



MINUTES

BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday, April 25, 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 9:15 a.m. Commissioners Riordan, Rubalcava, Khero and Knaan were present. Absent was Commissioner Brunson.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

A. Rescue Wagon

Guerdon Stuckey, General Manager, Department of Animal Services imparted additional information relative to PetSmart's Rescue Wagon. Mr. Stuckey indicated that the project manager for the Rescue Wagon said the euthanasia rate for the program was extremely low, 2.8%. Most of the euthanasia's were for issues related to the animal's health. Before an animal, that is part of the program is euthanased, the program manager must approve the procedure. The program has very, very strict protocols related to the program. Commissioner Rubalcava asked if any animals released into the program were euthanased for lack of space. Mr. Stuckey indicated that only animals euthanased were for medical reasons. Commissioner Riordan asked if the Department required City Council approval to transfer animals. Commissioner Rubalcava indicated that, at the last meeting, Commander David Diliberto reported that all approval requirements have been met.

B. Transfer of Animals

Guerdon Stuckey reported that a list of transferred animals has been prepared but was not included in the Commission's binders. Commissioner Knaan indicated that the main concern was about the "pound seizure" of dogs and whether people who take animals participate in this activity. Commissioner Riordan commented that some of the shelters in California do participate in the practice of pound seizure. Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations gave a brief verbal report on the ongoing transfer of animals between shelters. Copies of the Animal Transfer List were passed out to the Commission and made available to the public. Commissioner Knaan asked the report be held over until the next meeting. Commissioner Rubalcava asked that the matrix used to present the information be explained to the Commission. Commander Diliberto explained the matrix and where each animal originated and to which shelter it was sent. Commissioner Knaan asked the disposition of the twelve evidence animals that had been on a list given to the Commission by Commander Diliberto. Commissioner Rubalcava asked that the information be provided monthly. Mr. Stuckey indicated the information would be included as an item at the second meeting of each month.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Asked what the criterion is to transfer animals. There are organizations that are not big rescue groups that find it difficult to pay the bailout fees. There is a group in San Diego that is beginning to rescue rotweillers. The financial part is a difficult matter. Ms. Blakely was aware a lot of evidence animals were transferred from the Annex. Fortunately a lot of them were puppies that got adopted right a way. Some of them are still there. Want to know when they go off the website where they can be found. No way to track animals at the Annex through the website.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes For April 11, 2005

Commissioner Rubalcava made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Knaan seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed 4-0.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioners reported no meetings or events attended.

C. Consideration of Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Riordan reported that the City Council returned the matter regarding the \$5.00 increase in altered dog license fee back to the Commission for further study and public discussion. Mr. Stuckey also indicated that he would request the Budget and Finance Committee to return the item to the Commission for further study. Commissioner Knaan requested an update on the effectiveness of the Evidence Animal Procedures. She would like to know if the procedure has been implemented and what follow-up has been done to ensure the timelines set-forth in the procedures are met. Commissioner Knaan asked for an update on the e-mail alert system. Commissioner Rubalcava indicated it would be added to the next Commission Meeting Agenda.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Questioned why the Shelters were still charging the \$100 adoption fee to 501(C)(3) and the public. Mr. Stuckey has sent a letter to stop charging the 501(c)(3) but not the public.

3. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. Change in Shelter Hours

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations gave a report on a number of proposed changes in shelter hours. Commander Diliberto reported there are some concerns about being open in the evenings due to poor lighting at some of the shelters. Also some of our shelters are not in the greatest of locations. These could be a deterrent to people going in the evenings. Commissioner Riordan indicated there may be union problems with a change in hours but thought the shelter could be open later during daylight savings hours such as 10 A.M to 7P.M. rather than 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Commander Diliberto indicates it is something that can be looked at. In response to a question from Commissioner Rubalcava regarding traffic at South Los Angeles during the early morning weekdays. Captain Ram Carnero, District Manager of South Los Angeles Shelter the busiest time is between Tuesdays through Thursday. Commissioner Riordan asked if changing the hours would have any effect. Captain Carnero indicated that changing that

Please join us at our website: www.LAAnimalservices.com

extending the current hours to 7 P.M. would be better. Unless there was a specific dog people wanted there was not much activity early in the morning. Commissioner Khoro commented that the best time for working parents was between 6 and 7 P.M. Commissioner Rubalcava asked what work rules may be impacted by extending the hours. Commander Diliberto indicated that clerical staff is hired for a specific time period, unlike animal control officers who are hired any shift any shelter. The union could say the clerks were hired 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Mr. Stuckey reported that it is necessary to discuss the issue with the union before proceeding. A suggestion to use part-time clerks was brought up by Commander Diliberto. Commissioners Knaan, Khoro and Rubalcava indicated support for this program. Commissioner Rubalcava asked for a report on what would be required to implement this one or two days per week and are the resources available immediately. Also he asked when a logical timeframe to begin the program and begin to discuss the issue with all the stakeholders such as the City Council and union and what the financial impact will be.

Public Comment:

Zsuzsa Blakely: Asked if shelter have parking lots as they help with safety. Also being open on the weekends is vital, as some people cannot make it during the week. Suggested the Animal Care Technicians learn the clerical stuff. They have nothing to do so they can handle the extended hours

Sue Freeman: Suggested that the Department contact Pasadena as they are open two days per week until 7:30 and SEAACA is also open late. Questioned the Sunday hours and indicated that an 8:00 A.M. opening on Sunday not good as no one will be there that early. Also suggested two days per week until 7:30 P.M. for adoptions.

B. Unweaned Pilot Program

Ms. Susan Greenberg, Animal Care Technician Supervisor, described the programs developed by her to facilitate the implementation of the unweaned program. Included in the program is information provided by the Department's Chief Veterinarian, handouts from several animal rescue groups. Although the program has been in operation for approximately two-weeks, its effectiveness is uncertain due to a lack of information from other shelters. Commissioner Knaan asked about any publicity for the program. Ms. Greenberg indicated there was no active publicity. Commissioner Knaan also asked about the training that was being provided and who was receiving the training. She had heard rumors about rescuers being given wrong information regarding the program. Ms. Greenberg indicated that she had a meeting with all the Animal Care Technician Supervisors and distributed the information she had put together including animal rescue contact information and all the supplies required. In addition, a script was provided that encouraged people to take them back. The Animal Care Technician Supervisors were then to return to the shelters and train all staff in the program. Commissioner Knaan commented that if a person brings in a litter without the mother, they should be encouraged to trap the mother and bring her in for alteration, as this will eliminate the chances of additional unwanted litters. Commissioner Riordan emphasized that unweaned animals left at the shelter do not stand a chance and they will be killed.

Ms. Greenberg also described a new program that enabled employees to foster animals. Employees have been able to foster an animal and take it home. They can bring the animal back to the shelter and feed it on their breaks and lunch period. Commissioner Knaan asked about the ability of the foster employee to adopt the animal or choose the new owner. It was explained that when a person fosters an animal, you get attached.

Public Comment:

Sandra Harrison: Believes this is awesome and the shelter is really trying. Some steps are missing; you

Please join us at our website: www.LAAnimalservices.com

have to alter the mother. Staff must encourage people turning in the litter to alter the mothers. Questioned whether rescue groups are contacted to take the litters.

Sue Freeman: Asked about information that was presented at the Participant Task Force Meeting, as she has never seen the final copy. With the change in staff it is difficult to track where things are. In addition, people must know that it is important that the animals be spayed and neutered as part of the program. Actors and Others also pay the difference on the feral cats.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Lots of times the moms get scared off. It is suggested that an Animal Control Officer be sent out to bring in the mother. Hold the animals and make them adoptable immediately.

Commissioner Riordan and Rubalcava asked that this item be returned to the Commission for a vote at the May 23, 2005 meeting.

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.)

Rita Burton: Asked about the program to include dog license notices being included in utility bills. Believes it is a great way to bring in revenue to animal services and the general fund. Something must be done about unlicensed dogs. Even have friends that have unlicensed dogs.

Zsuzsa Blakely: A month is too long to wait because it is kitten season. Lives are being lost while the Commission is talking. Would like to find out what the Commission is going to do about Mr. Stuckey sending the memo regarding the \$100. People do come into the pound at 5:00 P.M. but they are turned away. If people are not afraid to go in to turn in an animal at night they are not afraid to go at night to adopt an animal. Don't throw people out

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:26 A.M.