

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
SPAY / NEUTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES
January 26, 2009**

**Location:
East Valley Animal Care Center**

Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee Chairperson Laura Beth Heisen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present were Committee members:

NAME	COUNCIL DISTRICT
Marie Atake	11
Dr. Bill Bender	12
Laura Beth Heisen	10
Judie Mancuso	7
Elizabeth Oreck	5
Rachel Paap	4
Christine Peters	1
Cheri Shankar	6
Scott Sorrentino	2
Lezle Stein	14
JeanMarie Wisniewski	13

Absent were Committee members:

NAME	COUNCIL DISTRICT
Bobby Dorafshar	3
Ricardo Mendoza	9
Theresa Sardisco	15
Willie Solomon	8

I. GENERAL BUSINESS

Ms. Heisen requested that, after Committee members meet with members of City Council, shelter Captains, and other city and shelter representatives, Committee members write a report. The report need not be extensive but should memorialize important points discussed and good ideas raised. Committee members should Email their reports to all other Committee members; however, comments by other Committee members should be held to

the next public meeting, unless communicated to fewer than a quorum of the Committee, due to the Brown Act.

II. MINUTES

Chairperson Heisen requested approval of the minutes for the meetings of January 5, 2009. Jean Marie Wisniewski motioned for approval of the minutes and Cheri Shankar seconded the motion. The minutes were approved on a 9-0 vote.

III. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

The March 2009 preliminary report will discuss only the most urgent recommendations that should be implemented immediately. Recommendations for the March 2009 preliminary report should include reasoning for the recommendation and supporting documents if appropriate. The October 2009 final report will have more comprehensive recommendations along with more in-depth presentation of strategy, findings and supporting documents. Recommendations should if appropriate and possible identify resources needed to implement the recommendations.

Each Committee member should suggest for the next meeting those recommendations for his or her assigned topics which the Committee member considers crucial enough to warrant inclusion in the March 2009 preliminary report. No topic has more than a quorum assigned, and Committee members should be working with other Committee members assigned to the topic (if more than one Committee member is assigned to the topic) to plan and prepare the topic and its recommendations for consideration by the full Committee.

The topic of Spay/Neuter resources already available was added. This includes what LAAS shelters offer and what the community offers. This also includes how LAAS can make these resources readily available to low income residents and others. Ms. Peters agreed to be responsible for this topic.

A problem identified is that the shelters do not currently have consistency in their presentation of information regarding spay/neuter resources already available. Nor do LAAS staff have consistency in their knowledge of the information or where the information can be found. Ms. Heisen told of an incident just before tonight's meeting. A couple came into the shelter needing low-cost spay/neuter information; they could not find the needed information in the shelter lobby and the shelter staff did not know where to find it. Ms. Oreck was able to locate the information for the couple. This shows a need for better presentation of the material, and a need for employee training so they will know how to quickly provide the needed information for the public.

The Committee agreed that an appealing and prominent poster and display for spay/neuter information at each shelter is a good idea. These displays should be uniform at each shelter so they will be easy to spot. With the displays, there

should be employee and volunteer training to ensure awareness of the display and its resources.

Ms. Papp stated that she had in the past compiled a "yellow pages of spay/neuter" and it is bi-lingual. She will attempt to locate it and provide it to Ms. Peters and the Committee.

The LAAS website has a link to SpayCalifornia which provides low-cost spay/neuter information. However, accessing this link requires knowledge of where to find the link, and requires internet access, which many low income people do not have. SpayCalifornia information should be easily accessible on the LAAS telephone recording system, in shelter lobbies and with ACOs and license canvassers

The Committee discussed the possibility of showing on the LAAS website those Veterinarians offering low-cost spay/neuter and their prices charged. Ms. Peters and Dr. Bender recommended against showing prices because of variability of what is included for the price and because veterinarians change their prices.

With the added topic, the updated report topics and responsible Committee members and volunteers are now as follows:

1. Introduction a) Short background of LAAS s/n b) The s/n ordinance c) Our Committee	Heisen
d) Demographics	Menck
e) LAAS s/n data f) LAAS s/n costs	Mancuso & Heisen
2. Definitions a) "Low income" b) "Affordable" s/n	Papp & Heisen
3. S/N Strategy for LAAS	To be determined
4. LAAS Systems	Mancuso
5. Communications & Outreach a) How to help low income residents and everyone WANT to s/n i) Diversification and inclusiveness ii) LAAS direct messages iii) LAAS in the community	Solomon/Simpson/Peters Shankar Papp
b) How to help low income residents and everyone be ABLE to s/n i) Overcoming objections ii) Transportation issues iii) How to target people; animals; geographic areas iv) Financial issues [Addressed under	Solomon/Simpson/Peters/ Wisniewski/Stein Peters/Wisniewski/Stein Peters/Wisniewski/Stein/ Solomon/Simpson

"LAAS S/N Programs"]	
c) Spay/neuter resources already available	Christine
6. LAAS S/N Programs	Sorrentino/Sardisco
7. LAAS Staff	Papp/Sardisco/Heisen
8. LAAS Volunteers	Stein/Wisniewski
9. Veterinary	Bender/Atake/Oreck
10. LAAS S/N Clinics	Heisen/Papp
11. Fundraising & Partnerships a) Resources already out there b) Developing new resources	Shankar/Papp
12. Enforcement	Dorafshar/Heisen
13. Ordinance	Heisen/Dorafshar/Mancuso
14. How to Measure Success a) What to measure b) How to measure it	To be determined Mancuso
15. Oversight	To be determined
16. Appendix a) Timeline	All

IV. COMMITTEE'S SPAY/NEUTER STRATEGY RECOMMENDATION

The Committee began discussing an overall LAAS spay/neuter strategy it might recommend. Targets might be certain people (low income residents); geographic areas (where low income residents are located and/or with highest impounds); animals (highest euthanasia and/or most public safety complaints); time of year (most kitten/puppy intake).

It was noted that "affordable" spay/neuter varies depending on what the resident can afford. "Affordable" for some is low cost. "Affordable" for others must be free.

V. REPORT FORMAT

Topic postponed due to time considerations.

VI. UPDATES

Ms. Stein and Ms. Wisniewski will meet with the LAAS Volunteer Coordinator.

Ms. Atake told of an incident she and Ms. Oreck witnessed very recently at a shelter. A dog owner redeeming his dog from the shelter was told of the need to purchase a breeders permit for his unsterilized dog at a cost of \$100, plus the \$100 unsterilized license fee, plus the \$25 redemption fee. His response was that, since he had to pay for the permit and associated costs totaling \$225, he would attempt to recoup the cost by breeding his dog and trying to sell the

puppies. Ms. Atake noted that this is the opposite of the spay/neuter and breeders permit ordinances' intent, yet the way the ordinance is written can create this result. This is because the name is "breeders" permit, suggesting that purchase of the permit is a cost of engaging in a breeding business. It will take an ordinance change to change this situation. A discussion took place on the best way to accomplish changing the ordinance.

At one shelter, when an owner reclaims, the shelter simply states the redemption fee as \$225, rather than breaking down the component costs and explaining that spay/neuter would reduce the cost significantly. This is another employee training issue, so employees will know to educate about the possibility of reducing the redemption costs by spaying or neutering. Achieve more spay/neuter by recommending spay/neuter and let the reclaiming owner ask if he or she wants to keep the animal intact, or say the costs with and without spay/neuter and let the owner choose.

Ms. Peters stated that free spay/neuter is now virtually impossible to obtain through LAAS. She reports that there are usually no free spay/neuter certificates available, and the spay/neuter vans are fully booked. As a result, more free spay/neuter is needed for low-income residents.

A discussion was held regarding permit fees and unsterilized license fees being paid into the city's general fund and not remaining with LAAS.

The Committee considered the idea of distributing \$70 free spay/neuter certificates through veterinary offices where the certificates are accepted as payment in full. A concern was raised that controls are needed to ensure that the certificates are used only by low-income persons. A better idea might be to provide these veterinarians with information about the free certificate program and how the public may obtain a free certificate. It was noted that LAAS employees are not trained to screen for low income use.

The Committee discussed the possibility of reallocating some or all of the funds used for \$30 coupons to be used instead for \$70 free certificates, to better target funds to help low income residents comply with the spay/neuter ordinance.

a. and b. Captain meetings and Council office calls

Ms. Heisen reminded Committee members to complete these tasks and prepare a written report of important information learned. The written reports should be Emailed directly to the Committee members, by February 9th if possible. The documents so Emailed will be made available to the public at the next Committee meeting.

Committee members had queried Council offices regarding what spay and neuter information was available at the offices. The reply was that very few knew about spay and neuter programs.

c. and d. Neighborhood Council survey and Subsidized S/N User survey

Ms. Papp reported that these two surveys are moving forward.

e. Employee survey

It was decided that Ms. Heisen will Email the employee survey to Mr. Pool, LAAS Management Analyst II. Mr. Pool will make copies and deliver the copies to AGM Kathy Davis. AGM Davis will deliver the employee surveys to the shelter Captains with instructions to distribute to the surveys to every employees' mailbox and for those employees who do not have a mailbox to otherwise ensure that every employee receives a survey. AGM Davis will also ensure that every employee at the Figueroa building receives an employee survey. Ms. Heisen will also write and send to Mr. Pool a notice to be posted on the LAAS all-employee intranet regarding the employee survey.

A discussion on the best way to collect the employee's survey ensued. It was decided that a box would be placed in each shelter break room to collect the individual surveys.

f. Veterinary survey

The Veterinary survey has been received from 28 SCVMA Veterinarians and the results have been compiled.

VII. SUGGESTIONS FOR USEFUL DATA TO RECOMMEND FOR LAAS TO TRACK

Topic postponed due to time considerations.

VIII. COMMITTEE MEMBER TASKS

a. Before 2-16-2009 meeting

Committee members should send their Captain reports, Council office reports and reports of other meetings to all Committee members, if possible, by February 9th.

Committee members should send their ideas for March 2009 preliminary report recommendations to Ms. Heisen, if possible, by February 9th.

b. Before 3-9-2009 meeting

Topic postponed due to time considerations.

IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Menck stated that the Neighborhood Councils do not know about the spay/neuter ordinance.

It was noted that the Committee's recommendations are to the Mayor, City Council and LAAS Commission, rather than directly to LAAS.

Jim Bickhart suggested that the Committee prioritize its recommendations, so that if LAAS lacks resources to implement all recommendations, LAAS would know which to implement before others.

XI. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m.