



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



Monday, July 24, 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 10:08 A.M. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Khero, Atake and Knaan. Commissioners Brown joined the meeting at 10:40 A.M.

(There was a tape recording system failure. The minutes were written based on the notes that were taken.)

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

The General Manager's Six Month written report to the Mayor 2006 was sent to the Commissioners on July 14, 2006. It was also posted on the Department's Website.

- The Department was recently recognized for its "transparency" by the Maddie's Foundation in gathering and publishing its shelter statistics.
- The 14th annual Animal People analysis of kill rates in communities across the United States was published July 20. It showed 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 decreased 62% in dog euthanasia and 19% in cat euthanasia.
- The Department reported a 70% "live-release" rate for dogs and a 44% "live release" rate for cats. This is the first time in the City's history in which more animals were left alive than were killed.
- The first two quarters of the calendar year 2006 represent the highest pet adoption quarters (6,821 adoptions) and the lowest euthanasia quarters (7,865 deaths) in the Department's history.

2. OLD BUSINESS INCLUDING MATTERS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. None

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Recommendation For New Agenda Items

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- Commissioner Riordan requested a report on animals being transferred between shelters. Commissioner Riordan read a statement about the Nelson case in which an allegation was made against the employees. Commissioner Knaan mentioned that the City would be conducting an investigation into the case in conjunction with the Personnel Department.

Public Comments

Jane Garcia: Commented on the confusion with the animals placed on the white list and the red list. Staff does not seem to have all the facts. There have been some animals on the white list that have been euthanized.

(The General Manager responded that animals on the white list were only euthanized for medical reasons.)

4. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for July 24, 2006

Commissioner Riordan asked that they table the approval of the minutes for July 10 to the next Commission meeting on 08/14/06 with the inclusion of her requested changes.

Action Item: Approval of the Minutes for July 10, 2006 to be tabled as an agenda item for the next Commission Meeting on 08/14/06.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Atake volunteered at dog adoption events on July 1, July 16, and July 22. She also attended a reception for Mr. Boks at Former Commissioner Erica Brunson's home on June 29. Commissioner Atake made a recent visit to the South Los Angeles Annex and volunteered at the mobile event on July 16, 2006. She also attended a meeting for a discussion on the Department Logo. Commissioners Riordan, Khero, and Knaan had nothing to report.

5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

B. Board Report: Donation Acceptance for \$50,000 from the Coalition for Pets and Public Safety (COPPS)

(Item 5A was postponed until Mr. Jeff Brill, Sr. Management Analyst II, arrived at 10:23 A.M.)

On June 1, 2006, the Department received a letter from COPPS stating their commitment to donating \$50,000 for fiscal year 2006-07. The \$50,000 would be used in conjunction with the \$200,000 from Department Trust Funds for spay/neuter surgeries performed by the Valley Van Project operated by the Amanda Foundation.

Commissioner Knaan motioned to authorize the General Manager to accept the \$50,000 donation from the Coalition for Pets and Public Safety. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and passed on a vote of 4-0.

6. REGULAR AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM

A. Discussion: Animal Cruelty Task Force Update

The Animal Cruelty Task Force was formed in July 2005. The Task Force consists of two Los Angeles Police Department detectives and five Department of Animal Services officers. Currently, the LAPD and the LAAS use two different formats on their statistics and information. The LAPD records their information with citations and arrests. The LAAS only records arrests. Through the Animal Cruelty Task Force, these groups are able to share information in a partnership with the common goal of effectively investigating and abating issues of animal cruelty. Interaction between the two varies from case to case.

Deputy City Attorney IV, Bob Ferber reported on the general training taking place for the Department's ACOs. He said that there were cultural differences between the LAPD and LAAS. Measures are being taken to improve communication between the two groups. Statistics are being developed in a way using similar definitions.

Public Comments

Jane Garcia: Wanted to make people aware that there was a difference in the information from the LAPD and the information from the Department.

Phyllis Daugherty: Expressed concern about the recent publicity of the Animal Cruelty Task Force.

Evelyn Walton: Advised that some mechanism needed to be put in place between the rescue community and the Animal Cruelty Task Force to increase involvement from the community.

Ben Lehrer: Commented that one of the major issues the Task Force must address is the cat hoarding issue.

B. Discussion: Animals Released Without Sterilization

From January 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006, a total of 27,496 animals were adopted from the Department shelters. Of the 27,496 animals adopted, 3,964 animals were released to private citizens and rescue groups without being sterilized. Follow-up information regarding spay and neuter procedures that were later performed was only submitted for 1,463 of these unsterilized animals. With their experience in dealing with licensing issues and issues with unsterilized animals and breeding, the Department approved a program that would utilize the Spay and Neuter Task Force as the leading unit in field enforcement follow-ups. Commissioner Riordan commented that the Department should consider amending certain codes and establishing a penalty phase of 45 days for those individuals and rescue groups who fail to spay and neuter their unsterilized animals.

Public Comments

Susan Taylor: Requested for updated statistics on the unaltered animals released by the Department. Pointed out faults she found in the statistics and the difficulty she experienced in obtaining the information. Felt that the follow-ups conducted by the Department have been insufficient thus far and was not confident that the Spay and Neuter Task Force would do them properly. Claimed that the Department, for requesting information on the unaltered animals, wrongfully charged her \$80.

Teri Austin: Commented that the two mobile vans have helped reach just fewer than 12,000 surgeries.

Evelyn Walton: There needs to be better clarity in the communication of the shelters information. Suggested that the forms be revamped and use larger print.

Sue Freeman: Asked for a reorganization of the shelter statistics.

5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Board Report: Sam Simon and Amanda Foundation Contracts

Mr. Jeff Brill, Sr. Management Analyst II, reported on the latest negotiations and agreements reached with the Sam Simon Foundation in regards to providing spay and neuter services for the South Los Angeles clinic. As of October 1, 2006, the Sam Simon Foundation would be taking over the South Los Angeles clinic in an interim position. Within the next few weeks, the Department would also be trying to get send out an RFP to allow anyone in the community to come in and operate the spay/neuter clinic. The Sam Simon Foundation would be performing sterilization procedures three days per week on shelter animals, who would be transported by use of a City vehicle. Once a week the spay/neuter clinic would then be open to the public.

Commissioner Knaan left at 11:55A.M.

Public Comments

Sue Freeman: When the contract with the Sam Simon Foundation expires, she wanted the agreement with the next vendor to offer more days to the public for spay/neuter procedures. The South Los Angeles area is one that Department must focus on because the communities present there are the ones in the most need of spay/neuter services.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Sue Freeman: Had requested in April for information on the number of shelter dogs and cats that were unsterilized and believed that much of the information she had received was incorrect. Was surprised to find out that there was only one Animal Control Officer on duty during the evening and night hours of the day.

Teri Austin: Commented on the profits being made and on the abuse by the public in regards to sterilizing animals in the City. Mentioned that there are many individuals illegally selling pets without proper licenses or permits to do so.

Evelyn Walton: There is a problem in Central Los Angeles in which rabbits are being sold on the street. In some instances, these rabbits are later turned into the shelters. Rabbits are also being sold on Craig's List

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented on an incident that took place in the Harbor Center in which a hit dog was brought in. Thanks to the employees the dog is now recovering.

Tina Clark: Commented on the Animal Cruelty Task Force in how they are addressing the hoarding issue. She suggested that something needed to be done to improve the necessary medical care for the animals.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:25 P.M.