Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. For information please call (213) 482-9558.

Si requiere servicios de traducción, favor de hacer pedido con 24 horas de antípico al (213) 482-9558.

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - (Comments from the public on items of public interest within the Board’s subject matter jurisdiction that are not on the Agenda; two minutes per speaker.)

Public Comments: The Brown Act prohibits the Board and staff from responding to the speakers' comments. Some of the matters raised in public comment may appear on a future agenda.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL COMMENTS - (Discussion with Neighborhood Council representatives on Neighborhood Council Resolutions or Community Impact Statements filed with the City Clerk which relate to any agenda item listed or being considered on this agenda for the Board of Animal Services Commissioners)
3. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for Meeting of November 28, 2017. (Action Item; Public comment limited to one minute per speaker).

4. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER (Public comment limited to one minute per speaker).

5. COMMISSIONERS’ ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (Public comment limited to one minute per speaker).

6. BOARD REPORTS

A. Recommendation to Report Back With a Feasibility Analysis Presenting the Benefits and Risks of Providing an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) Approved, Plant-Based Diet for Shelter Dogs. (Action item; Public comment will be taken).

7. ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 A.M., January 9, 2018, at City Hall 200 North Spring Street, Room 1060, Los Angeles, California 90012. (Enter on Main Street).

AGENDAS - The Board of Animal Services Commissioners (Board) meets regularly every second (2nd) and fourth (4th) Tuesday of each month at 9:00 A.M. Regular Meetings are held at City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Room 1060, in Los Angeles, CA 90012. Evening Meetings are held in various locations throughout the City, from 7:00 to approximately 9:30 P.M. The agendas for Board meetings contain a brief general description of those items to be considered at the meetings. Board Agendas are available at the Department of Animal Services (Department), Administrative Division, 221 North Figueroa Street, 6th Floor, Suite 600, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Board Agendas may also be viewed on the 2nd floor Public Bulletin Board in City Hall East, 200 North Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Internet users may also access copies of present and prior agenda items, copies of the Board Calendar, MP-3 audio files of meetings as well as electronic copies of approved minutes on the Department’s World Wide Web Home Page site at http://www.laanimalservices.com/CommissionAgendas.htm

Three (3) members of the Board constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Some items on the Agenda may be approved without any discussion.

The Board Secretary will announce the items to be considered by the Board. The Board will hear the presentation on the topic and gather additional information from Department Staff. Once presentations have finished, the Board President will ask if any Board Member or member of the public wishes to speak on one or more of these items. Each speaker called before the Commission will have one (1) minute to express their comments and concerns on matters placed on the agenda. (For certain agenda items, speakers will have two (2) minutes.)

PUBLIC INPUT AT BOARD MEETINGS – Public Participation on Agenda Items. Members of the public will have an opportunity to address the Board on agenda items after the item is called and before the Board takes action on the item, unless the opportunity for public participation on the item was previously provided to all interested members of the public at a public meeting of a Committee of the Board and the item has not substantially changed since the
Committee heard the item. When speaking to an agenda item other than during Public Comment (see Public
Comment below), the speaker shall limit his or her comments to the specific item under consideration (California
Government Code, Section 54954.3).

**Public Comment.** The Board will provide an opportunity for public comment at every regular meeting of the Board.
Members of the public may address the Board on any items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board as part
of Public Comment.

**Speaker Cards.** Members of the public wishing to speak are to fill out one speaker card for each agenda item on
which they wish to speak and present it to the Board secretary **before** the item is called.

**Time Limit for Speakers.** Speakers addressing the Board will be limited to one (1) minute of speaking time for each
agenda item except during general public comment period which is limited to two (2) minutes per speaker. (For
certain agenda items, speakers will have two (2) minutes each.) The Chairperson, with the approval of a majority of
the Board, may for good cause extend any speaker's time by increments of up to one (1) minute.

**Brown Act.** These rules shall be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the Ralph M. Brown Act, California
Government Code Section § 54950 et seq.

**STANDARDS OF CONDUCT.** Speakers are expected to behave in an orderly manner and to refrain from personal
attacks or use of profanity or language that may incite violence.

All persons present at Board meetings are expected to behave in an orderly manner and to refrain from disrupting the
meeting, interfering with the rights of others to address the Board and/or interfering with the conduct of business by
the Board.

In the event that any speaker does not comply with the foregoing requirements, or if a speaker does not address the
specific item under consideration, the speaker may be ruled out of order, their speaking time forfeited and the
Chairperson may call upon the next speaker.

The Board, by majority vote, may order the removal from the meeting of any speaker or audience member continuing
to behave in a disruptive manner after being warned by the Chairperson regarding their behavior. Section 403 of the
California Penal Code states as follows: “Every person who, without authority of law, willfully disturbs or breaks up
any assembly or meeting that is not unlawful in its character, other than an assembly or meeting referred to in
Section 302 of the Penal Code or Section 18340 of the Elections Code, is guilty of a misdemeanor.”

**VOTING AND DISPOSITION OF ITEMS** – Most items require a majority vote of the entire membership of the Board
(3 members). When debate on an item is completed, the Board President will instruct the Secretary to "call the roll".
Every member present must vote for or against each item; abstentions are not permitted unless there is a Conflict of
Interest for which the Board member is obliged to abstain from voting. The Secretary will announce the votes on each
item. Any member of the Board may move to "reconsider" any vote on any item on the agenda, except to adjourn,
suspend the Rules, or where an intervening event has deprived the Board of jurisdiction, providing that said member
originally voted on the prevailing side of the item. The motion to "reconsider" shall only be in order once during the
meeting, and once during the next regular meeting. The member requesting reconsideration shall identify for all
members present the Agenda number and subject matter previously voted upon. A motion to reconsider is not
debatable and shall require an affirmative vote of three members of the Board.

When the Board has failed by sufficient votes to approve or reject an item, and has not lost jurisdiction over the
matter, or has not caused it to be continued beyond the next regular meeting, the issue is again placed on the next
agenda for the following meeting for the purpose of allowing the Board to again vote on the matter.

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Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m. Commissioners present were Gross, García, Dicker, Finsten and Wolfson. Also present from Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) Board Secretary Johana Moran, General Manager (GM) Brenda Barnette; and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Laurie Rittenberg.

Commissioner Gross opened the meeting, introduced staff and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS (Item taken out of order, held after Item II. 2)

1. Barking Dog Noise Case: BD 172169 SLA
   Respondents: Sylvia Hercules and Ashley Martinez
   South Los Angeles Animal Care and Control: Lieutenant Jose Gonzalez
   Complaining Witness: Miranda Fawn Sattaar El

   Testimony was taken from Respondent, Sylvia Hercules, who initially argued that she disagreed with all the findings and alleged that the witness, Miranda Sattaar El, provoked the dogs and made false statements. Commissioner Garcia reminded Ms. Hercules on the appeal form Ms. Hercules stated that the issue with the hearing was that she was unable to review the audio and visual evidence and that she wanted to appeal certain items of the Terms, Conditions and Restrictions (T&C’s), specifically, the curfew and confinement requirements. Ms. Hercules confirmed and stated that the curfew conflicts with the family’s schedule and she does not have the financial resources to install the additional fencing that would be required to further confine the dogs within her already fully fenced property. Testimony was taken from Witness, Miranda Sattaar El, including that the dogs continue bark excessively despite the anti-bark collars, which appear to not be functioning. Commissioner Wolfson asserted that all that is being appealed is certain items of the T&C’s and he asked Ms. Sattaar El if she saw any problem with changing the curfew. Ms. Sattaar El responded that she questions why the Respondent is requesting that and added that the dogs are not being kept away from her property line as the respondent was ordered to. Commissioner Wolfson referred Ms. Sattaar El to take that issue up with the Department. Commissioner Gross interjected that it is important for the Board to consider compliance with the orders when making the determination and he invited Ms Sattaar El to elaborate on her testimony and she responded. ACA Rittenberg counseled the Commissioners on what constitutes new evidence. Commissioner Wolfson stated that he finds no reason to not uphold the
General Manager’s decision. Ms. Hercules repeated that the curfew conflicts with her family’s schedule and caregiving needs. Commissioner Gross laid out the consequences if Ms. Hercules does not comply with the T&C’s. Commissioner Garcia offered that there are ways Ms. Hercules may seek financial assistance for the additional fencing. Ms. Hercules alleged that the dogs are provoked to bark by Ms. Sattaar El and other people. Commissioner Wolfson commented Ms. Hercules’s statements served to confirm that the Hearing Officer made a decision based on the evidence; there is no reason for the Board to overturn the decision. Commissioner Wolfson added that it is important to be good neighbors and good dog owners. Commissioner Wolfson advised Ms. Hercules that she might want to find another home for the dogs so that she has the time to focus on her family and other pressing needs; the dogs can be in a home where they can truly be attended to. The Board found that the evidence does support the decision of the General Manager.

Commissioner Dicker made a motion to uphold the decision of the General Manager with the existing Terms, Conditions and Restrictions. Commissioner Gross seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Public Comment:
None.

2. Barking Dog Noise Case: BD 171210 WV (item taken out of order, held after Item I.3)
Respondent: Julie Ann Apparis
West Valley Animal Care and Control: Lieutenant Lorna Esparza
Complaining Witness: Michael Wischhusen

Testimony was taken from Respondent, Julie Ann Apparis, and her spouse, Mark Apparis, who alleged that the Complaining Witness, Michael Wischhusen, made false accusations; they did not receive notice of the first hearing due to frequent mail mix-ups and were only made aware of the second hearing because that notice was hand-delivered by someone from the shelter. Ms. Apparis spoke about measures taken to abate her dogs’ barking, including professional training and anti-bark collars. Commissioner Gross asked why Ms. Apparis feels that the Terms, Conditions and Restrictions (T&C’s) are unfair to which the respondents replied that there are many dogs in their neighborhood and all dogs bark. Commissioner Gross asked Respondents to state why the T&C’s are burdensome. Mr. Apparis replied that Mr. Wischhusen is the type of person who wants to fight. Commissioner Garcia asked for an explanation of the letters from other neighbors and Ms. Apparis provided information and continued with testimony. Complaining Witness, Michael Wischhusen, was not present but submitted a written statement. Commissioner Gross read part of the statement regarding the time of day when the barking starts and lack of anti-barking collars. Ms. Apparis refuted Mr. Wischhusen’s statements and asserted that she is in compliance of the T&C’s. Commissioner Wolfson asked Ms. Apparis to state what type of anti-bark collar she uses on her dogs and Ms. Apparis admitted to not knowing. Commissioner Wolfson remarked that if Ms. Apparis is trying to convince the Board that she is using the collars, it might be more convincing if she knew what they are. Ms. Apparis explained that the dog trainer recommended that she get the dogs to stop barking by clapping her hands and continued to assert that she does use the collars. Commissioner Gross
informed Respondents that they are not telling the Board why the T&C's are burdensome. Respondents acknowledged that the T&C's are not burdensome and stated that they are abiding by the T&C's to the best of their ability.

**Commissioner Wolfson** made a motion to uphold the decision of the General Manager of Terms, Conditions and Restrictions. **Commissioner Gross** seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

**Commissioner Gross** cautioned Respondents of the consequences of not complying with the T&C's, including license revocation and losing the right to own dogs.

Public Comment:
None.

3. **Dangerous Animal Case: DA 171391 WV** *(Item taken out of order, held after Item I.1)*

   Respondent: Neda Eivazmohammadi and Matthew Ryan Roysner
   West Valley Animal Care and Control: Lieutenant Lorna Esparza
   Complaining Witness: Gavin Grogan, Shannon Grogan, Gina Vergara and Angelica Velasco De Vergara

The Respondents, Neda Eivazmohammadi and Matthew Roysner, were represented by legal counsel, Adrienne Hewitt. Testimony was taken from Ms. Hewitt who argued that the result of the hearing was extreme and not supported by the evidence; alleged that some evidence was not entirely truthful. **Commissioner Wolfson** remarked that Ms. Hewitt appears to be ignoring the fact that Respondents’ dogs killed a dog. Ms. Hewitt replied that it’s a terrible incident, her clients tried to offer their condolences and she stated that these things happen. **Commissioner Gross** admonished Ms. Hewitt that Respondents’ dogs came onto the neighbor’s property, killed another dog and he does not hear any remorse or concern about that. **Commissioner Gross** asked Ms. Hewitt to clarify the history of the dogs’ spay/neuter and licensing status and Ms. Hewitt provided information and continued with testimony. **ACA Rittenberg** counseled the Commissioners that a certain amount of discretion is available, especially in a case like this, it is relevant if Respondents have made significant changes to prevent such incidents from occurring again; the rules in these hearings are loose. Testimony was taken from Complaining Witnesses, Gavin Grogan and Gina Vergara regarding prior incidents of Respondents’ dogs escaping, breaking into their property and the attack resulting in the death of Mr. Grogan’s dog. Brief testimony was taken from the owner of Respondents’ home, Scott Roysner, who argued that they were not notified that there was a problem with the fence and that ownership of the fence is split 50/50 between Ms. Vergara and him. The Board discussed the merits of the appeal, the evidence provided to the Hearing Examiner and the grounds supporting the General Manager’s determination. **Commissioner Dicker** found the General Manager’s decision to be unsubstantiated by the evidence and that the circumstances do not warrant having the dogs removed from the City or taken from their owners.

**Commissioner Wolfson** made a motion to uphold the General Manager’s decision to revoke licenses for dogs Bandit and Bear. **Commissioner Gross** seconded and the motion was approved by a vote of 4-1.

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Public Comment:
None.

4. Dangerous Animal Case: DA 172412 SLA *(Item taken out of order, held after Item II.3.A)*
Respondent: Alex Maradiaga and Norma Cordova
South Los Angeles Animal Care and Control: Lieutenant Jose Gonzalez
Complaining Witness: Violet Galeano and Gaudy Galeano

Testimony was taken from Respondent, Norma Cordova, who argued that the decision of the General Manager was not supported by the evidence because nobody witnessed the death of the Galeano's dog; and added that she has installed additional fencing to confine her dogs and ensure that another incident does not occur again. Respondent Alex Maradiaga was also present. Testimony was taken from Complaining Witness, Violet Galeano. Complaining Witness Gaudy Galeano was not present. Ms. Galeano recounted prior incidents of Respondents’ dogs escaping, entering the Galeanos’ property and killing various pets belonging to the Galeanos and the most recent attack that resulted in the death of Ms. Galeano’s dog, Cringer. Commissioner Garcia asked Ms. Galeano if there were witnesses that saw the Respondents’ dogs during the attack. Ms Galeano confirmed that her niece and nephew witnessed the attack and explained that they had to go to school today and could not attend. In rebuttal, Ms. Cordova recounted her attempts to ameliorate the situation by offering Ms. Galeano a new puppy. Ms. Cordova testified on prior incidents and the animals involved. The Board discussed the merits of the appeal, the evidence provided to the Hearing Examiner and the grounds supporting the General Manager’s determination.

Commissioner Dicker made a motion to uphold the decision of the General Manager to revoke licenses for dogs Max, Chiquitin and Bella. Commissioner Garcia seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Public Comment:
None.

II. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1. PUBLIC COMMENT *(Item taken out of order, held first)*

None.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL COMMENTS - (Discussion with Neighborhood Council representatives on Neighborhood Council Resolutions or Community Impact Statements filed with the City Clerk which relate to any agenda item listed or being considered on this agenda for the Board of Animal Services Commissioners)

Jeffrey Mausner identified himself as a Board member and Second Vice President of the Tarzana Neighborhood Council (TNC), Chair of the TNC Animal Welfare Committee (AWC), the TNC and the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils (VANC) liaison to LAAS. Mr. Mausner provided an updated report on the vacancy status of the various kennels at the West Valley Animal Shelter and reminded the
Board that, pursuant to the resolutions of the TNC, no healthy, adoptable animals
should be killed while any kennels are available. He commented that the official start
of no-kill is one month away; the neighborhood councils are very happy about that
and are watching it closely. Mr. Mausner requested that GM Barnette provide an
update on the status of the Jefferson Park Shelter contract with rescue organizations
and the expected opening date of the facility. Additionally, he requested confirmation
that the statistical standard of no-kill used by LAAS is 90% of all animals entering the
shelters, with no exceptions.

GM Barnette arrived later in the meeting and did not have an opportunity to respond
to Mr. Mausner’s requests.

Public Comment:
None.

3. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for Meeting of November 14, 2017.  (Item taken out of order, held
after Item I.2)

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to approve the minutes of November 14,
2017. Commissioner Garcia seconded and the motion was approved by a
unanimous vote of 5-0.

Public Comment:
None.

4. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER  (Item tabled to the next meeting)

5. COMMISSIONERS’ ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS  (Item tabled to the
next meeting)

6. Board Reports

A. Oral Update on the Department’s Phone System Problems and Collaboration
with the Information Technology Agency (ITA).  (Item tabled to a future meeting)

B. Board Report on Feeding Vegan Food to Shelter Dogs.  (Item taken out of order, held after
Item I.4)

Commissioner Gross asked Board Secretary Moran to state the number of
speaker cards received for this item and Ms. Moran responded that were 14
speaker cards. Commissioner Gross asked for input from the other
Commissioners on time allotment for speakers and added that he had agreed to
allow two minutes but it may need to be restricted to one minute per speaker.
Commissioner Wolfson asked if this is an action item. GM Barnette stated that
the item was written incorrectly on the agenda as a Board Report and does not
say it was an action item, which both Commissioner Gross and she thought it
was. Commissioner Wolfson stated that he was informed it was an action item
and the community was informed it was an action item. ACA Rittenberg
counseled that it is not and the Board cannot move on this today. GM Barnette
stated that we can hold a discussion and then let the Commission make it a

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voting item at the next meeting. **Commissioner Wolfson** asserted that he was informed it was a voting action and there are a lot of people in attendance who took days off from work so they could be here to testify and be part of this, including veterinarians who have taken days off at great expense and one of them drove from San Luis Obispo. **Commissioner Wolfson** stated that he was informed by the President of this Commission that this was an action item, he passed that on to the community, so this has to be an action item. **ACA Rittenberg** reiterated that it is not. **Commissioner Gross** declared that it is not. **Commissioner Wolfson** noted that the Board Report states that it is and the Board Report is a public item. **ACA Rittenberg** countered that it is not good enough; opined that we would be in jeopardy if someone sues the Department or the City because we are in violation of the Brown Act by voting on something that is clearly not an action item; concluded that we must follow the rules. **Commissioner Dicker** inquired what can be done to honor the promises that were made and to give due to this motion. **Commissioner Gross** stated that the Board can discuss this as if it were an action item; added that the Board cannot make a decision on it. **Commissioner Dicker** inquired if the Board can do everything possible, except vote, and then vote at the next meeting. **Commissioners Garcia** mentioned that something similar was done before. **Commissioner Wolfson** stated that he appreciates everyone’s efforts to push this along and does not doubt the good will of anybody in the room, however, if this was the City’s mistake he is concerned about making a decision that is based on the City covering itself; if this was the City’s mistake and someone has an issue with it, then it was the City’s mistake. **ACA Rittenberg** responded that someone can sue; if someone thought that the Board was not going to vote or that they were going to vote at another time and the Board moved to vote one way or another they can go to court and invalidate the action. **Commissioner Dicker** inquired if testimony can be heard and the discussion be held today and then do the minimally required action at the next meeting, such as additional public comment. **Commissioner Gross** interjected that we can take testimony and then, without diminishing any of the testimony or the impact of this hearing today, we can continue the item to the next meeting for action. **Commissioner Wolfson** surmised that, next time, there would be public comment, testimony and the opportunity to change minds; opined that this is really an issue. **Commissioner Gross** stated that, unfortunately, the Board does not have a choice in the matter. **Commissioner Wolfson** mentioned that if the Board is going to vote on this item next time, according to the Brown Act, there is going to have to be public comment. **ACA Rittenberg** agreed. **Commissioner Wolfson** stated that it seems like the Board is boxed in and, although there appears to be no ill will, it is frustrating for the community and the people present. **Commissioner Dicker** stated for the record that he agrees with Commissioner Wolfson and the other members of the Board followed suit. **Commissioner Gross** asked that the Board determine the time allotted for the speakers and asked for a count of the speaker cards. **Ms. Moran** replied that 15 speaker cards were received for this item. **Commissioner Wolfson** spoke on the group of experts expected to testify today, including Moby, Cheri Shankar, Lisa Bloom, three veterinarians and asked that those people who are experts speak first; he...
thanked those speaking in favor of this proposal and asked that they keep their remarks short. Commissioner Wolfson commented that if the allotted time is two minutes and people want to make use of the full two minutes, he is in support of that. Commissioner Wolfson encouraged everybody to understand and be respectful of the amount of time.

Commissioner Gross noted the arrival of ITA staff (for Item 6.A). Commissioner Wolfson asserted that the Board is going to hear this item first. Commissioner Gross asked AGM Brown if ITA staff is able to come back. AGM Brown was in the audience and inaudibly confirmed that they would be standing by to present item 6.A.

Commissioner Gross inquired about the number of expert witnesses. Commissioner Wolfson stated that he has not been able to communicate with the group but believes that there are three veterinarians and Ms. Bloom and Ms. Shankar; he asked to revisit the topic after he introduces this item. Commissioner Gross clarified that the Board needs to get an idea of how much time to allot. Commissioner Wolfson declared that, in the history of Animal Services, the Board has never before put any time limit on experts; he asked that the experts be brief. Commissioner Gross asked if the other Commissioners were fine with that and none voiced objections. Commissioner Gross indicated that the item will commence as a staff report and asked if the Department's Chief Veterinarian was present. Commissioner Wolfson interjected that he would like to start by introducing the item, then the staff will speak and then the experts. Commissioner Gross stated that, procedurally, the Department goes first and then Commissioner Wolfson can speak. Commissioner Wolfson contended that in every hearing he has ever been in, the Commissioner who has an item talks first and he intends to do that; he asked if anybody objects, besides Commissioner Gross. Commissioner Dicker recommended that procedure and precedent notwithstanding, Commissioner Wolfson be allowed to address this item first, even if such is out of order. Commissioner Garcia agreed. Commissioner Wolfson thanked Commissioner Dicker.

Commissioner Wolfson opened his presentation with the premise that the environment is a key and important issue that affects all of our lives that, in this City, the case is already made that every individual, organization and department of the government needs to do everything in their power to protect the environment. Commissioner Wolfson pointed to the raising and killing of animals for having a disastrous impact on the environment; the consumption of meat and dairy products is the number one producer of deforestation, greenhouse gases, dead zones in our oceans and the number one user of water. Commissioner Wolfson relayed that livestock are responsible for one-third of all fresh water consumption on this planet; livestock occupy 45 percent of all usable land on this planet; every day, world-wide, humans drink five billion gallons of water and eat 21 billion pounds of food, while cows drink 45 billion gallons of water and eat 135 billion pounds of food every day. Citing Worldwatch, a non-partisan environmental research institute, Commissioner Wolfson stated that even if we were to eliminate the use of all fossil fuels on this planet, we will still pollute our atmosphere beyond its capacity to heal by the year 2030 simply by continuing our current consumption of meat and dairy. Commissioner Wolfson stated that each of us can make our own choices but when we get together as a
group, especially in organizations like the Department of Animal Services, we have to embrace the fact that the raising and killing of animals for food purposes must only be done if we have absolutely no other choice. Commissioner Wolfson relayed that the Department of Animal Services provides 336,000 pounds of animal-based dog food to the dogs in our shelters every year; based on the brand of food purchased, at an annual cost of over $300,000, our choice is responsible for the deaths of over 20,000 chickens, over 10,000 turkeys and over 1,000 lambs ever year. Commissioner Wolfson argued that feeding meat to omnivorous dogs means choosing to kill 31,000 animals a year; animals that, if any one of them wandered into one of our shelters, would be given the utmost care and respect. Commissioner Wolfson noted that we have 33,000 dogs in our shelters in a given year and we are killing virtually the same number of animals just to feed the ones we have. Commissioner Wolfson added that feeding meat to our dogs is not healthy for the dogs; the brand of food we provide to them, Canidae Life Stages dog food, does not even list meat as an ingredient, it’s chicken meal, turkey meal, lamb meal and “meal” means the worst by-products of these slaughtered animals; it means parts and components that are unfit for human consumption, including diseased lesions. Commissioner Wolfson stated that he does not question the good intentions and commitment to the welfare of companion animals of Chief Veterinarian Jeremy Prupas, however, is deeply disturbed by Dr. Prupas’s board report. Commissioner Wolfson commented that Dr. Prupas’s report is impossible to scrutinize effectively and Dr. Prupas’s opposition to this proposal is based on phone calls with three unnamed veterinarians and a conversation with an unnamed pet food representative; besides a conclusion that does not cite a study, fact or witness that can be questioned and that clearly does not reflect the cutting-edge research that is available in this field, Dr. Prupas states that one of the reasons for rejecting this proposal is that reducing the amount of animal flesh and increasing fiber fed to dogs will increase the amount of dog waste our staff will have to clean up. Commissioner Wolfson stated that it appears that the LAAS Chief Veterinarian is advocating the killing of 31,000 animals a year to feed our omnivorous dogs in order to constipate them, so that they will produce less solid waste. Commissioner Wolfson admitted that he is not a veterinarian and spoke about his professional experience performing research and making recommendations resulting in billions of dollars of appropriations; he never would have been able to make such a recommendation based on three or four phone calls; he’s had to cite studies; in this situation, every study he has reviewed states that dogs can do well or better on plant-based diets. Commissioner Wolfson mentioned that three veterinarians are present to testify, including one who works for Best Friends, and they’ll say that Dr. Prupas’s information is outdated, dogs are omnivores; over the last 30,000 to 40,000 years they have adapted to be as omnivorous as humans; many, if not most, of the longest living dogs are vegan dogs. Commissioner Wolfson stated that feeding dogs a plant-based diet eliminates a huge host of health concerns, allergies and cancers; he brought studies that he can cite, that can be reviewed, understood and that can hold up to scrutiny. Commissioner Wolfson mentioned that Dr. Prupas, who he has not met but who he respects, will speak soon and that Dr. Prupas’s testimony should be taken with a grain of salt; then we will listen to feedback from experts in our community who came here today on their own dime and on their own time, with tremendous expertise when it comes to diet. Commissioner Wolfson speculated that Dr. Prupas will say that dogs in shelters have unique needs, that
changing diets is challenging, that sick or ill dogs have special needs, pregnant dogs and puppies have special needs and stated that Dr. Prupas will be entirely right; however, Dr. Prupas’s points have no relationship to his conclusion that they should be fed meat instead of plant-based food. **Commissioner Wolfson** reported that many veterinarians prescribe plant-based food for dogs that are ill as a means of ruling out allergens to the poisons and chemicals contained in the meat-based food. **Commissioner Wolfson** agreed with Dr. Prupas’s report that vegan food currently available under City contracts would be more expensive; announced that he is in receipt of two commitment letters from nationally regarded and recognized plant-based dog food companies who are willing to match the price of $0.87/lb that we pay for meat-based dog food; additionally, Marc Ching’s foundation is willing to beat the price and save LAAS thousands of dollars a year. **Commissioner Wolfson** proposed to empower the Department of Animal Services to negotiate with these companies to obtain a price for plant-based dog food that is in the same range we currently pay for meat-based dog food; the Chief Veterinarian can prescribe anything he wants for ill dogs or individual dogs that do not adapt well to a particular diet; he added that this a fair and decent proposal, it is better for the environment, it is healthier for dogs and would be either cost neutral or save money. **Commissioner Wolfson** cited the Department’s Mission Statement Values and Service Theme from the LAAS website and spoke about how this proposal is in more in keeping with them than our current practices. **Commissioner Wolfson** addressed the Board and asked for their support.

**Commissioner Gross** remarked that Commissioner Wolfson may be the first Commissioner to receive a standing ovation and thanked him for his passion and commitment to this issue; invited Dr. Prupas to speak.

**Chief Veterinarian Jeremy Prupas** commented that Commissioner Wolfson’s heart is in the right place and a lot of what he said is true. Dr. Prupas recounted his research process, including that he spoke with nutritionists from veterinary schools, a clinical veterinary toxicologist who does a lot of work with pet food companies, shelter medicine specialists; he asked them if there is science behind it and if there is an ability for this to be done safely for the animals. Dr. Prupas reported that none of the experts he spoke with thought it was a good idea for reasons of the nutritional content the foods; acknowledged that Commissioner Wolfson explained cost is not an issue, anymore. Dr. Prupas spoke on the issue with solid waste, including that the shelters are understaffed, the ACT’s have a lot to do, new dogs switching to a vegan diet will cause diarrhea. **Commissioner Dicker** asked if switching between meat-based diets also causes diarrhea. Dr. Prupas replied that it is much less; reported that, over the years, the population of dogs that come into the shelters deal with it well enough that there has not been any widespread diarrhea; asserted that it is a big issue with this proposal. **Commissioner Wolfson** contended that Dr. Prupas has not named any of the people he talked with; offered to hand Dr. Prupas copies of the studies from his own research and evidence; recounted experience switching his own dogs’ food from meat-based to vegan and reported that they did not get diarrhea. Dr. Prupas stated that Commissioner Wolfson is looking at this issue from an individual dog population; supports anyone who wants to feed vegan diets to their own dogs; we’re dealing with a completely different population of animals in the shelters. Dr. Prupas added that there are all sorts of animals in all kinds of

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conditions, some injured and some are stressed. Commissioner Wolfson interjected that the presence of meat contributes to that hysteria. Dr. Prupas opined that Commissioner Wolfson has no evidence of that. Commissioner Dicker asked if Dr. Prupas has evidence that placing dogs on a vegan diet would stress them out more than they already are in that environment. Dr. Prupas replied that he did not say that placing dogs on vegan diets would stress them out, in the past they fed vegan diets to the animals and it caused a lot of diarrhea. Commissioner Wolfson asked for the details. Dr. Prupas replied that a company comes in once a year for P.R. with vegan dog food. Commissioner Gross asked if any shelter in the nation provides vegan food to its animals and Dr. Prupas replied ‘no.’ Commissioner Gross stated that he is concerned that if dogs brought into the shelter are fed vegan diets, post-adoption they may not be provided vegan diets due to the cost. Commissioner Wolfson interjected that he’s saved a lot of money by having a vegan dog. Commissioner Gross asked if any shelter in the nation provides vegan food to its animals and Dr. Prupas replied ‘no.’ Commissioner Gross stated that he is concerned that if dogs brought into the shelter are fed vegan diets, post-adoption they may not be provided vegan diets due to the cost. Commissioner Wolfson interjected that he’s saved a lot of money by having a vegan dog. Commissioner Gross asked if any shelter in the nation provides vegan food to its animals and Dr. Prupas replied ‘no.’ Commissioner Gross stated that he is concerned that if dogs brought into the shelter are fed vegan diets, post-adoption they may not be provided vegan diets due to the cost. Commissioner Wolfson interjected that he’s saved a lot of money by having a vegan dog. Commissioner Gross asked if any shelter in the nation provides vegan food to its animals and Dr. Prupas replied ‘no.’ Commissioner Gross stated that he is concerned that if dogs brought into the shelter are fed vegan diets, post-adoption they may not be provided vegan diets due to the cost.

Dr. Prupas shared Commissioner Gross’s concerns and stated that it usually takes a week for a change in diet to take hold and get the intestines used to accepting the new diet; expects that post-adoption there would be diarrhea because it’s a big change to go from vegan to meat-based. Commissioner Garcia asked if that is always a possibility when you change between meat-based diets, too. Dr. Prupas confirmed and added that with the food we currently use, he does not know of anyone calling to report diarrhea post-adoption and he does not know if that would change if we fed a vegan diet. Commissioner Finsten asked if Dr. Prupas would be willing to provide the professional background information on the experts he spoke with. Dr. Prupas replied that he would but he does not want to give names that people could start attacking on social media. Commissioner Wolfson asked for the names from Dr. Prupas. Commissioner Finsten stated that it is an issue of legitimacy as opposed to giving people opportunities to attack. Commissioner Dicker recommended that the Board let it go to the weight of Dr. Prupas’s testimony. Commissioner Wolfson agreed. The Board discussed the order of speakers and time allotment.

Guest Speaker Jane Velez-Mitchell identified herself as a journalist and author and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that factory farming is institutionalized torture and studies show that it is not good for the health of the animals; she feeds her own dogs a vegan diet. Ms. Velez-Mitchell stated that meat is not sustainable, the world is waking up and Los Angeles needs to lead the way forward.

Guest Speaker Armaiti May, D.V.M. provided her professional background and spoke in favor of the proposal by citing various studies that indicate that dogs are omnivores and can thrive on nutritionally complete plant-based diets, the benefits of plant-based diets and the harmful ingredients and toxic chemicals that go into commercial meat-based dog food. Dr. May stated that a transition to a plant-based diet should be a gradual change to prevent diarrhea.
Guest Speaker Sherstin Rosenberg, D.V.M. provided her professional background and experience working with humane societies and shelters and spoke in favor of the proposal. Dr. Rosenberg cited research and personal experience for her support of feeding dogs a vegan diet and provided the names and qualifications of two other veterinarians that approve of vegan diets for dogs.

Guest Speaker Daniela Castillo, D.V.M. provided her professional background as a veterinarian working in shelters. Dr. Castillo asserted that livestock is the number one reason for the environmental disasters we are experiencing and removing meat-based diets from shelters will contribute to the health of our planet and our future. Commissioner Gross inquired if the shelter Dr. Castillo works for feeds a vegan diet to their dogs. Dr. Castillo replied that they do not and is optimistic that they will be open to it once she brings it up; she has only worked there for two months.

Guest Speaker Richard Hall, publicly known as Moby, identified himself as a homeowner and business owner in Los Angeles, spoke in favor of the proposal and found it suspect that Dr. Prupas did not cite any studies or peer-reviewed journals. Mr. Hall added that, prior to being brought into the shelter, dogs on the street may have been eating dead rats and garbage, to say feeding them a vegan diet is going to compromise their health and well-being strains credulity. Prompted by Commissioner Wolfson to say more, Mr. Hall added that Los Angeles is known as a bastion of progressive thought and culture; if we adopt this, it’s just one more thing that proves to the world that Los Angeles really is the progressive capital of the world.

Guest Speaker Lisa Bloom identified herself as a civil rights attorney with a firm in Los Angeles and spoke in favor of the proposal, including her personal experience discovering vegan diets are healthier for people and animals. Ms. Bloom stated that her dogs never got diarrhea from the vegan diet and her veterinarian told her that her dog recovered from an injury more quickly after the vegan diet. Ms. Bloom stated that this is an issue of compassion.

Guest Speaker Amy Jean Davis identified herself as an organizer for the group Los Angeles Animal Save and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that she has seen firsthand the tumors that go into some of the dog food; the cost of Natural Balance vegan dog food is the same price as the Canidae fed to the dogs. Ms. Davis spoke on the increased risk of disease for non-vegans and urged the Board to be pioneers and consider going against the social norms.

Guest Speaker Prabhat Gautam spoke in favor of the proposal, including that the ingredients in meat-based dog food include road kill, diseased animals, expired meats from grocery stores, plastic and dead dogs and cats that are euthanized in shelters. Mr. Gautam urged the Board to set a minimum standard of care for food for animals in the care of the City.

Guest Speaker Marc Ching identified himself as the founder of Animal Hope and Wellness and spoke in favor for the proposal, including his experience working with animal food manufacture and knowledge in treatment of illness in people and animals; plant based diets have enzymes added. Mr. Ching spoke about the
shelter he runs where he feeds them vegan diets. Prompted by Commissioner Wolfson, Mr. Ching spoke about his letter of intent and stated that he can match or beat the price to provide LAAS with vegan dog food.

Guest Speaker Cheri Shankar spoke in favor of the proposal, including that Los Angeles can be the humane and environmentally conscious city that it claims to be. Ms. Shankar cited studies demonstrating that vegetarian and vegan diets can meet the nutritional requirements of cats and dogs; she feels that the food fed at shelters was chosen due to cost and not nutritional value.

Commissioner Wolfson stated that the Board and attendees were informed that this would be an action item and he believes that the people are entitled to know what the outcome is likely to be and how Commissioners intend to vote. Commissioner Gross replied that it may be inappropriate. ACA Rittenberg confirmed that it is inappropriate; it is like voting. Commissioner Wolfson argued that it is not fair and the community deserves to know. Commissioner Dicker mentioned that the intent may be evident during the Board’s discussion of the matter. ACA Rittenberg reiterated that it is inappropriate and counseled that no one is entitled to know, or demand to know, the evolution of the thinking process of the Board members; the Board may have a discussion. Commissioner Wolfson contended that the purpose of hearings is to know the Commissioners’ intent. ACA Rittenberg replied that asking for a commitment is not appropriate. Commissioner Wolfson cautioned that it will open up the City to vulnerability if opinions change between now and the next meeting. Commissioner Gross interjected that opinions are entitled to change until the Board gets to the vote; it is not going to happen today and he has never heard of doing that. Commissioner Gross added that people are welcome to come to the next meeting to see how the Commissioners vote but no mock vote will take place now. Commissioner Gross asked for a count of the speaker cards and Ms. Moran replied that there are 11; he proposed allowing two minutes per speaker. Commissioner Dicker spoke in favor of allowing whatever time is deemed necessary.

Commissioner Finsten inquired if the other agenda items would be postponed or heard after this item. Commissioner Gross inquired if ITA staff left and if they are coming back and Ms. Moran replied that AGM Brown and ITA are still on standby. Commissioner Gross quickly reviewed the list of pending agenda items. Commissioner Finsten suggested that ITA be asked to come back at a future meeting in order to spend some time to fully go in depth on the situation with the phones; she would rather have more time to concentrate on this item; asked that the Department apologize to ITA on the Board’s behalf. Commissioner Gross mentioned that the report with ITA would probably be delayed until January and Commissioner Finsten agreed. Commissioner Gross announced that the next Board meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at Ramona Hall.

Commissioner Dicker offered 90 seconds limits for speakers as a compromise. Commissioner Wolfson responded that one minute should work and speakers may have a little more time if they need to finish making a point.

Public Comment:

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Phyllis Daugherty: Stated that she has been a vegetarian all of her life and spoke against the proposal, including that studies tend to tell us what we want to know; our animal shelters should not be an experiment of this massive proportion. Ms. Daugherty added that Dr. Prupas has a plan that works for all the shelters; the animals do well, they gain weight if they are too thin and are as healthy as can be coming from an animal shelter. She concluded that if the Board wants to make a change, it should be tried with a small number of kennels.

Sarah Segal: Presented her beagle ‘Boomer’ and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that she adopted Boomer from a shelter at five years old, he is now 12 ½ and is thriving on a vegan diet. Ms. Segal identified herself as a resident of Los Angeles and business owner in Atlanta; owns Atlanta Dog Spa. She claimed to sell more vegan dog food than other and urged the Board to consider all the animals that die in order to feed dogs at shelters.

Dhun May: Identified herself as a semi-retired teacher and spoke in favor of the proposal, comparing it to the successful LAUSD Board approved plant-based food service pilot program; she stated approving this proposal can cause a ripple effect. Ms. May spoke on environmental factors.

Kimberly Berthet: Identified herself as a molecular and cellular biologist and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that the number one cause of climate change is animal agriculture; stated that animals are sentient beings; spoke on use of antibiotics in animal agriculture causing the next “super bug”; mentioned that plants contain protein.

Emek Felekoglu: Identified herself as an animal rights activist, long-time vegan and spoke in favor of the proposal, including how animals are mistreated; she feeds her own cats a half-vegan diet; her friends feed their dogs vegan diets and the dogs are thriving. Ms. Felekoglu feels confident that the Department can find ways to support adopters to continue feeding vegan diets.

Sica Schmitz: Identified herself as a vegan-fashion business owner operating out of lofts directly across from the North Central Animal Shelter and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that sustainability and veganism are very important to her; she takes pride in working in a progressive and sustainable city.

Alison Taylor: Spoke in favor of the proposal, including her experience with feeding vegan diets to shelter dogs she rescued and the positive results. Ms. Taylor urged the Board to do the compassionate thing.

Lisa Karlan: Identified herself as the co-producer of Lunch Break Live with Jane Velez-Mitchell and as a teacher of nutrition for Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that PCRM successfully sued the US Department of Agriculture on several occasions; the food pyramid guidelines were not supported by science, six of the eleven people on the committee responsible for the guidelines had ties to the industry. Ms. Karlan spoke about her experience feeding a vegan diet to her dog and that there is no difference in proteins from plants and animals.
Lisa Lange: Identified herself as a member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that it is not an experiment anymore to feed vegan food to dogs; key is to get vegan dog food companies to match the price; it’s better for the dogs; these companies could provide a vegan starter kit.

Constantin Philippou: Identified himself as a street artist and spoke in favor of the proposal, including that most people love animals, dogs are omnivores and it is not necessary for dogs to eat meat. Mr. Philippou stated that it is better for the world to skip meat and give the dogs a different option.

Monique Lukens: Identified herself as a guest teacher with LAUSD and as a performer and spoke in favor of the proposal, including the positive effects she experienced when switching to a vegan diet. Ms. Lukens cited studies done on humans indicating a drop in violence; she stated that, anatomically, dogs and humans are both animals.

Guest Speaker Simone Reyes, Director of Television Development at Russell Simmons Def Pictures and Vice-President of Social Compassion in Legislation, spoke on the disconnect between animals called “pets” and animals called “food”; all animals have the same ability to feel fear, pain, loneliness and joy. Ms. Reyes stated that animal agriculture is arguably the number one cause of global warming and climate change, it is time California takes a lead in changing this reality before we are all forced to. She mentioned that being vegan is still a choice, yet, the World Health Organization lists meat as a carcinogen and the United Nations is begging people to switch to a plant-based diet; it will no longer be a choice, it will be a requirement. Ms. Reyes stated that animal shelters need to be a part of this fight to sustain our Earth. She spoke on her experience having vegan dogs.

Commissioner Wolfson repeated that Vdog and Halo are both matching the government subsidized low prices that LAAS is paying for meat-based food and made a case for feeding a vegan diet to shelter dogs. Commissioner Dicker stated that, with the points raised today and the research he found online, he is convinced that the dietary needs of dogs can be satisfied with a plant-based diet and spoke in favor of the proposal. Commissioner Finsten inquired about the procurement process and asked if the City can accept the offers from the vegan dog food companies; mentioned the City’s stringent procurement issues and that the budget for 2018 is already set. GM Barnette replied that the companies would have to submit their bids via the Business Assistance Virtual Network (BAVN) and when General Services gets ready to make another order, if the Board wants to go with a vegan diet, that would be the next order. GM Barnette added that the dogs would be fed the remaining food and transitioned to vegan food. ACA Rittenberg counseled that something like this, due to the large dollar value, would probably have to go through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Commissioner Finsten stated that it is important to understand that this is not an overnight change and that there is a budgetary impact. GM Barnette took a moment to explain the RFP process to the audience. Commissioner Finsten inquired if it is “all or nothing” for the vegan diet. GM Barnette replied that we would be consistent; posed an academic question for Dr. May regarding partial vegan diets for cats. Dr. May replied that there could be a combination of vegan
and non-vegan foods fed to the dogs as deemed appropriate and should be done gradually; cats are obligate carnivores, however, some cats can be successfully maintained on well balanced plant-based diet; is not suggesting that a vegan diet be implemented for shelter cats. Dr. May opined that dealing with a little loose stool and some diarrhea is small potatoes compared to having animals die from cancer; a vegan diet can make a huge different in an animal’s health. Commissioner Gross inquired about the price and bids for the vegan dog food. The Board, GM Barnette and ACA Rittenberg discussed the RFP and bidding process. Commissioner Garcia thanked everybody for coming and stated that one of the barriers, in her opinion, was cost; opined that it is overwhelming and humbling to have people stepping up for that cost; offered her support for this proposal. Commissioner Wolfson remarked that a majority of Commissioners have stated their support and urged the community to show up at the next meeting. Commissioner Dicker thanked everyone for attending and sharing their passion; thanked Commissioner Wolfson for organizing this and presenting an educational opportunity. Commissioner Gross announced that this item is continued to the next meeting on December 12, 2017 and tabled the other items on today’s agenda.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting ended at 12:21 p.m.
Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners

MEETING DATE: December 12, 2017  PREPARED BY: Brenda Barnette, General Manager

REPORT DATE: December 6, 2017

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO REPORT BACK WITH A FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS PRESENTING THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF PROVIDING AN ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN FEED CONTROL OFFICIALS (AAFCO) APPROVED, PLANT-BASED DIET FOR SHELTER DOGS

BOARD ACTIONS RECOMMENDED:

Instruct the Department to report back to the Commission with a feasibility analysis presenting the benefits, and risks, of providing an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) approved, plant-based diet for shelter dogs. The analysis should include:

A. Thorough, cited, scientific research and expert testimony assessing the nutritional pros and cons about AAFCO approved, plant-based diets for dogs.

B. Thorough, cited, scientific research about the impact of meat-based dog food on all animals, and the environment.

C. A thorough cost-benefit analysis that includes a five year cost projection, with the goal of identifying cost-neutral solutions, and recommended funding sources if additional funding is required.

D. Two potential options for a pilot plan designed to have minimal impact on shelters and dogs, conducted with oversight from an academic partner and information on how these pilots would fit into a full implementation plan.

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Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners
Subject: Recommendation to Report Back with a Feasibility Analysis Presenting the Benefits and Risks of Providing an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) Approved, Plant-Based Diet for Shelter Dogs

SUMMARY:

The Department of Animal Services has been asked to consider feeding shelter dogs a plant-based diet. We have heard from a few experts and numerous individuals who do not appear to be in agreement about which diet is the best for shelter dogs.

In order to make a significant policy recommendation, we need to evaluate the cost and benefits associated with changing our dogs’ diet. We believe that a thorough feasibility analysis should be conducted to determine if animal shelter dogs should be fed a plant-based diet. The analysis should include:

A. Thorough, cited, scientific research and expert testimony assessing the nutritional pros and cons about AAFCO approved, plant-based diets for dogs.

B. Thorough, cited, scientific research about the impact of meat-based dog food on all animals, and the environment.

C. A thorough cost-benefit analysis that includes a five year cost projection, with the goal of identifying cost-neutral solutions, and recommended funding sources if additional funding is required.

D. Two potential options for a pilot plan designed to have minimal impact on shelters and dogs, conducted with oversight from an academic partner and information on how these pilots would fit into a full implementation plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

TBD

Approved:

[Signature]
Brenda F. Barnette, General Manager
Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners
Subject: Recommendation to Report Back with a Feasibility Analysis Presenting the Benefits and Risks of Providing an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) Approved, Plant-Based Diet for Shelter Dogs

BOARD ACTION:

_____ Passed

Disapproved ______

_____ Passed with noted modifications

Continued ______

_____ Tabled

New Date ______