

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
SPAY/NEUTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES
October 21, 2008

Meeting was called to order at 7:39 pm by Chairperson Cheri Shankar.

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 Shanker	6
Scott Sorrentino	2
Lezle Stein	14
Jean Marie Wisniewski	13

Absent were Committee members:

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

I. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Chair and Co-Chair:

Committee Chair Cheri Shankar opened the meeting and announced her resignation as Chair due to time requirements. Laura Beth Heisen was nominated, seconded and elected Committee Chair. Laura Beth Heisen began as Committee Chair. Cheri Shankar was nominated, seconded and elected Committee Co-Chair.

B. Brown Act:

Continuing the discussion from the last meeting, Laura Beth Heisen reviewed basic Brown Act requirements. She stated that she is communicating with

the City Attorney's office regarding a possibility that the Subcommittees are within an exception to Brown Act coverage for short-term advisory committees which are not standing committees and which are less than a quorum of the appointing body. Ms. Heisen will notify the group when the City Attorney's office provides an opinion but in the meantime all members should assume that the Brown Act does cover the Subcommittees as well as the Committee. Ms. Heisen noted that the Brown Act prohibits communication among a quorum of members about the subject matter under the Committee's or Subcommittee's jurisdiction. She cautioned against "serial meetings" in which fewer than a quorum communicate from one to another until a quorum of members has spoken on the issue; serial meetings relating to the subject matter under the group's jurisdiction are a Brown Act violation unless proper public notice is provided.

c. New Committee Member Introduction:

Christine Peters from Council district 1 introduced herself to the Committee members as this was her first meeting.

d. Spay/Neuter Ordinance Information:

It was noted that Los Angeles' spay/neuter ordinance has been effective since April 14, 2008 and has been enforced since October 1, 2008.

Committee members discussed paragraph 8.H.(1) through (6) of the spay/neuter ordinance. Paragraph 8.H. sets forth the Committee's responsibilities. The Committee identified which Subcommittee(s) would primarily address each of the items in paragraph 8.H.(1) through (6).
Specific comments:

Paragraph 8.H.(1) will be addressed by all Subcommittees.

Paragraph 8.H.(2) will be primarily addressed by the Internal Subcommittee. The amount and timing of committed funding will be addressed both by the Internal and the External Subcommittees. The provision regarding the amount and timing of committed funding will be addressed both by the Internal Subcommittee and by the External Subcommittee. The provision regarding recommendations for legislative and administrative action needed to ensure that funding is allocated promptly to qualified providers of spay/neuter programs was considered to relate to allocations of budget amounts to spay/neuter; accordingly, this item was deemed appropriate for the Internal Subcommittee. Both the Internal Subcommittee and the External Subcommittee will review voucher utilization and whether enough vouchers are provided. It was suggested that the Committee consider possible recommendations for modifying the spay/neuter ordinance, for example, whether it would be more beneficial to provide fewer exemptions, such as possible elimination or modification to the exemption for all who purchase a breeder's permit.

Regarding Paragraph 8.H.(3), the Committee felt that it should determine accountability measures. A complaint system was suggested which would relate to customer service (for example, giving rabies and spay/neuter certificates in a timely manner to animal guardians upon spay/neuter) but would not relate to veterinary care because the California Veterinary Medical Association is more appropriate for veterinary care issues. However it was noted that the Committee should consider whether certain veterinarians taking City vouchers are receiving too many complaints.

Paragraphs 8.H.(4) and (5) would be addressed by all Subcommittees.

e. Draft Report Preparation and Due Date:

Laura Beth Heisen stated that basic outlines of Subcommittee report plans should be prepared for the next Committee meeting.

Per ordinance, the Committee's draft report is due to the L.A. Animal Services Commission by March 30, 2009. The final report is due October 30, 2009.

II. MINUTES

L.A. Animal Services General Manager Ed Boks, designated as Committee Secretary by City Ordinance, was not in attendance. Minutes were not provided for Committee consideration. Mr. Boks had not designated any substitute to serve as Secretary. Ross Pool, L.A. Animal Services Management Analyst II, offered to take meeting Minutes.

III. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

a. External Subcommittee: This Committee had not yet met.

b. Internal Subcommittee: Subcommittee Chair Scott Sorrentino delivered the Subcommittee's report on its October 20, 2008 meeting. He described three working areas as (1) LAAS statistics and systems, also including enforcement; (2) current LAAS programs and services, also including ordinances and funding; and (3) recommendations for spay/neuter improvements. Mr. Sorrentino noted the importance of establishing an accurate statistical baseline for spay/neuter.

c. Veterinary Subcommittee: Dr. Bill Bender delivered the Subcommittee's report. Dr. Bender stated that planned topics for the Veterinary Subcommittee report relate to (1) the number of spay and neuter surgeries performed by and for L.A. Animal Services, and the number of participating veterinarians; (2) the number of spay and neuter surgeries performed under the auspices of rescue groups and the number of participating veterinarians; (3) providing a questionnaire to members of the Southern California Veterinary Medical

Association, to evaluate veterinarians' current level of participation in spay/neuter programs for low income residents and to evaluate the potential for increased participation in these or as yet other undefined programs.

IV. CURRENT L.A. ANIMAL SERVICES SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAMS, RESULTS AND NEEDS

L.A. Animal Services General Manager Ed Boks at the September 22, 2008 Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee meeting assured Committee members that L.A. Animal Services Spay/Neuter Programs Administrator Brenda van den Bosch would be present at this October 21, 2008 Committee meeting to describe current L.A. Animal Services spay/neuter programs and answer Committee members' questions. Ms. van den Bosch did not attend the October 21, 2008 meeting. Ross Pool stated that he would send information regarding L.A. Animal Services spay/neuter programs to all Committee members.

V. AND VI. FUTURE COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Laura Beth Heisen recommended discussing a method for obtaining "regular and systematic input" regarding spay/neuter needs and resources from low income city residents. Rachel Papp stated that she can provide "DUN" information related to Neighborhood Councils.

Ms. Heisen inquired regarding preferred methods of interacting between L.A. Animal Services and Committee members. Ms. Heisen as Chair will generally be the Committee representative for such interactions. Jim Bickhart of the Mayor's office agreed to assist in securing needed information and attendance by L.A. Animal Services personnel at Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee meetings and for the Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee's use.

Ms. Heisen reminded Committee members that the Committee has a very large job and that the focus should be on positive improvements and on ideas that make practical sense from spay/neuter, constituent services and fiscal perspectives.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:28 pm.