



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday, September 12, 2005
9:00 a.m.
CITY HALL
200 N. Spring St.
Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012



Commissioners: Kathleen Riordan, President
Vacant 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 9:17 a.m. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Khero, Knaan and Brunson.

1. APPEAL OF THE GENERAL MANAGER'S DECISION IN BARKING DO G CASE – BD 04603WL

The Board heard an appeal to Barking Dog Case – BD 04603 WL. Attending were the Complainant Ms. Cate Frost and Respondent Sandra Ashton –Phillips. The Commission reviewed the case history and heard testimony from both parties. Based on the information presented, Commissioner Brunson motioned that the Commission uphold the terms and conditions set forth in a letter by the General Manager dated January 24, 2005. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Knaan and approved 4-0.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – GUERDON H. STUCKEY

The General Manager reported that the Mayor and his staff have directed City departments to participate in the evacuation situation resulting from Hurricane Katrina. The South Los Angeles Shelter will be used as a holding point for animals that arrive. Currently no animals have arrived. Commissioner Knaan asked how many animals we were expecting and how this would affect our animals. Based on the experience of Phoenix (AZ), it is estimated that there will be approximately 25 dogs. Commissioner Riordan asked if the Mayor requested ideas or an action plan to house animals. Mr. Stuckey responded that it was to house animals brought in by evacuees. Commissioner Brunson thought it was a good idea to issue press release regarding this action to attract new people to the shelters. If not handled properly and just house animals, it will create a poor image. Based on a question by Commissioner Khero, Mr. Stuckey indicated that we would only house animals that were brought in by their owners. Each animal would be given a medical screening. The Department is also working with other departments to identify housing that would accept the animals. Commissioner Knaan expressed concern over the length of time the rescued hurricane animals would be in the shelters and the danger that these rescued animals would displace local animals. Commissioner Brunson suggested that the rescued animals be fostered out. Commissioner Khero commented that the Commissions' concerns were based on space, disease, and duration of time. Fostering was the best way to go. Commissioner Brunson suggested that, by having rescued animals in our shelters, this was an opportunity to attract new patrons. Commissioner Riordan suggested that boarding kennels be used to house additional

animals. Commissioner Knaan suggested that the empty clinic at North Central be used to house animals. Deputy City Attorney Dov Lesel indicated the discussion had exceeded the content of information in the report of the General Manager. Commissioner Brunson suggested that the Commission hold a special meeting to discuss the item. The General Manager reported that the Mayor has directed the Department to respond to the needs of the disaster victims. Commissioner Khero asked that the Commission be apprised, by e-mail, when the animals begin to arrive and Mr. Stuckey agreed.

Commissioner Knaan asked if the South Los Angeles Spay and Neuter Clinic had been closed. She was concerned that the information was not brought to the Commission's attention. Mr. Stuckey indicated that it concerned personnel issues.

Commissioner Knaan asked if the new extended shelter hours had been implemented. Mr. Stuckey indicated that the shelter hours had not been extended. Commissioner Knaan asked when the shelter hours would be extended. Mr. Stuckey said the new hours would be implemented. Mr. Lesel indicated that once again this item exceeded the required information. Commissioner Knaan asked how the employees were polled and wanted to see the results. She also asked the Department to re-poll the employees to see who would like to work the extended hours. Commissioner Khero expressed frustration that the communication between the Department and Commission was falling apart.

Public Comment

Daniel Guss: Not surprised and disappointed that the General Manager does not know the shelter hours. Fact that he did not disclose the South Los Angeles Shelter Clinic closing and the shelter hours, anything he says is biased because he wants to attract attention to himself. Where more animals are brought in to make the Mayor and Department look good results in our animals being killed.

Irene Ponce: Volunteer. The Mayor has asked the G.Ms. to come up with an action plan to help the hurricane victims. She applauded the General Manager for his actions. We have to help these animals. We are the second largest city in the nation. Should have a plan to advertise the animals.

Tina Clark: Upset about bringing in Katrina animals you do not help street people if your children are starving. It is a disaster for animals that are dying in our shelters.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes for the Meeting of August 8, 2005

Commissioner Knaan requested that the public comment by Barbara Trelease be changed to reflect that she was speaking of the rabbit spay and neuter program and not the avid program. Also commented on the ability of Ms. Jane Garcia to groom evidence animal.

Public Comment

Terri Austin: Asked that the wording be changed from "the foundation has a voluntary veterinary staff" to the "foundation has a paid veterinary staff".

Commissioner Brunson motioned that the minutes be accepted with the recommended changes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and was approved on a vote of 4-0.

Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Brunson attended PETA, which was fabulous. Commissioner Knaan attended the Greater Valley Planning Neighborhood Council, summer fest. In addition Ms. Knaan attended the PETA event and visited the East Valley Shelter on two occasions. Commissioners Riordan and Khero had nothing to report.

Public Comment

Daniel Guss: Asked if the General Manager was going to attend the Nathan Wintergrad Conference in October. If not, why?

Consideration of Future Agenda Items

- Commissioner Knaan asked that an election be held. Commissioner Khero will be out of the state. The election is to be held on October 11, 2005
- Commissioner Knaan asked for a report on the policy of the mandatory rabbit spay and neuter fee increase and why it has not been implemented. To be on the agenda of September 26, 2004.
- Commissioner Knaan asked that the question of isolation animals be placed on the agenda. To be on the agenda of September 26, 2004.
- Commissioner Knaan asked how the Commander has gotten the word out to his staff on the grooming of animals. Also how the policy is being implemented. To be on the agenda of October 11, 2005.
- Commissioner Knaan asked for reports on the Senior 4 Senior Program and all the advertising done for the program. and a list of all active volunteers and what they are doing. On the Agenda for October 11, 2005,
- Commissioner Khero asked about the issue of communication and how is policy being implemented. On the agenda for October 24, 2005.
- Commissioner Brunson asked how the Department fills important positions and how we hire people. What are our policies?
- Commissioner Riordan asked that statistical information and the Department's Manual be presented to the Commission.
- Commissioner Knaan asked that information be presented on the transfer of animals, including how the policy is being implemented.

Public Comment

Daniel Guss: Asked if the computers that were "stolen" by the LAPD had been returned to the shelters. Important to understand why officers who are investigating cases report the name of the people who make the complaints. Lives could be in danger

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

A. Board Report: Long Term P.R. Marketing Plan

General Manager Guerdon Stuckey reported on the concept of the marketing plan. Explained the targeted, three tiered strategy. Beginning with the fact that the Department has no budget, the plan relies heavily on the district manager to do outreach. The Department identified the ten high-priority areas and how we can increase the participation and shelter walk-ins. An Assistant General Manager will be hired that has a background in marketing. The AGM is an exempt position. Commissioner Knaan understood that the marketing position was the Public Information Officer position. Commissioner Brunson asked about the Marketing Plan. Both she and Commissioner Khoro believe the plan should be more specific. They believe there is a lack of specific information contained in the report. Commissioner Khoro indicated that nothing had happened with marketing. Commissioner Knaan indicated that when she asked for the plan it was to be specific. She wanted to know what had been done within the last six-months. Mr. Stuckey indicated that resources are limited and samples of outreach had been sent to the Commissioners. Commissioner Brunson indicated that emotional resources of the volunteers and rescuers are unlimited. Believes more attention should be paid to the volunteer's resources to help with the marketing program. Commissioner Knaan reported that in her visits to the shelters they look god-awful, the cages are dirty and the place looks un-kept. She does not believe we are doing enough to the market department.

Public Comment

Daniel Guss: Wrote marketing plan for large companies. He has contact with media and foreign language stations. The marketing plan should be a five year plan and, as currently presented lacks detail. The plan is not reaching out to the residents and does not name the targeted groups. No hiring should be done without knowing where the Mayor stands on the department's leadership.

Jane Garcia: The marketing plan should include going into schools. Asked if schools visited shelters? Is there a system whereby third parties could be called in to fix problems? Also asked if I.D. requirements are posted for checks and credit card transactions.

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented that the concept of a no-kill shelter is a myth and cannot be achieved. Also commented that there is a lack of funding for a spay and neuter plan.

Commissioner Brunson moved that the Commission reject the Marketing plan as written and a new plan with more specifics be presented within 30 days. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khoro and approved 4-0.

Board Report: Employees Discouraging Adoptions

Commissioner Knaan said she had heard that shelter personnel were actively talking prospective adopters out of adopting animals. She asked how new ideas are sent to the staff. Mr. Stuckey reported that he had instituted round table discussion with the general staff and weekly meetings with the captains. Commissioner Brunson suggested the Commission accompany the General Manager to the shelters and explain the new culture. Mr. Stuckey said he was frustrated with information not getting down to the staff. Believed much of the problem centered on the question of whether he would be here for a while. Indicated that it takes 5-7 years to effect change throughout the organization. Commissioner Riordan indicated that employees who do not follow directions are guilty of insubordination. Commissioner Riordan indicated that the staff should not try to deceive the public; they should use more positive descriptions when describing dogs. There is personnel policy and civil service commission that all have the authority to effect the removal of an employee. Commissioner Knaan suggested that Mr. Stuckey address all three shifts with the new

policy and not leave it to the supervisory staff to pass on the new policies. Upper management is not passing on the information. Asked how the policy is going to be passed on to the staff. Commissioner Knaan asked how soon the policy could be adopted. Commissioner Khero said that these are the policies of the Commission and the staff must understand that the policies will continue regardless of who is the General Manager or what his status is. Commissioner Brunson said that there has been a cut off of information between the department staff and the Commission. There has to be communication between the staff and the Commissioners. Commissioners believe that some meetings should be held at the shelters. Commissioner said the policy should be disseminated by October 11. Commissioners discussed the wording of the policy. Mr. Lesel indicated the wording should be:

“Employees must consider the impact that negative descriptions of animals will have on the adoption process. Therefore, employees shall refrain from describing an animal using language; actions or writing that might prejudice a prospective adopter from completing the adoption process. In implementing this policy, employees shall always ensure that the health and welfare of adopted animals is matched with the welfare and lifestyle of the prospective adoptive family.”

Public Comment

Laura Beth Heisen: Does not have specific information on how to implement the plan. Volunteers should be used to encourage adoptions. People do not know what words to use to encourage adoption. Sometimes adoptions should be discouraged.

Teri Austin: Agreed with Laura Beth Heisen. Suggest that people be used who are trained in such a way that they can adopt animals. It is a skill. Don't refer to the animals in a negative way.

Phyllis Daugherty: Supports what Laura Beth Heisen said. There are animals in the shelter that have tried to bite children, torn up the furniture. This places the employees in a dangerous position. A sign should be posted indicating that Commission policy precludes employees from describing the negative aspects of an animal behavior.

Daniel Guss: Can't wait for Sarah Nelson to return, as she will be great to head up the program. Suggested that the Mayor's picture and number for people to call who have not been treated well. That is what the private sector does.

Commissioner Knaan moved to adopt the policy with the appropriate word changes suggested by Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brunson and approved 4-0.

Board Report: Tuff Mutts

Captain Karen Knipscheer, along with Tia Torres reported on the concept of the Tuff Mutt Program. The program uses volunteers to go out to homes with overly aggressive dogs in an attempt to keep the animal from becoming a neighborhood or Department problem. An issue was raised that the program creates a liability to the City and is dangerous to volunteers. The Department's Counsel, Mr. Lesel, spoke about the program and indicated that the program required additional specific guidelines. Captain Knipscheer indicated that the volunteers would be sent out to homes prior to a dog escaping and having an Animal Control Officer issuing a citation. Commissioner Khero asked who would call for training from the project. Ms Torres indicated that the information would come from neighbors. Owners normally call for training.

The cities of Denver and Austin Texas have approached Ms. Torres about the program. She has held off, wanting to help Los Angeles first. Mr. Lesel is waiting for specific guidelines that can be reviewed for liability questions. A question arose over the use of the City's logo. The use of the logo by the program was denied. Mr. Lesel indicated that additional information was needed from Department staff before he could review the program. Commissioner Knaan asked what the connection to the City the program was to have. Did not understand the program. The program is in partnership with the City.

Public Comment:

Daniel Guss: This is an example where more marketing is going to help. Perhaps some sort of quasi-uniform can be used to give the impression they are authorized to act in the capacity of an officer.

Commissioner Brunson made a motion to table the report until the Commission hears from the City Attorney. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khoro and passed 4-0.

D. Rescue Wagon

General Manager requested this item be tabled for two weeks. The Department has preliminary discussion with PetSmart over the issues. Commissioner Riordan said that if the item is continued the program will continue to be suspended for two weeks. She does not see the program working. The two critical issues for the rescue community are the Safer testing and the issue of the holding period for the animals. Commissioner Knaan asked why after three weeks is the Department still without solutions for the program. The program is important for the Department. Mr. Stuckey had a conversation with the Commission President about continuing the issue for an additional two weeks. The Commission President did not feel she had the ability to extend the item. In addition, she is ready to vote the issue out. Commissioner Knaan indicated she was not inclined to terminate the program until she had heard the issues that were a problem such as the testing, the holding period and if the animals were going to be available to the public during the holding period. Commissioner Brunson included the issue of the selection of the animals. Mr. Stuckey said that there was room for compromise for all the issues except the testing which is a roadblock. Commissioner Knaan said that someone should have met with PetSmart within the last three weeks and not wait until this week. Commissioner said that the Commission is disappointed that the issue has not been resolved in a timely manner.

Public Comment

Melanie Pozez: One of the things is that PetSmart has been working at Hurricane Katrina. Furthermore, they were at the Champ Conference. The Commission has to understand the momentum has not been lost. The Commission's issues are not the only issues out there and the Department has been out there saving animals' lives.

Phyllis Daugherty: Agrees with what Ms Pozez said. She has been with them for the last three days. She said the County has had to suspend the Rescue Wagon. Not because of the testing. There were other issues about holding the animals.

Laura Beth Heisen: The expense of the program has not come up. No one has mentioned controlling the disease. Claims have been filed against the City for animals getting sick from being held too long.

Commissioner Khoro motioned to suspend the program indefinitely until the next meeting. The motion was

seconded by Commissioner Brunson and failed due to a 2-2 vote.

Commissioner Khero motioned to suspend the program indefinitely until the General Manager brings to the Commission potential solutions to rescue the Rescue Wagon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brunson and approved 3-1 with Commissioner Knaan voting nay.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

Update: Marketing Plan for Increased Dog Licensing

Captain Karen Knipscheer reported on the plans to increase the number of dog licenses. The Amnesty Program has preliminary interest from the City Council. No revenue would be lost because the dog owners do not purchase licenses now. It is a way to get the dog license in the system and that way we could charge them next year. In addition, put information out with the utility bills. Commissioner Khero and Riordan asked about the amnesty period. Commissioner Khero asked about one six-month amnesty program. Commissioner Brunson indicated that in the 1970's there were 260,000 animals licensed. Now there are 130,000. This is a loss of \$12 million in revenue because we are not licensing dogs. Commissioner Knaan asked what are we doing right this minute to increase licenses. The report is all speculation. She is against an amnesty program for unaltered animals. Wants to hear that officers are going to dog parks and information is being placed in employee paychecks. Commissioner Riordan wants to begin instituting the penalty phase of the License Code. Asked if the renewal letter is sufficient notification to begin the 45-day period to levy the \$500 penalty. Commissioner Brunson said the process must be consumer friendly through the use of credit cards, on line and other incentives. Commissioner Knaan asked that the item be returned on September 24 with information on when the license will be on the website, when the amnesty program goes to City Council, when the van will begin giving the Department information, when the dog parks will be visited. Commissioner Brunson asked for demographic information on the City between 1970 and 2005 so we can get a ratio of dogs to people.

Public Comment

Daniel Guss: Doesn't know what incentive that was used in the past. Must use private sector ideas to generate licenses. Give free shots or leashes. Must use an incentive. Need a corporate relations person in the Department.

Laura Beth Heisen: No message about marketing. Must focus on getting people to sterilize their animals. Use the van to sterilize and license animals.

Teri Austin: Van was to follow licenses.

Phyllis Daugherty: Opposed to this. Why should a lawbreaker be rewarded over those who pay each year. The canvassers are to license dogs. Do we want to say we are already failing? This is a very bad program. County amnesty program was only for altered animals.

Update: Sam Simon Contract

Commissioner Brunson recused herself from the meeting.

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Commissioner Riordan said the contract says the City expects 7,000 surgeries using one van. Does not see this as possible. Mr. Guerdon said there was never discussion of using two vans. The Department will report on a 90-day report to the Public Safety Committee. The contract began on September 6, 2005. To reach the 7,000 surgeries the Sam Simon Foundation would have to perform 580 surgeries per month. Commissioner indicated that there is nothing that can be done as the contract is signed. The action of the Commission focused on the number of surgeries to be performed, not the number of vans. Commissioner Riordan commented that she did not have the information available to make a decision. Rachael Papp of the Sam Simon Foundation said that the proposal only reflects one van. Commissioner Knaan indicated that, on the day of the vote, the Commission was bullied into voting for the contract because of the timeframe. Council action requires quarterly reports.

Public Comment

Terri Austin: No answer was given to where the second van was. The van was to be 60% dogs and 40% cats. The General Manager's report indicated that more service for less money. Service in not just the number of surgeries it is the areas served. Asked that the Sam Simon van be downtown while the Amanda Foundation van is in the valley.

Commissioner Brunson re-joined the meeting

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Beth Heisen: Spoke on a dog. Described dog. Dog was euthanized for suffering. There was a hold on this dog. This is a pattern. Employees do not care. Went to the Champ Conference. Chameleon was represented and taught me things. Can do so much. Getting the available date correct. There is a field ad one of the fields is available. We are not following-up on the unweaned program.

Phyllis Daugherty: Also attended the Champ Conference. State of New Mexico outlawed TNR. Jacksonville, Fla. has 2 full time officers assigned to pick-up stray cats. Denver, Co. shelter is filled with cats for the first time. Food left outside allows cats to breed. Hungry cats do not reproduce. Unless you are targeting 70% of female cats, your problem will not go away. Start enacting cat licenses. Cats are as important as dogs and we must do something positive.

Daniel Guss: Stopped coming to the meetings because of the former Mayor. He believed he was not being heard. Heard Mr. Stuckey say I misunderstood. Thrilled about the line of questioning. Suggested a vote of confidence in Mr. Stuckey and let Mayor's office know where you stand. Also outsourcing communication function. Volunteered for the position.

Jane Garcia: Asked the Commission to consider the policy that precludes people from turning in a dog and immediately adopting another dog.

Bill Dyer: Request City Attorney to provide companion animals is allowed to accompany their owners out of disaster areas and rescue groups be allowed to rescue animals in danger. Katrina demands more specific language about disaster animals.

Terri Austin: The stats for the sex of dogs and cats are available from intake sheets. A contract is a valid

contract for the Valley Van. All programs should be on the website. All the programs are valuable.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 P.M.