



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Special Meeting



Monday, March 29, 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 President Riordan called the Commission meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. Commissioners Riordan, Rubalcava, Khero, Knaan and Brunson were present.

1. **REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER**
None

2. **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. Approval of Minutes For February 28, 2005

Commissioner Riordan asked that the minutes be put off until the next meeting, as she had not reviewed them. Commissioner Rubalcava introduced a motion to continue approval of the minutes to the next meeting. Commissioner Khero seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Knaan attended the Genesis Awards. Commissioner Riordan attended the Genesis Awards and the California State Assembly Committee for Arts and Entertainment. Commissioner Brunson attended the Beverly Hills Adoption Event.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Commented on the fact that the Department was not represented at the Nathan Wintergard event in San Diego.

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented on the Blessing of the Animals. The Department did have an allotted table there as the always do and have had for the last 10 years. They have always been there and it has always been well manned with Mary and Jackie always went on their own time and at least three officers on duty there and was very successful table. They had it this year it was appropriated to them. The Department was notified, Emily told me they were notified as always to the Public Relations Department. But the Shelter was told they did not have a table therefore the personnel did not go. That was an instruction. They asked are we going? Officer Clegg came, not as part of that as he did not know there was a table. He came to make sure the animals were under control and everything was all right on the premises and safe. He had his citation book in his hand and he was a very, very good deterrent if people allowing dogs to get into trouble or run loose. That is the comment, they did have the table, that they did not respond and they did not have to staff it, as they did not have a table. It was a problem with management and not a

problem with the shelter.

C. Consideration of Future Agenda Items

The Commission recommended that Items 4- GM. Report on Change in Shelter Hours; Item 7 – Update on Mandatory Spay and Neutering at Pet Shops and Item 9 – GM Report on the Unweaned Pilot Program be postponed until the April 25, 2005 Meeting. In addition an Update on the Trap and Release program be placed on the May 9, 2005 Commission Agenda.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Questioned why the Shelters were still charging the \$100 adoption fee. Also did not understand why Animal Control Officers were out rounding up stray animals when they could be in the shelters assisting with adoptions.

3. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. Evidence Animals Held at Shelters

This was discussed in conjunction with the cruelty case statistics.

Public Comment:

None

B. 2003-04 Cruelty Case Statistics (Taken out of Order):

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations, reported on the 2003 Cruelty Case Statistics. He reported that the 2004 Case Statistics were incomplete and would be presented at a future Commission Meeting. Deputy City Attorney Bob Ferber explained the difficulty in reconciling cruelty case statistics between the Department, the City Attorney's Office and the LA Police Department. Mr. Ferber explained that each department has its own information system that catalogued, collected and processed information using different formats and processes. Commissioner Knaan requested information on the fate of 22 dogs awaiting disposition of the cases. Commander Diliberto explained the case process and how officers are assigned to cases. He indicated that officers who take the initial report are not necessarily the ones who will do the follow-up investigations, due to regular days off or other job emergencies.

Also included in the discussion was the Departments' effort to form an Animal Cruelty Task Force (Item 3-F on the Agenda) with the Los Angeles Police Department. Commander Diliberto set forth some of the job duties of the Captain that would be assigned to the Animal Cruelty Task Force. Among the duties would be a liaison between the various departments to ensue that evidence animals did not languish in shelter kennels and cages longer than necessary. Deputy City Attorney Ferber reported on officer training and case preparation that has resulted in improvements in case filings and reduction in evidence animals being held longer than necessary. Commissioner Knaan asked if the City Attorney's Office was looking into a foster program for evidence animals. Commander Diliberto indicated that a foster program is under active consideration. Commissioner Khero asked about the evidentiary value of animals increase over time. Deputy City Ferber indicates that the evidentiary value of the animal is virtually non-existent as both sides of the cans could use the animal to their advantage.

Commissioner Rubalcava indicated items that must be addressed regarding evidence animals. The items included solving computer problems, implement the procedures for the handling of evidence animals as set

forth in the General Managers Recommendations for Board Actions, Item 3 F Animal cruelty Task Force, on the agenda, eliminate the backlog of evidence animals held by Friday (April 1) and e-mail the results to the Commission, a long term study on the use of reserve Animal Control Officers and assigning case officers to a case from the beginning to the end and a report on ongoing training of officers in regards to animal cruelty cases.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: The ultimate cruelty is killing of the animals. Many animals on the LAAS website do not have photos.

Phyllis Daugherty: Difference between humane officers and animal control officers under the law on what they each may do. Commented on the 17 vacant Animal Control Officers positions and the use of light duty officers to fill positions.

C. Transfer of Shelter Animals

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations, presented a list of animals transferred between shelters. Commissioner requested the information be broken down by specie; impound numbers, shelters involved in transfers. Commander Diliberto described the policy and procedures used in transferring animals between shelters. The Commission requested that all future transfer information be presented quarterly. Commander Diliberto will forward the information to the Commissioners.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Requested a list of the 21 animals transferred from South Los Angeles Shelter to West Valley Shelter. Transferring animals to South Los Angeles Shelter would result in death for the animals. Transfer of animals to West Los Angeles will result in additional adoptions.

D. Pet Store Licensing and Permits

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations, reported that most dogs that are adopted from pet stores are under four months of age and therefore do not require a license. Commander Diliberto reported that the Department has the ability to have in-house administrative hearings. This should increase the compliance of pet stores to ensure all animals purchased that require a license or permit will obtain one. A discussion ensued over the roll of the Permit Officer. Commander Diliberto reported that the permit staff visits pet shops, not only to issue permits but to also check on violations of animal cruelty. Deputy City Attorney Bob Ferber reported that animals used in medical research, under federal law, are more protected than animals in pet stores.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Does not understand why animal selling is allowed and does not understand why there are pet stores

Phyllis Daugherty: Reported that Los Angeles County grades pet stores A-B-C. Also commented on signs at petting zoos indicating the potential for disease.

Mary Cummings: Questioned why some humane organizations are required to obtain licenses and permits when they are working for animal welfare.

GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

E. Senior/Senior Dog Adoption Program

Ms. Heidi Hubner, Volunteer Coordinator reported on a new program that would allow senior citizen over the age of 62 to adopt older animals. Ms. Hubner indicated that most persons adopt puppies or younger dogs. Dogs in excess of seven years normally are not adopted. This program will allow senior citizens to adopt senior dogs. Deputy City Attorney Dov Lesel reported that a change in the ordinance would be required to enable adoption fees to be waived. Commissioner Knaan asked why the age for senior adoptions was placed at 62 years. It was explained that this is consistent with other Department programs for elderly residents such as free licenses for older persons.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Explained the importance of animal companionship to the elderly. Calls them therapy animals.

A motion to approve the Senior for Senior program was put forth by Commissioner Knaan and seconded by Commissioner Khoro. The motion passed 5-0.

F. Animal Cruelty Task Force

Continued as part of Item 3 – B, 2003-04 Cruelty Case Statistics. Commander Diliberto reported that Councilman Villaraigosa has sent a letter, to the Commission, in support of the Animal Cruelty Task Force.

Public Comment:

Phyllis Daugherty: The success of the task force is dependent upon the detectives that are assigned to it. If officers are deployed from 8:00 to 5:00 it is not going to work. Must have Animal Control Officers and detectives working at night.

Zsuzsa Blakely: SEU is ultimate Gestapo.

A motion by Commissioner Rubalcava to approve the General Manager's recommendation was made. Commissioner Knaan seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

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

Zsuzsa Blakely: Commented on the Department's statistical reports. She indicated that the Department's adoption statistics change.

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented on the Jillian Lang Foundation. Also reported on legislation that would ban the breeding and selling of animals for fighting purposes. Currently there are no provisions in any statutes that prohibit breeding animals for fighting.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:21 p.m.