



MINUTES

BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday, March 14, 2005
9:00 a.m.
CITY HALL
200 N. Spring St.
Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012



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

COMMISSION MEETING, 9:00 A.M.

Commission Vice-President Rubalcava called the Commission meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Commissioners Khero, Knaan, Brunson and Rubalcava were present. Commissioner Riordan joined the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

A. Increase Licensing Opportunities

General Manager Guerdon Stuckey reported on the Department's effort to work with the Mayor's Office and the unions to renew the Canvassing program. Planning includes utilizing full and part time canvassers. Commissioner Brunson requested a complete and comprehensive study of the licensing program. Commissioner Knaan indicated that the Department could use other agencies databases regarding dogs to identify unlicensed dogs within the City. The Commission recommended that a comprehensive report be presented at the second meeting in May.

Public Comment

None

B. Altered Dog License Fee Increase

Acting Board Secretary Ross Pool reported on the increase in the altered dog license fee from \$10 to \$15. The fee increase was recommended in a CAO Report dated June 29, 2004. The recommended fee increase recently passed the Public Safety Committee and is scheduled before the Budget and Finance Committee on March 24, 2005. Commissioner Knaan questioned why the fee for unaltered dogs could not also be raised. It was explained that a fee could only cover the cost of enforcing the statute. At \$100 the fee for unlicensed dogs adequately covered the enforcement cost and left no room for increasing the license cost.

Mr. Pool reported that the SB 1785 estimated the State Controller would pay reimbursement claim of \$956,937, for Fiscal Year 2004-05, to implement the State program, at 99%. After a review of the actual claim the final 1% will be paid, by the State Controller, to the City's General Fund. Previous claims for SB 1785 will begin receiving reimbursements in 2006.

C. Pre-Euthanasia Report:

The General Manager also reported on a new procedure whereby humane groups will receive an e-mail list of animals that are scheduled for euthanasia within 24 - 48 hours. This will allow the humane

community time to rescue some animals. The program will be implemented in early April. Commissioner Rubalcava requested an update report on the program at the next meeting.

D. Events:

Ms. Heidi Hubner, Volunteer Coordinator, reported on the new adoption event held at the Beverly Hills Farmers Market. The next event is scheduled for March 20. In addition, a flyer has been prepared, with a St. Patrick's Day theme, to encourage adoptions. Ms. Susan Greenberg, a Department employee, developed the flyer. All Shelters will have banners indicating March is Spay and Neuter Month. Buttons and flyers have also prepared for distribution to inform the public of Spay and Neuter Month. On March 5, an event was held at Johnny Carson Park with all shelters participating. A total of 94 animals were adopted at the event. Commissioner Brunson requested information what policy precludes volunteers from driving. Karen Knipscheer, Sr. Animal Control Officer II reported on the rescue of a horse that fell off a path in Griffith Park. Ms. Knipscheer also reported on the rescue of 127 animals from one person. Also a felony conviction was obtained against a man who beat his dog to death. A juvenile had charges filed against him for throwing a cat off a roof. South Los Angeles Shelter also visited 368 business and passed out flyers for March Spay and Neuter Month.

E. Isolation Survey

Linda Gordon, Sr. Management Analyst II, reported on a survey of 12 local and 1 Northern California agency regarding isolation policies. Five of the agencies have no access to the isolation areas at any time. Two agencies had limited access to look for lost pets. However persons were not allowed to return to the shelter one they had entered the isolation area. The remaining agencies allowed various levels of access to the isolation area for volunteers and the public.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes For February 28, 2005

Commissioner Rubalcava called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Public Comment:

Phyllis Daugherty: Requested that the minutes be changed to reflect that she was not upset but surprised at the press conference that was held.

Commissioner Knaan made a motion to approve the minutes with the change in wording. Commissioner Brunson seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Knaan attended the Best Friends event.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: A few more animals went than last year, twelve more but it could have been a lot more. Additional animals could have been taken.

C. Consideration of Future Agenda Items

Nothing at this time.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Asked that animals be retained on the public website permanently. This way people will know the disposition of the animals.

3. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. Isolation Animals Progress Report

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations, reported on change made at the shelters regarding isolation animals. The name Isolation Ward was changed to Medical Treatment Ward. Instructions were also given to shelter managers to photograph every animal, including those in the Medical Treatment Ward. A locked glass cabinet was installed at South Los Angeles Shelter for cards that kept disappearing. The board at East Valley Shelter is hard to see. Instructions were given to highlight the board so the public can see the animals that are in the Medical Treatment Ward. In addition, Dr Smith is researching non-slip flooring and footbaths for the Medical Treatment Wards. Commissioner Knaan asked if it was possible to separate diseased animals from those with broken bones and other non-communicable diseases. Commander Diliberto will look into the situation.

NOTE: Commissioner Riordan joined the meeting at 10:00 A.M.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Must make the animals full accessible. Also cards cover each other.

Mary Catalano: Does not believe the public takes the cards. In most cases isolation animals do not even have paperwork. Isolation ward should be open to the public.

Scott Sorrentino: Suggested digital picture frame for animals in isolation. The slide show could be on a loop and be viewed while outside the isolation area.

Phyllis Daugherty: Supports Mr. Sorrentino's idea for digital pictures. Concerned about the spread of disease from people entering isolation areas.

B. Evidence Animals Held At Shelters:

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations, reported on evidence animals held at the shelters. Commander Diliberto indicated that of the 92 animals picked-up on March 1, all but six animals were turned over to the Department and are actively seeking adoptions. The remaining four dogs and two birds were retained by the owners and will remain as evidence. The General Manager has set an April 1 date to clear out all the cases that are backlogged. After April 1, coordination of evidence animals will be turned over to a Sr. Animal Control Officer II. This will ensure that this backlog of evidence animals will not occur again and expedite the process. The Office of the City Attorney is also working to get evidence animals released more quickly. The Department is also working with LAPD to have the animals released more quickly. Commissioner Knaan questioned how the Department would prevent another increase in the holding periods for evidence Animals. Commander Diliberto indicated that a Department supervisor is now in charge of overseeing all evidence animals. No animal should be held over 60 days. Commissioner

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Rubalcava recommended goals be set for who is responsible for the evidence animals, an expectation of a general time frame and that persons are not charged for court related delays. Also, a report on evidence animals for the General Manager's Report for the first meeting in May was suggested

Public Comment:

Scott Sorrentino: Suggested the Department work with behavior specialist for animals that have been impounded for a long period of time, as they would need work in order to be adoptable.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Indicated evidence animals are on the website.

Mary Catalano: Believes evidence animals should be on the website with a notation that they are not available for adoption at this time.

C. Internal Customer Service Report:

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations, reported on customer service training. He reported that training is now under his supervision. Commander Diliberto reported on training sessions and workshops that have been held. Mr. Mike Arms held a one-day workshop on customer service, for Animal Control Officers and staff, an outline on telephone etiquette and customer service was distributed. Commander Diliberto indicated that he has seen an improvement in the phone customer service at shelters. Heidi Hubner, Volunteer Coordinator, reported on the Helen Woodward training that she attended. The training uses three colors to indicate life styles for persons who are interested in adopting dogs. Dogs are color coded for temperament and personalities.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Lack of staff precludes phones being answered in a timely manner. Also more people would come to the shelters if euthanasia of animals ceased. Animal Control Officers should stop bringing in animals and help at the shelters to adopt the animals out. Staff should be reassigned to times when they are needed to assist the public

Mary Catalano: There have been changes in staff. Staff should be reassigned to help adopt animals out rather than impound. Staff needs to be more informed of policies so they don't give out incorrect information.

Scott Sorrentino: The rescue alliance is attempting to create a group of adoption counselors who will volunteer on weekends to help with animal adoptions. Should record phone conversations to check on customer services.

GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

None

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

Kim Dane: Commented on coyotes in Angelino Heights. The coyote problem is out of hand and the community needs help to address the problem.

Donald Pease: A resident of Angelino Heights whose cat was killed by a coyote. He hears them at night and has sightings on a daily basis. No one is doing anything. Mr. Pease would like the coyotes trapped and move to other areas.

Scott Sorrentino: Wanted to ask the status of the van. Is it running now and are there two vans currently operating. Recommends shorter meetings to enable each topic to be adequately covered. The Rescue Alliance brought the idea of an urgent list to the Department. If each shelter had a coordinator to assist with adoptions the process work more smoothly

Lisa Edmondson: Spoke on the Spay and Neuter Ordinance. Found that many people do not understand that the ordinance applies to cats as well as dogs. It will be impossible to find homes for most of the kittens that are born in the spring if action is not taken. Information should go into utility permits to remind residents to spay and neuter their cats.

Phyllis Daugherty: Spoke on the coyote problem in Angelino Heights. Indicated that when the coyotes become urbanized they no longer fear humans. If cats are not humanely trapped they will become victims of coyotes. Commented on the Department impounded 127 animals on Tuesday from a home in Lakeview Terrace. Also found were 35 dead animals in a freezer. This is a matter of hoarding and is a real sickness.

Mary Catalano: Reported on the impounded cat from West Los Angeles that was handled by employee 440. The cat was treated at the doctor. The employee who impounded the animal should have called an Animal Control Officer who could begin an investigation. Overheard an employee describe a dog as over five years old. Also observed individuals turn in an older dog and adopt a puppy.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Employees need a memo that the \$100 fee has been eliminated. Also reported that puppy 703236 was killed. Two rescue groups are upset because they would have taken the dog. If the isolation ward name is changed to Hospital Ward people should be allowed to visit the area. The fear of disease is merely a scare tactic. Also noted that several things have changed since Mr. Stuckey arrived.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 p.m.