



## MINUTES

### BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday, February 14, 2005

9:00 a.m.

**CITY HALL**

**200 N. Spring St.**

**Room 1060**

**Los Angeles, CA 90012**



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Commissioners: Kathleen Riordan, President  
Alex Rubalcava, Vice President  
Erika Brunson  
Tariq Khero  
Deborah A. Knaan

### COMMISSION MEETING, 9:00 A.M.

The Commission meeting was called to order by Commissioner Riordan at 9:10 a.m. Present were Commissioners Brunson, Khero, Knaan, Riordan, and Rubalcava.

#### 1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

Mr. Guerdon Stuckey, General Manager, reported on the following items:

- Mr. Stuckey reported on the Save-a-sweetheart Program that was held at South Los Angeles Shelter on Saturday, February 12, 2005. Over 70 animals were adopted at the event.
- The groundbreaking for the new Harbor Shelter occurred on February 10, 2005.
- The two special needs dogs that were posted on the Department's website were adopted.
- The Department is working with a film from Germany to produce a documentary to be shown on European television.

#### Public Comment:

Scott Sorentino: Followed up regarding the Save-a-Sweetheart event at South Los Angeles Shelter.

#### 2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. Approval of Minutes for the meeting of January 10, 2005. A motion to accept and approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Rubalcava and seconded by Commissioner Khero. The motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

Approval of Minutes for the meeting of January 24, 2005. A motion to accept and approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Knaan and seconded by Commissioner Brunson. The motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

#### B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Brunson attended the Harbor Shelter groundbreaking and visited the Shelter afterward.

Commissioner Rubalcava attended the Save-a-Sweetheart event at South Los Angeles Shelter

Commissioner Riordan attended an awards event hosted by Voice of the Animals. Also attended the Coyote Task Force meeting in Councilman's Zines District.

Commissioner Knaan attended the Save-a-Sweetheart event at the South Los Angeles Shelter.

C. Consideration of Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Knaan requested that the issue of evidence dogs held at the Shelters be addressed regarding the length of time held.

Commissioner Riordan requested the mandatory spay and neuter of cats and dogs at pet shops be discussed. Also requested information on the traveling animal shows.

Commissioner Brunson and Knaan requested staffing for the new Spay and Neuter Clinics be added to the agenda.

Public Comment:

Phyllis Daughterty: An issue to mandate spay and neuter of cats and dogs at pet shops will not pass because it is unlawful to regulate private property.

**3. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS**

A. Update: February 26, 2005 Spay Day

The General Manager presented a report on the efforts being made to advertise the upcoming Spay Day events. Commissioner Knaan asked about efforts being made to reach the Spanish and Korean speaking communities. Commissioner Knaan also wants to get the word out that the law requires people to license their dogs and there are stiff penalties for those who don't.

Public Comment:

Scott Sorrentino: There is a need for the Department to advertise and promote Spay Day and other events in a more efficient manner. Events should be promoted far in advance of the event.

B. Update: Rabbit Fee Increase and Sterilization

Mary Carbajal, Management Analyst II reported that there were no funds available to pay for the sterilization of the animals. It was also unclear whether the \$50 fee would go for sterilization or some of the fee would be kept for administrative fees. Michelle Kelly reported that rescue groups are able to keep the cost of altering rabbit down because of special arrangements with several veterinarians who are willing to do the procedures for less than \$50. In 2003 the average cost of spay and neuter of rabbits was \$65. Ms. Kelly believes the program would pay for itself if the Department created a flexible program and allowed the use of specific vets. Ms. Carbajal also reported that, in addition to the cost, the Department has concerns regarding the transportation of rabbits by private parties. Most rabbit rescues are due to volunteers and rescue groups. The general public would rather get a rabbit from a pet store rather than a shelter. As a result the adoption of rabbits from the shelter is going to decline as most rescue groups have turned into collectors rather than rescuers. Commissioner Rubalcava asked how many rabbits entered the

shelters each year. Ms. Kelly indicated that the shelters handled approximately 700 rabbits annually. The big issue continues to be the transportation of a rabbit to the vet by a rescue group in-as-much as the Department does not always have the resources to accomplish the task. Commissioner Rubalcava suggested the Department work together with the City Attorney's Office, rabbit rescue groups to structure the fees and long term contracts in support of the program. Commissioner Brunson asked about the union question regarding the transportation of rabbits using private vehicles and volunteers. Commissioner Rubalcava indicated that a Board Report in a month.

Public Comment:

Sue Taylor: Came to support Michelle Kelly. This item has been around for a long time so it is important to finalize quickly.

Lisa Edmondson: Concerned over the lack of appreciation of the general public over rabbits.

Scott Sorrentino: This item should be fast-tracked.

Melanie Pozez: It important to wipe away the bureaucracy and make this happen.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Acknowledge the volunteers who handle rabbits. Refused to accept that the unions have to be involved in transportation issues.

Commissioner Riordan asked about not adopting rabbits during Easter time.

C. Motion: Reconsideration of RFP Language and Requirements for Spay and Neuter Van.

Commissioner Brunson rescued herself for this Item. The General Manager requested the Commission to reconsider the number of minimum surgeries approved at the last meeting and increase them from 3,500 to 4,000. In addition, a minimum of four days would remain. Commissioner Riordan contacted a group called TEAM who runs a spaymobile for cats. TEAM was hesitant to submit a bid due to the City's regulations and being an out-of-state group. The number of days and surgeries was never an issue. Commissioner Knaan questioned the difference between the cost of spay and neutering of large versus small dogs. Her question revolved around the average cost of the spay and neuter procedures on all dogs. Dov Lesel of the City Attorney's Officer reported that the vendors were given the choice of how they wanted to break the fee down when submitting their bids.

Public Comment:

Scott Sorrentino: Concerned about the unit price paid for each animal surgeries.

Susan Taylor: When she heard the number of surgeries went down to 3,500 it was felt the Department's dedication to spay and neuter had waned and it was a concern. Commented on rescue groups who took care of animals that could not be accommodated on the van.

Melanie Pozez: Commented on the services provided by private Spay and Neuter Van. Also expressed concerns over pregnant animals in the shelters.

A motion to approve the recommendation of the General Manager to increase the number of minimum surgeries from 3,500 to 4,000 was made by Commissioner Rubalcava and seconded by Commissioner Knaan. The motion passed 4-0.

- D. Board Report: Waiver/Deferment of Adoption Fees for Organizations That Are Part of the Participant shelter Program (Amending Los Angeles Municipal Code 53.11 (o) and (p). 53.15.3, 53.15.5.

Commissioner Rubalcava moved to accept the recommendation of the General Manager with a second by Commissioner Khero. The motion passed 5-0

- E. Board Report: Deferral of Adoption Fees of a Private Person Residing in the City (Los Angeles Municipal Code 53.15.3)

A discussion regarding the deferral of the \$90 Adoption fee and the imposition of the Department's \$500 fine for persons who do not spay or neuter their dogs occurred. Deputy City Attorney Dov Lesel recommended that individuals who do not license their dogs be assessed the Department's \$500 fine. Commissioner Riordan believed the Department had issues with the \$500 penalty but the Department would let the penalty stand. Commissioner Khero asked if the penalty was enforceable. Commissioner Riordan recommended that POP officers follow-up on the licensing issue. The \$40 deposit would be refunded upon proof of sterilization from a veterinarian. Mr. Lesel prepared an adoption agreement that spells out what is expected of the adopter and the Department regarding the \$40 refund.

Public Comment:

Scott Sorrentino: Clarified the \$40 fee.

Phyllis Daugherty: Questioned whether a person who would not pay a \$100 license fee would pay \$500 fine.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Asked Commission not to pay attention to scare tactics.

Mary Catalano: Ensure that all follow-up literature is strong enough to ensure the animal is licensed.

A motion to accept the General Managers recommendation was made by Commissioner Knaan and seconded by Commissioner Brunson. The motion was adopted by a 5-0 vote. Commissioner Rubalcava asked that a policy be review in six months be added to the Commission Calendar.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - (Comments from the public on items of public interest within the Board's subject matter jurisdiction.)**

Mary Catalano: Wants impounded cats to be re-evaluated after a period of time.

Phyllis Daughtery: Reported on a conference on Animal Hoarding on May 4 at the Long Beach Convention Center. Also cannot mandate spay and neuter of animals at pet shops.

Lisa Edmondson: Did not like the idea of adopting rabbits to schools as a pet.

Michelle Kelly: Proposed a moratorium on the adoption of rabbits and baby chicks for ten days prior to Easter.

Scott Sorrentino: Reported that all four animals that have been placed in the special needs category have been adopted. Also disappointed on the press turn out for the adoption event on Saturday.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Agreed with Mr. Sorrentino's comments on the press. Also commented on pregnant animals that are altered within 72 hour of giving birth.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.