



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



Monday, July 10, 2006
10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL
200 N. Spring St.
Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Commissioners: Kathleen Riordan, President
Tariq Khero, Vice President
Marie Atake
Glenn S. Brown
Deborah A. Knaan

COMMISSION MEETING

Commission President Riordan called the Commission meeting to order at 10:15 A.M. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Khero and Knaan. Commissioners Atake and Brown were absent.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

The General Manager's written report for the month of June 2006 was sent to the Commissioners on July 5, 2006. It was also posted on the Department's Website.

- The 14th annual Animal People analysis of kill rates in communities across the United States will be published July 20. It shows that Los Angeles has had the greatest decline in animal euthanasia over the past three years with a 50% decrease. Over the past five years, the City has decreased 62% in dog euthanasia and 19% in cat euthanasia.
- The Department recently closed out the fiscal year with fewer than 19,500 in euthanasia, the lowest number of animals euthanized in the City's history. If the Department continues decreasing euthanasia at its current rate, it may be possible to end the current year with around 15,000 animals.
- There is a new feature on the Department Website that features a "Pet of the Day." The feature is also now featured on the City Website.
- There is now a S.T.A.R. (Special Treatment And Recovery) program on the Website. Animals that are brought into the shelters abused, neglected, or injured are featured on this section.

Commissioner Riordan congratulated the General Manager and the staff on their hard work in reducing the euthanasia rate. She commented that impounds have decreased as a result of the Department's spay/neuter services in conjunction with the City ordinance.

Public Comments

Daniel Guss: Mr. Boks should have reported on the "Hooters for Neuters" fundraising event. He is not giving the Board everything they should need to know. Wanted to have an actual body count on animals.

Phyllis Daugherty: Concerned about the increasing calls for animals being released unaltered by the

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shelters. Wanted to know how the Department was moving forward in terms of monitoring the release of animals.

2. OLD BUSINESS INCLUDING MATTERS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Board Report: Adoption Policy

The General Manager reported that there were two material errors in the Board Report. The Adoption Policy as written, gives any employee the ability to refuse an adoption based on the criteria. This needs to be amended so that such situations would first be brought to the attention of a supervisor before a decision is rendered. Secondly, the policy needs to be made more specific to where the Department can operate in criteria that is not as subjective in determining who would be able to adopt. Captain Nancy Moriarty, Acting Director of Shelter Operations, commented that there was no clarity on whether individuals were placed in the Do Not Adopt category as a result of outside problems or convictions, or as a result of internal problems discovered thru counseling. She stressed that the Department needed to establish standards to ensure that their policy was fair and unbiased. While taking much of the subjectivity out of the policy, Commissioner Knaan did want to give the staff the ability and freedom to rely on their instincts and judgment.

Commissioner Knaan suggested that the Board Report return to the Commission Meeting on August 14, 2006 with the necessary changes.

Public Comments

Daniel Guss: The City of Pasadena has terrific Do Not Adopt policy. It would be great to coordinate with Burbank, Pasadena and the County to share information. Volunteers assigned to do home-checks must be able to operate independently from the Commission and General Manager's ambitions.

Mary Catalano: Wished that puppies and kittens only be released to rescue groups.

Jane Garcia: Suspected that a dog at the South Los Angeles shelter may have been adopted out to an owner who already owned a pit bull that had previously killed five other dogs.

Action Item: Board Report on the Adoption Policy to return as an agenda item for the Commission Meeting on 08/14/06.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Recommendation For New Agenda Items

- Commissioner Riordan asked for a report on newspapers listing permits and breeder's licenses. (Ms. Daugherty responded that the City ordinance has penalties for not properly listing one's breeder license number. The problem is that newspapers are not required to enforce the listing of the license.)
- Commissioner Knaan requested to schedule a closed session on the report written by Sr. Assistant City Attorney Michael Claessens.
- Commissioner Knaan requested to schedule a night Commission Meeting in the month of August.
- Commissioner Knaan wanted an updated list on all evidence animals being held, including their case status. (The General Manager responded that the Department would be putting together a comprehensive report for the Commissioners, breaking down all the animals held in the shelters.)

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- Commissioner Knaan wanted a policy on the care taking of evidence animals to be voted on at the next Commission Meeting.
- Commissioner Knaan wanted an item-by-item list of Department expenditures over \$500.

Public Comments

Daniel Guss: Wanted an agenda item on the definition of the word “euthanasia.” It is critical to get a body count. Need to have transparency within the Department.

Jane Garcia: Praised the General Manager’s foster program for evidence animals.

4. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for June 26, 2006

Commissioner Knaan motioned to approve the minutes for June 26 with the changes requested by Commissioner Riordan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and passed on a vote of 3-0.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Knaan had recently had the opportunity to spend more time at the East Valley Center. She also attended a reception for Mr. Boks at Former Commissioner Erica Brunson’s home on June 29. Commissioners Riordan and Khero had nothing to report.

Public Comments

Daniel Guss: Did the General Manager lack common sense when he wore a Hooters t-shirt to a speech two days after the Hooters fiasco? Council Member Jack Weiss publicly noted that the General Manager had misspelled the word “adopt” on the Hooters flier.

5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. None

6. REGULAR AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM

A. Discussion: Update on Progress of Volunteer Program

Ms. Heidi Huebner, Volunteer Program Director, reported on the Department’s Volunteer Program. For the month of June 2006, the volunteers accumulated 15,991 service hours. The Department currently has 877 listed volunteers, with around 200 active volunteers participating more than three times per month in mobile adoption activities and at the shelters. She commented that the key to the success of the program would rely heavily on the Department liaisons and their ability to work and coordinate with the volunteers.

Mr. Larry Herskovic, Animal Care Technician, suggested that the Department do more to reach out to high school students and get them more involved as volunteers to help with the two mobile pet adoptions that he helped establish for the West Valley Center. He commented on the importance of providing more pet adoption events during the week, and bringing the animals to areas or locations that experienced a higher level of pedestrian traffic.

Ms. Charla Fales, Animal Care Technician, commented that dealing with the community service people requires a great deal of work. The younger volunteers often need more supervision. Targeting the older volunteers or individuals who may have lost a pet, is something that the Volunteer program needs to target. One of the programs Ms. Fales oversees is the Sunday dog obedience class at the West Los Angeles Center. The program has twelve volunteers and six dogs. The volunteers are required to work with their dog 2-3 times per week. So far, eleven dogs have been adopted from the program. Such programs keep the animals busy and the volunteers involved.

Ms. Dawn Gentry commented on the Dog Walk Log and how it has helped improve communication between the staff and volunteers. The log tracks and ensures that the shelter dogs are more evenly walked.

Ms. Martha Lopez, New Hope Coordinator commented on the efforts to get the animals adopted out, especially with rabbits. Currently she oversees a group of 15-20 volunteers that come in on a regular basis during the week. She agreed the Volunteer Program needed to target the high school student involvement. Alexandra Cortez, Animal Care Technician, shared her experience of first becoming involved as a volunteer with the Department. She mentioned the importance of making the volunteers feel welcome and giving them attention on showing them how to work with the animals and staff.

Public Comments

Daniel Guss: Had provided the General Manager with photos of high school teenagers volunteering in Burbank for the Department back in January.

Jane Garcia: Suggested that the Department reach out to churches, community centers, and other places to make the public aware of the Department's programs. Discussed holding possible mini adoption events.

Mary Catalano: Suggested that the Department reach out to the senior community be involved in the volunteer program. Stressed the importance of using free community advertising for the Department.

B. Discussion: Department Logos

In July 2005, the Department had held a contest amongst the employees to develop a new Department logo. The Commission had no knowledge of the contest within the Department. After some time, along with the hiring of the new General Manager, the contest and the submitted logos were apparently forgotten. In January 2006, the Otis Art College of Art and Design was brought in under a contract, receiving a fee for their students creating logos for the Department. During that same time, the General Manager had been approached by a private advertising agency to provide advertising for the Department with respect to the opening of the new shelters, and to also create a logo, pro bono. A committee consisting of employees, citizens, and staff from the agency was formed to review the logos. The committee selected the logo currently used by the Department.

Phyllis Daugherty: The selection of the current logo was done without public comment or Commission decision. Is there a contract with the private company? The logo of the doghouse is the antithesis of everything the Department is trying to teach people about caring for animals.

Daniel Guss: Upset that the General Manager would go before the Budget and Finance Committee to beg for more money, when there was already money allocated for the employees and the Otis College of Art and

Design to come up with a logo. The current logo does not represent the animals of the Department.

Mary Catalano: Agreed with Ms. Daugherty that the logo of the doghouse did not represent the Department. Wanted to make sure that money was not being squandered on coming up with a new logo.

Commissioner Riordan suggested that the Board and the Department redo the selection process of the Department logo, and include Commissioner Atake's expertise. The General Manager added that the creator of the selected logos for consideration should be brought in to explain the symbolism in their logos.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mary Catalano: Rescued a kitten at North Central in which the individuals who had turned it in claimed that it had bitten them. Asked for a reassessment of the kitten.

Daniel Guss: Would go before the Budget and Finance Committee to ask that they reject the General Manager's request to increase the licensing fee for altered animals. Said he would ask about all of the Departments fundraising opportunities that were missed. Also said he would ask the General Manager to provide a comprehensive report on all Department expenditures and grants.

Phyllis Daugherty: Informed the Board that the toy manufacturer, Mr. David Gonzalez, had stopped distributing the fighting pit bull toys. Commented that her letter, regarding the Jesse Katz article was published in Los Angeles Magazine. Suggested that the Department begin coordinating training on investigating and handling breeders who fail to list their breeder's license number and enforcing appropriate penalties for non-compliance.

Commissioner Riordan: Before we close I wanted it on the record that, Mr. Boks had nothing to do with the increase in the Altered Dog License. That he is being the messenger, as his job duty is to bring this to Public Safety. I just wanted to make that very clear that this is not Mr. Bok's doing he is just the messenger.

Mr. Pool added that the fee increase had been recommended and approved by the City Council.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:50 P.M.