



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday January 22, 2007
10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL
200 N. Spring St.
Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Commissioners: Tariq Khero, President
 Kathleen Riordan, Vice-President
 Marie Atake
 Glenn Brown

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL HEARING

Commission President Khero called the Administrative Appeal Hearing to order at 10:20 A.M. Present were Commissioners Khero, Riordan, and Atake. Commission Brown was absent.

1. Appeal of the General Manager's Decision in License Revocation Case – BR 06505NC

Appellant: Theodore & Rosalind Wiesand

Complaining Party: David Ladelfa

District Manager, North Central Animal Care and Control, Karen Stepp, Captain

Hearing Coordinator, Department of Animal Services, Helen Brakemeier, Captain

Commissioner Atake motioned to uphold the General Manager's decision to reissue **License Number L06-142248**, for dog "**Dinita**" and **License Number L06-137714**, for dog "**Debo**", subject to terms and conditions set forth in the Notice of Order, which was dated April 8, 2006. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Riordan and passed on a vote of 3-0.

Determination: License Reissued with Terms and Conditions

COMMISSION MEETING

Commission President Khero called the Commission meeting to order at 10:58 A.M. Commissioner Brown was absent.

1. PRESENTATION OF COMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMISSION TO EMPLOYEES FOR EXTRADORDINARY SERVICE:

A. Officer Andrew Redfield, Animal Control Officer II, West Los Angeles Shelter

Captain Derek Brown commented on the background of Officer Redfield and his work with the West Los Angeles Shelter. He thanked the Commission for recognizing Officer Redfield's dedication and continued service to the Department.

Public Comments

Daniel Guss: Congratulated and thanked Officer Redfield. Commented on an emergency last week in which he was surprised when Officer Redfield answered and was able to assist him late at night.

2. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

- The executive team led by Assistant General Managers Linda Barth and Deborah Knaan has enhanced the programs and services of the Department.
- The Mayor has interviewed a new potential candidate to serve as a Commissioner for the Department.
- **2006 Department Statistical Highlights:** 19,200 dogs and cats were euthanized (6.6% decrease from 2005). The Department averaged 4.8 animals euthanized per 1,000 residents, compared to the national rate of 17.0 animals euthanized per 1,000 residents. Of the 25,045 dogs taken in by the shelters, 6,947 were euthanized (14.2% decrease from 2005). Of the 21,373 cats taken in by the shelters, 12,278 were euthanized (1.3% decrease from 2005).
- The Management team will be meeting to improve the organizational structure of the Department.
- The Department will continue to review the Animal Cruelty Task Force and attempt to recruit more officers to become part of the team.
- Procedures for silent auctions have been implemented to reduce the number of problems between potential adopters at the shelters.
- The Department will expand the New Hope Program to include rabbits and pocket animals.
- New Hope Alert Program has undergone several enhancements: The Green Alert lists animals difficult to place, that are available to all New Hope members at no cost. These animals come with free spay/neuter surgery, microchip, and vaccination. The Red Alert lists animals that are sick and/or injured and have not responded to two regimens of medical treatment, irremediably suffering, have been in the shelter for over 45 days, and those that are dangerously aggressive. Animals on the Red Alert List are time-stamped, and given seven days to be adopted out by rescuers.
- There is now a volunteer coordinator in each of the shelters responsible for recruiting and managing volunteers. The vision is to eventually have a volunteer-led mobile adoption force for each shelter.
- D300 animals will not be released without veterinary clearance or authorization from AGM Knaan.
- The Department of Recreation and Parks approved a Board Report that formally adopted rules for conduct in off-lease dog parks.

- February 10 and 11, the Department will be partnering with the Rescue and Humane Alliance in declaring a “No Kill” weekend and promoting an adoption event called the “Paw-fect Match.”
- The West Valley staff will be moving into their new facility.
- The Department will be participating in the Big Sunday Event on April 28-29. All volunteer staff will help work on the shelters.
- The systems team will be unveiling of the newly improved Department website.
- There are nine potential veterinarians that are in queue of the hiring process with the Department.
- Best Friends Animal Society is conducting an art exhibit at the M.J. Figgins Fine Art & Furnishings on Saturday, January 20, 2007. The art exhibit would continue thru February 8.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented on problems with bringing animals into the shelter and not having them altered. Concerned about the suffering animals placed on the 7-day Red Alert List. Also concerned with the lack of monitoring.

Mary Catalano: Said that the Euthanasia List was never voted out. Was very happy with the Department’s recent progress. Had heard that there have been a number of dogs and cats killed as a result of a lack of medical staff available to medicate the animals. Suggested that individuals in rest homes would be good candidates to assist with Baby Bottle Feeding Program.

Daniel Guss: Suggested that the General Manager report to the Commission all media coverage given to either himself or to the Department. Commented that the County is not experiencing difficulty in hiring veterinarians. Indicated that there is still much confusion for the public in dealing with the different Lists.

3. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2006

Commissioner Atake motioned to approve the minutes for December 11, 2006 with her requested changes, along with those changes requested by Commissioner Riordan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Riordan and passed on a vote of 3-0.

B. Oral Report by the Commission on Meetings and Events Attended

Commissioner Atake volunteered at dog adoption events on December 16, December 30, January 3, and January 6. Commissioner Khoro and Riordan had nothing to report.

Public Comments

Daniel Guss: The General Manager should advise the Board as to why he is missing a Commission Meeting.

C. Approval of Meeting Schedule for 2007

Commissioner Riordan asked about the Department’s authority in conducting investigations in public events that featured wildlife animals. She also requested that a No-Kill Plan be developed and placed on a future agenda. Commissioner Atake pointed out that there should be separate items for the New Hope Program and

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the Signed-Off Euthanasia List. Commissioner Riordan asked if a future nighttime meeting to be held off-site could be added to the schedule. Commissioner Atake motioned to approve the meeting schedule. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Riordan and passed on a vote of 3-0.

Public Comments

Mary Catalano: Asked about where the possible off-site meeting would take place.

4. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Request for Devising and Distributing a List for Animals Pending Euthanasia (Continued from December 11, 2006)

The Board decided to hold the agenda item over to the February 12, 2007 Commission Meeting.

B. Five-Year Agreement with Dr. Eric D. Jones, DVM, For Operation of a Spay & Neuter Clinic at the Department's South Los Angeles Animal Shelter

The General Manager announced that the Department had recently found a potential candidate in Dr. Eric D. Jones to take over and operate the South Los Angeles Spay and Neuter Clinic. It was the Department's hope to move forward in offering Dr. Jones a contract with the City. Assistant General Manager Ms. Linda Barth explained that the term of the Agreement would be five years, with four one-year extensions, exercised at the discretion of the City. Ms. Barth gave a brief overview on the background of Dr. Jones and clarified the perceived incidents in the past, in which an owner failed to follow the Dr.'s orders. Dr. Jones came before the Board and explained his personal philosophy and desire to help the community and the Department in reaching their goal of a "No Kill Community."

Public Comments

Mary Catalano: Asked how Dr. Jones would handle the rabbit situation and how thoroughly the Department reviewed the Dr.'s background in dealing with a large scale spay and neuter operation. Inquired about what the prices would be for the services offered by Dr. Jones.

Daniel Guss: Expressed concern about the related services Dr. Jones would be performing and the incentives he would have for offering them. Suggested that Dr. Jones could possibly help in recruiting fellow veterinarians.

Commissioner Riordan motioned to award a five-year agreement with four one-year extensions to Dr. Eric D. Jones, DVM, subject to approval of the Mayor, City Council, and City Attorney; and direct staff to issue an interim permit so that services may begin immediately. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 3-0.

5. DISCUSSION ITEM

A. Hearing Process Overview (Held from November 13, 2006)

Captain Helen Brakemeier gave an overview of the Department's Hearing Process. The first step when a

barking dog issue arises is the filing of a complaint. Letters about the barking dog problem are sent to notify both the dog owners and the complainants. Complainants must wait a period of fifteen days before a second complaint can be filed with the Department. It is the hope, within this period of fifteen days, that the problem could be resolved without taking further action. If a second complaint is filed, a mediation meeting is held at the shelter so that both parties could meet face-to-face and offer solutions to resolve the problem. If the problem is not resolved at the mediation meeting or within a period of 120 days, a formal hearing is held and a decision is reached and forwarded to the General Manager of the Department. The General Manager must review the case and approve the Hearing Examiner's decision. The dog owner has the right to appeal the decision of the General Manager. The appeal must be filed within a period of fifteen days upon receiving the decision letter.

Captain Brakemeier commented that the Department needs its own Hearing Division to oversee the program, and give Barking Dog and Dangerous Animal cases full attention in finding solutions to ongoing community problems. A separate division would allow the Department to better monitor whether or not the issued terms and conditions are being met.

Public Comments

Curt Steindler: Commented that the barking dog issue is something that needs to be addressed, as it affects an individual's quality of life. Barking dogs represent a breakdown in the community relations between neighbors. The time period in which a problem is resolved needs to be much quicker. A second complaint should not be required to get to the mediation session. Favored a separate division of hearing experts to oversee the barking dog cases. Training videos should be made available to the public after the first written complaint, and more stringent terms and conditions should be applied.

Phyllis Daugherty: Suggested that the Department begin threatening to confiscate animals if ownership is denied. This method has often been successful in getting an individual to admit to ownership.

The Commissioners felt that a better solution instead of confiscating animals would be to raise fines on owners.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (Taken out of order)

Daniel Guss: Expressed concern about the Department's lack of marketing prowess. Indicated that the Department missed out on a great opportunity when Cesar Millan, the Dog Whisperer, came before City Council. The Department was not represented at the Council Meeting.

Curt Steindler: The Department Website had no indication that the previous Commission Meeting was cancelled. Asked that the meeting agendas be posted on the Website closer to every Friday morning. Mentioned that using the Community Council system would be very beneficial to the Department in terms of public outreach.

The General Manager left the Commission Meeting at 1:00 P.M.

Coby Siegenthaler: Had been a former volunteer. Questioned why animals were being put to death when there were still empty cages. Felt that personnel at the shelters needed better training. Asked that the Department consider bending the rules for her in allowing her to receive spay/neuter vouchers for her work.

with New Hope animals.

Theresa Brady: Thanked the West Valley shelter for not killing the neonate babies. Indicated however, that two of the neonate babies were adopted out unsterilized. Claimed that she has experienced difficulty in speaking with staff about the babies. Concerned that the rabbits were euthanized when there was still cages available. Mentioned that on several occasions, cages were freely given out to the public when rabbits were adopted. Wondered why rabbits had been left off the New Hope List, and expressed her confusion with the wording for the Red Alert List.

Phyllis Daugherty: Wanted a discussion item on guard dogs. There is no wording on anti-tethering laws for the officers to enforce. Indicated that there was far too much attention given to Department statistics. Felt that the Anti-Cruelty Task Force was failing in their mission and goals.

Mary Catalano: Suggested that rabbits be added to the New Hope List. Advised the Department to remove the slogan of "Saving Animals' Lives" from the Department's Website and uniforms. Commented on the importance of allowing more individuals to receive spay/neuter vouchers.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Requests from Commissioners For Future Agenda Items

- Commissioner Atake wanted discussion item on temperament testing to be placed on the agenda.
- Commissioner Atake wanted a discussion item on medical records accuracy to be placed on the agenda.
- Commissioner Atake requested a discussion item on puppy placements.
- Commissioner Atake requested for an update on the Do Not Adopt List.
- Commissioner Atake wanted to see what could be done to issue more spay/neuter vouchers.
- Commissioner Atake requested for an update on the Animal Cruelty Task Force.
- Commissioner Atake requested a discussion item regarding the tracking of the animals that were released intact.
- Commissioner Riordan wanted to look into incentives for pet shops taking in shelter animals. She requested that the Department look into whether pet shops and veterinary offices be made into "independent contractors" to try and license pets in exchange for a commission (percentage of the license fee). She recommended that the Department check with the City Controller.
- Commissioner Riordan asked if the Department could look into the USDA's approach towards the dangerous animal cases being treated as cruelty cases.
- Commissioner Riordan wanted public relations to be placed on the agenda.
- Commissioner Riordan requested a discussion item on Department procedures for impounding strays.
- Commissioners Khoro and Atake wanted Department language and a standard of terms to be placed on the agenda.

Public Comments

Mary Catalano: Requested that the Department perform a retraining of the ACT in how to talk people out of dumping their animals. Suggested looking into tax relief for homeowners who have pets. Wanted to make the Website language more clear.

Daniel Guss: Offered to provide a style guide to assist in Department language. Concerned about the negative names given to animals at the shelter that discourage adoptions. Wanted to know who owned the content on the Department Website. Indicated in a recent blog that the General Manager made several religious references on the Department Website.

Phyllis Daugherty: Requested that there be an agenda item on guard dog statistics. Re-emphasized the importance of having citation wording for anti-tethering laws for the officers to enforce.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Riordan motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 3-0. The Commission Meeting was adjourned at 1:40 P.M.