

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

**MINUTES  
March 9, 2009**

**Location:  
East Valley Animal Shelter**

Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee Chairperson Laura Beth Heisen called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Present were Committee members:

NAME	COUNCIL DISTRICT
Marie Atake	11
Bobby Dorafshar	3
Laura Beth Heisen	10
Judie Mancuso	7
Ricardo Mendoza	9
Elizabeth Oreck	5
Rachel Paap	4
Theresa Sardisco	15
Scott Sorrentino	2
Lezle Stein	14
JeanMarie Wisniewski	13

Absent were Committee members:

NAME	COUNCIL DISTRICT
Dr. Bill Bender	12
Christine Peters	1
Cheri Shankar	6
Willie Solomon	8

**I. General business**

The Committee was joined at the meeting by Jose Sigala, Legislative Analyst from City Councilmember Richard Alarcon's District 7, and by Mitch O'Farrell, District Director for Constituent Services from City Council President Eric Garcetti's District 13.

**II. Approval of Minutes, February 17, 2009 meeting**

Upon motion by Ms. Oreck seconded by Mr. Mendoza, the Minutes of the Committee's February 17, 2009 meeting were then approved.

### **III. Updates and questions**

#### **a. Surveys**

Some Committee members brought their respective shelters' completed employee surveys. Others stated that they had retrieved the completed surveys from their respective shelters but did not have them at the meeting. Ms. Mancuso stated that she had only just recently mailed the employee surveys to the shelter for which she is conducting the employee survey.

Ms. Wisniewski stated that the employee surveys from her shelter reflect that employees do not feel trained well regarding spay/neuter and that they feel spay/neuter enforcement is not taking place. Ms. Heisen stated that her shelter's surveys reflect a uniform sentiment that persons with intact animals are not purchasing breeders permits.

Ms. Atake stated that the employee surveys at her shelter were distributed by Captain Dedeaux with each employee's name written on the survey, harming the desired element of confidentiality. She stated that it also appears that surveys were given only to selected employees at that shelter. Ms. Heisen stated that this was outside the Committee's control. She also stated that this could impact the survey integrity with respect to the ranking questions and the Committee's ability to learn what all employees at that shelter would have written. Similar issues also appear to have occurred with the employee survey at the administrative office.

#### **b. Meetings**

Ms. Heisen met with LAAS Chief Veterinarian Dr. Jeremy Prupas. She stated that it was a very positive meeting and that he appears eager to generate more spay/neuter.

#### **c. Any other updates and questions**

Jim Bickhart from the Mayor's office stated that the LAAS budget is roughly \$20,000,000 per year of which 90% pays salaries and the remaining 10% is for all other needs including food for the animals and other operating expenses. Mr. Bickhart stated that the spay/neuter allocation from the general fund had been \$500,000 per year, deposited into the Spay and Neuter Trust Fund (Fund 543), but that it was cut two years ago to \$300,000.

Mr. Bickhart stated that another \$100,000 budget cut in spay/neuter had been made the preceding week per City Council. He stated that this leaves \$200,000 for spay/neuter. The foregoing applies

to spay/neuter funds LAAS receives from the city's general fund.

Other spay/neuter funding was discussed, including \$7 received for spay/neuter from each dog license sold. The various trust funds were described.

#### **IV. Individual assignment topic sections for March 30, 2009 report**

It was decided that, due to some individual topic sections not yet being completed and some changes and coordination being needed, an additional meeting would be held between this night's meeting and the March preliminary report due date.

##### **a. Completed submissions**

The Committee reviewed all submitted individual topic sections. These included Veterinary, Enforcement, Ordinances, Strategy, Computer Data and Statistics, Programs, Volunteers, Outreach and Existing Spay/Neuter Resources.

There were multiple submissions relating to outreach in various ways. Committee members who wrote those sections will coordinate. They are Lezle, JeanMarie, Rachel, Christine and Cheri.

Ms. Heisen requested that Mr. Mendoza coordinate with those working on outreach (above paragraph) regarding Mr. Mendoza's contributions. Mr. Mendoza will contribute a section on how to conduct outreach in various communities.

Comments included:

Ms. Stein and Ms. Wisniewski presented the packet of spay/neuter information they prepared and will recommend for use at shelters and in kiosks. These will include multi-lingual materials.

Strategy: The concept is good but Mr. Sorrentino stated that certain wording should be changed.

Programs: Mr. Sorrentino explained the recommendation that funds for \$30 coupons be used instead for \$70 certificates, to target assistance to more low income persons. He also asked the difference between create and implement programs.

Ms. Sardisco noted a need for improvement in pricing or assistance for add-on fees for non-standard spay/neuter procedures including pregnant spays. She stated that when an adopted animal is pregnant and the spay/neuter Veterinarian charges the adopter a surcharge to spay the pregnant animal, adopters sometimes cannot afford the surcharge and relinquish the animal back to the shelter.

Ms. Mancuso indicated she had paid to cover the difference between the coupon and cost of spay or neuter procedure. It was suggested that funds be established in different areas to cover the difference in procedures for large and small dogs.

Ms. Papp will write a recommendation relating to motivating Veterinarians to get on board regarding low-cost spay/neuter. She will also describe the successful Veterinary program she created in Hollywood.

Ms. Papp stated that LAAS would benefit from a team approach within the department, with a spay/neuter team leader.

Mr. Sigala noted that the California Emerging Technology Fund is available to fund certain needs.

Ms. Heisen and Mr. Dorafshar will merge their sections on ordinances and enforcement.

Ms. Mancuso described her data recommendations. Mr. Sorrentino stated that the LAAS computer system should track the reason for spay/neuter deferral, since deferral sometimes appears to be for a reason other than the medical necessity of the animal.

Mr. Sigala requested that the Committee prepare a definition of "low income." Mr. Bickhart noted that the Commission on February 23, 2009 adopted the HUD definition of "low income." This would be a household income of \$30,000 for a family of four. It was noted that the Committee could recommend a change if a better definition is developed. Other options are Medi-Cal and food stamp eligibility.

Ms. Papp has knowledge regarding definitions of "low income." She will prepare a report section recommending a change in the LAAS definition of "low income" and recommending what does qualify as "low income" in the city of Los Angeles

Comments were made that the Committee should recommend ensuring staff training in the definition of "low income" and other spay/neuter related information.

Ms. Mancuso noted the budget crisis and stated that LAAS may close two shelters.

**b. Status of any topic sections not yet submitted**

No discussion.

**c. Review**

Postponed to the next meeting since not all submissions are in.

**V. Any remaining issues for March 30, 2009 report**

No discussion.

**VI. Editing, preparing and submitting the final March 30, 2009 report**

Postponed to the next meeting since not all submissions are in.

**VII. Discussion**

- a. Defining "low income"**
- b. Defining "affordable" or "low-cost" spay/neuter"**
- c. LAAS spay/neuter clinics**
- d. \$30 coupons**
- e. Enforcement priorities**
- f. Strategy**

These topics were discussed in the context of the individual report sections above.

**VIII. Committee member tasks to complete before next meeting**

Those with individual report section recommendation topics or discussion similar to those of another Committee member(s) should coordinate with the other Committee member(s) to ensure no duplication. In some cases, including outreach, similar individual report sections may be consolidated.

Committee members should make every effort to finalize and Email to Ms. Heisen their prepared March individual report sections by Monday March 16, 2009. This will allow enough time for the reports to be compiled and sent to all Committee members for review before the next meeting which will be the last before the March report is due.

All individual report sections for the March report, including those not otherwise requiring change, must be put into the format discussed at the meeting and which Ms. Heisen will Email to Committee members. This will facilitate completion of editing of the entire report in time for the report deadline.

**IX. Schedule future meetings**

The next meeting, the last before the March report is due, will be on Monday March 23, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the West Los Angeles animal shelter.

**X. Future agenda items**

None noted.

**XI. Public comment**

None.

**XII. Adjourn**

At 9:35 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.