



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday, July 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 Khoro
Deborah A. Knaan

COMMISSION MEETING, 9:00 A.M.

Commission President Riordan called the Commission meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Rubalcava, Brunson and Knaan. Absent was Commissioner Khoro.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

Transfer of Evidence Animals

The General Manager reported that Sr. Animal Control Officer II Karen Stepp has been assigned to keep the Commission informed about the outcome of evidence animals. Reports will be sent to the Commissioner weekly.

Prosecution of Animal Cruelty

A resident who was convicted of cruelty toward a sheep received 30 days in jail, three-years probation and a restriction of no ownership of animals for three-years. The Office of the City Attorney informed the Department that they were impressed with our preparation and presentation of the case.

Independence Day Event

Scott Sorrentino reported on the East Valley/Rescue Alliance adoption event. The event adopted 80 animals, re-directed several pet owners who were going to turn in their animals, and gave out 24 come-back-for-me-cards. Of these cards, 15 animals were adopted by cardholders. Mr. Sorrentino indicated that by working together and sufficient advertisement, an event would be successful. He indicated that \$5,000 was spent on advertising.

Public Information Handout

The General Manager handed out a list of public information and outreach efforts since March 2005. Mr. Stuckey indicated that the public information/advertising effort is very important and at the top of important Department items. He also indicated that the position for a permanent PR person, at least for the next several months, would remain unfilled due to staffing issues. Commissioner Knaan asked for a list of where the press releases were published. Commissioner Rubalcava indicated that

there is a free clipping service under google.com. Commissioner Knaan asked for a long-range plan to provide for the adoption of animals and alert and encourage the public to spay and neuter. Commissioner Brunson indicated that the public relation position was of the utmost importance and without a good PR person the Department would not be successful. The two key areas for the plan will be adoption or spay and neuter and what is the long-term program. The item will be reported on during the second meeting in August (August 22). Commissioner Riordan commented that the Department had no budget for a long-term public relation campaign. Mr. Stuckey indicated that the topic of adoption and sterilization is discussed at every public meeting the Department sponsors or attends. Commissioner Knaan indicted that the Department must be creative in the area of public relations in-as-much as there is no budget for this effort. Commissioner Rubalcava suggested the Commissioners forward to the Department ideas for a marketing plan.

Public Comment

Scott Sorrentino: The cost of the entire event was \$5,000. The advertising portion was \$3,000. Whatever amount of money you have, you must be creative. One volunteer sent promotion to every website and television station. Events must be sent to the station eight weeks out. Volunteers can do a lot of things and “we” had a lot of people handing outdoor hangars. Perhaps the girl scouts could distribute fliers at supermarkets. PSA spots usually play at two in the morning. If you want prime time spots you must pay for them.

Phyllis Daugherty: PR is a definite profession. The approach to each media outlet is different. Seat belt laws are an example. It is not that people went out to schools and told student to wear their seatbelts. It is because parent said that if you don’t wear your seatbelt, I would get a ticket. That is the way animal control works. People are not spaying and neutering because they want to cut down on pet overpopulation, but because of the cost of licensing. One bad incident will wipe out every positive piece of PR you do, such as the shooting of that pit bull downtown a few weeks ago. It should not take an Animal Control Officer two-hours to get from north central to downtown L.A.

Commissioner Knaan asked for a PR plan for National Homeless Animal Day. In June there was a National Adopt a Cat Day and nothing was done except one little thing.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for the Meeting of July 25, 2005

Commissioner asked that Dr. Smith’s comments regard cross contamination of animals was not her feelings. In addition a paragraph from the previous week was left in from the previous meeting, under Public Comments, regarding vet’s having responsibility to report animal cruelty and should be struck. With those changes Commissioner Knaan moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Rubalcava seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Rubalcava visited the South Los Angeles Shelter and Annex. Commissioner Riordan was at the opening of a dog park in Council District 14. In addition she attended political event for former Mayor Riordan.

C. Consideration of Future Agenda Items

- Commissioner Brunson asked for a report on new ideas and on what is being done to license new animals and increase the number of licenses issued. Commissioner Knaan asked that the report contain information on what is being done to license new animals and what is being done to re-license repeat animals. This report is due on September 12, 2005.
- Commissioner Knaan asked for a report on the capabilities of the phone system. A report will be presented on August 22, 2005.
- A follow-up report on sick, injured animals that are rescued unaltered and the status of sterilization of such animals. An update will be presented on August 22, 2005.
- Presentation of the Low Kill Plan for discussion. The item will be presented on September 26, 2005.
- Commissioner Brunson and Knaan asked for an update on the e-mail blast for animals that are to be euthanized and an update on the website regarding the ability to search for animals by impound number. No date was set for these two items.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugherty: Would like to see a report on the number of citations issued and cruelty investigations begun. A Discussion should be held regarding the change in the Departments status from public safety. Also she has heard that the attorney for the anti-cruelty task force has been changed. Does everything go through Mr. Ferber?

3. **GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION**

A. None

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

B. Update: Six-Month Review of Municipal Code Section §53.15

Lt. Castillo was not at the meeting. The item was rescheduled for the next meeting.

C. Update: Trust Funds

Jeff Brill, Senior Management Analyst II, reported on the status of each of the Department's Trust Funds. Mr. Brill explained the purpose of each trust fund and the monetary balance in the fund, prior to the year-end closing. The following is a synopsis of the report:

Animal Spay and Neuter Trust Fund – Fund Number 543

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

This fund provides pet sterilization services to residents of the City of Los Angeles who meet eligibility requirements as established by the General Manager of the Department and approved by the City of Los Angeles Council.

Current Balance - \$337,169

Veterinary Medical Trust Fund – Fund Number 841

This fund is used for refund of deposits upon satisfactory proof of sterilization. Forfeiture of deposits reverted to Animal Sterilization Fund if animal is not sterilized within a given time. This fund is also used for payment to veterinarians for spaying and neutering fees. The Department will continue to use these funds for spay and neuter services, including the pet sterilization program.

Current Balance - \$245,580

Animal Sterilization Trust Fund – Fund Number 842

This fund provides sterilization services to residents and for dogs and cats adopted from the City of Los Angeles animal shelters by other persons, subject to any special terms of conditions of individual gifts, contributions or bequests to the fund. The Department will continue to use these funds for spay and neuter services, including the pet sterilization program.

Current Balance - \$60,345

Animal Welfare Trust Fund – Fund Number 859

This fund is used to augment established programs and activities of the Department, except those involving pet sterilization, subject to special terms or conditions attached to individual contributions or bequests. Funds are designed for donor specific use. Non-designated funds will be used for public education, training, mobile pet adoption supplies and other expenses to augment departmental programs.

Current Balance - \$623,764

D. Update: Cost to Provide Services To The City of Beverly Hills

Mr. Ross Pool, Management Analyst II, Commission Secretary, updated the Commission on the status of providing animal care and control services to the City of Beverly Hills. Mr. Pool reported that a preliminary estimate of services has been provided at a cost of approximately \$93,000. The estimate has been reviewed by Beverly Hills and is within their budgetary parameters. A formal Board Report will be presented to the Commission at the August 8, 2005 meeting. At that time the Commission will consider a motion to forward the proposal to enter into contract negotiations with the City of Beverly Hills to the Council's Public Safety Committee.

E. Discussion Item: Amanda Foundation Projects

a. Announcement of Valley Van

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

Ms. Terri Austin of the Amanda Foundation presented an outline for the creation of a “Valley Van”. Ms. Austin reported that the Spaymobile project has provided less days of service to the Valley in comparison to the rest of the City. Approximately 75% of the scheduled days have been in the inner and southern council Districts.

There are communities in the Valley that have received little or no services from the spaymobile because problems in other areas of the City are perceived as being worse. On July 8, 2005, Council Members Smith and Cardenas put forth a motion to reallocate unused funds to create new programs using a spaymobile to serve areas of the City of greater needs.

The Amanda Foundation and the Coalition for Pets and Public Safety propose a voucher program that would be used only on the spaymobile. The new vouchers would be valued at \$60 for feline and \$80 for canines. The two foundations would provide a new spaymobile clinic and administrative support to the program. The spaymobile would service the five valley Council District of 2, 3, 6, 7 and 12, a minimum of 16 days per month.

- b. Presentation/Request for Operations of the South Los Angeles Clinic, Two Days Per Week For Pet Owned By The Public in Conjunction with PetSmart

Ms. Austin also commented that the Amanda Foundation is offering to run a pilot spay/neuter program utilizing the South Los Angeles Shelter’ Clinic on Sunday and Monday beginning on September 11, 2005. The program would operate by all staff, supplies and administrative processes being supplied by the Amanda Foundation. The program would provide 30 days of service and would project approximately 1,200 surgeries. The program would use both free and discount coupons to offset the cost of the surgeries, with additional monies being provided by PetSmart Charities. The program would run through December with a review by the Commission to discuss whether or not to continue the program. It is important to note that the PetSmart funding must be used by the end of 2005.

If the program is successful perhaps a similar program could be enacted at North Central and East Valley Shelters, provided their clinics are ready for use.

Commissioner Brunson indicated that there was a need for this type of service in the Valley and supported the concept of a Valley Spaymobile.

Public Comment

Zsuzsanna Blakely: Commented that she was familiar with the South Los Angeles Spay and Neuter Clinic. She believes it is wasted. Ms. Blakely supports the Amanda Foundation’s effort to provide service to the Valley.

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented on Dr. Mackey’s effort to provide sterilization. Feels the Department must plan on numbers

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

Elizabeth Wittelsbach and Theresa Dern: The tow ladies indicated they were new to the rescue community. They commented that on several issues including the fact that dogs were euthanized although they are on the alert list; on one occasion, when trying to adopt a dog, a shelter employee attempted to talk them out if it because the dog is "sick". In addition, Ms Wittelsback commented that, when calling the South Los Angeles Shelter to check on the status of a dog, she was hung up on three times by one of the employees. She believes employees are not well trained. Also commented on the fact that there was only one office on night duty for the entire valley.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:23 A.M.