



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Tuesday, November 13, 2012
10:00 A.M.

**Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Room 1060
Los Angeles, California 90012**

LISA McCURDY
President

KATHLEEN RIORDAN
Vice-President

JIM JENSVOLD
TARIQ A. KHERO
ALANA YAÑEZ

Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. For information please call (213) 482-9501.

Si requiere servicios de traduccion, favor de notificar la oficina con 24 horas por anticipado.

COMMISSION MEETING

1. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - (Comments from the public on items of public interest within the Board's subject matter jurisdiction and on items not on the Agenda.)

Public Comments: The Brown Act prohibits the Board and staff from responding to the speakers' comments. Some of the matters raised in public comment may appear on a future agenda.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the Meetings of October 23, 2012.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. None

4. BOARD REPORTS

- A. ASPCA Meet Your Match (MYM) and SAFER

That the Board authorize the Department of Animal Services to work with the ASPCA Meet Your Match and SAFER experts to develop and operate a pilot program at one Los Angeles animal shelter to aid the staff and volunteers in placing pets in the best homes for the pet and the family with the goal of decreasing the animals returned to the shelter after adoption and to increase the Live Release Rate in the shelter. The Department will periodically report back to the Board on the development and progress of this pilot program. At no time would the program be used to identify animals to be euthanized. If necessary, the Board also should modify its adopted policy prohibiting "temperament testing" to accommodate this pilot program.

5. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

6. ADJOURNMENT

Next Commission Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 P.M., November 27, 2012, at West Los Angeles Animal Shelter, 11361 Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90064

AGENDAS - The Board of Animal Services Commissioners (Board) meets regularly every second (2nd) and fourth (4th) Tuesday of each month at 10:00 A.M. Regular Meetings are held at City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Room 1060, in Los Angeles, CA 90012. The agendas for Board meetings contain a brief general description of those items to be considered at the meetings. Board Agendas are available at the Department of Animal Services (Department), Administrative Division, 221 North Figueroa Street, 5th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Board Agendas may also be viewed on the 2nd floor Public Bulletin Board in City Hall East, 200 North Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Internet users may also access copies of present and prior agenda items, copies of the Board Calendar, MP-3 audio files of meetings as well as electronic copies of approved minutes on the Department's World Wide Web Home Page site at <http://www.laanimalservices.com/CommissionAgendas.htm>

Three (3) members of the Board constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Some items on the Agenda may be approved without any discussion.

The Board Secretary will announce the items to be considered by the Board. The Board will hear the presentation on the topic and gather additional information from

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

Department Staff. Once presentations have finished, the Board President will ask if any Board Member or member of the public wishes to speak on one or more of these items. Each speaker called before the Commission will have one (1) minute to express their comments and concerns on matters placed on the agenda.

PUBLIC INPUT AT BOARD MEETINGS – Public Participation on Agenda Items.

Members of the public will have an opportunity to address the Board on agenda items after the item is called and before the Board takes action on the item, unless the opportunity for public participation on the item was previously provided to all interested members of the public at a public meeting of a Committee of the Board and the item has not substantially changed since the Committee heard the item. When speaking to an agenda item other than during Public Comment (see Public Comment below), the speaker shall limit his or her comments to the specific item under consideration (California Government Code, Section 54954.3).

Public Comment. The Board will provide an opportunity for public comment at every regular meeting of the Board. Members of the public may address the Board on any items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board as part of Public Comment.

Speaker Cards. Members of the public wishing to speak are to fill out one speaker card for each agenda item on which they wish to speak and present it to the Board secretary before the item is called.

Time Limit for Speakers. Speakers addressing the Board will be limited to one (1) minute of speaking time for each agenda item except in public comment which is limited to three (3) minutes. The Chairperson, with the approval of a majority of the Board, may for good cause extend any speaker's time by increments of up to one (1) minute. Total speaker time on any agenda item will be limited to ten (10) minutes per item and fifteen (15) minutes for Public Comment, unless extended as above.

Brown Act. These rules shall be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the Ralph M. Brown Act, California Government Code Section § 54950 et seq.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT. Speakers are expected to behave in an orderly manner and to refrain from personal attacks or use of profanity or language that may incite violence.

All persons present at Board meetings are expected to behave in an orderly manner and to refrain from disrupting the meeting, interfering with the rights of others to address the Board and/or interfering with the conduct of business by the Board.

In the event that any speaker does not comply with the foregoing requirements, or if a speaker does not address the specific item under consideration, the speaker may be ruled out of order, their speaking time forfeited and the Chairperson may call upon the next speaker.

The Board, by majority vote, may order the removal from the meeting of any speaker or audience member continuing to behave in a disruptive manner after being warned by the Chairperson regarding their behavior. Section 403 of the California Penal Code states as follows: "Every person who, without authority of law, willfully disturbs or breaks up any assembly or meeting that is not unlawful in its character, other than an assembly or meeting referred to in Section 302 of the Penal Code or Section 18340 of the Elections Code, is guilty of a misdemeanor".

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

VOTING AND DISPOSITION OF ITEMS – Most items require a majority vote of the entire membership of the Board (3 members). When debate on an item is completed, the Board President will instruct the Secretary to "call the roll". Every member present must vote for or against each item; abstentions are not permitted unless there is a Conflict of Interest for which the Board member is obliged to abstain from voting. The Secretary will announce the votes on each item. Any member of the Board may move to "reconsider" any vote on any item on the agenda, except to adjourn, suspend the Rules, or where an intervening event has deprived the Board of jurisdiction, providing that said member originally voted on the prevailing side of the item. The motion to "reconsider" shall only be in order once during the meeting, and once during the next regular meeting. The member requesting reconsideration shall identify for all members present the Agenda number and subject matter previously voted upon. A motion to reconsider is not debatable and shall require an affirmative vote of three members of the Board.

When the Board has failed by sufficient votes to approve or reject an item, and has not lost jurisdiction over the matter, or has not caused it to be continued beyond the next regular meeting, the issue is again placed on the next agenda for the following meeting for the purpose of allowing the Board to again vote on the matter.

**BOARD OF
ANIMAL SERVICES
COMMISSIONERS**

LISA McCURDY
President
KATHLEEN RIORDAN
Vice-President

Members
JIM JENSVOLD
TARIQ A. KHERO
ALANA YANEZ

City of Los Angeles
CALIFORNIA



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL SERVICES
221 North Figueroa Street
5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(888) 452-7381
FAX (213) 482-9511

BRENDA F. BARNETTE
General Manager
JOHN CHAVEZ
Assistant General Manager

Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners
Brenda F. Barnette, General Manager

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: November 13, 2012

PREPARED BY: Brenda Barnette
TITLE: General Manager

REPORT DATE: November 8, 2012

SUBJECT: ASPCA Meet Your Match (MYM) and SAFER

BOARD ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Board authorize the Department of Animal Services to work with the ASPCA's Meet Your Match® (MYM) and SAFER® (Safety Assessment For Evaluating Re-homing) experts to develop and operate a pilot program at one Los Angeles animal shelter to aid the staff and volunteers in placing pets in the best homes for the pet and the family with the goal of decreasing the animals returned to the shelter after adoption and to significantly increase the Live Release Rate (LRR) in the shelter. The Department will periodically report back to the Board on the development and progress of this pilot program. At no time would the program be used to identify animals to be euthanized. The ASPCA's Meet Your Match® (MYM) and SAFER® (Safety Assessment For Evaluating Re-homing) is not temperament testing, however, if the Board feels that it is necessary, the Board may want to modify its adopted policy prohibiting "temperament testing" to accommodate this pilot program.

I. PRESENTER:

Dr. Emily Weiss is the Vice President of Research & Development for the ASPCA. Dr. Weiss, a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (CAAB), has focused her professional and personal life on improving welfare for animals. Dr. Weiss has developed many life saving programs used by shelters around the country, including the ASPCA's SAFER®

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Visit our website at www.LAAnimalServices.com

and Meet Your Match® programs. She is the co-editor of the Journal of *Applied Animal Welfare Science*, and has published extensively in the field of applied behavior. She has traveled across North America lecturing on various areas of applied animal behavior, and has been featured nationally on radio, TV and print. She directed the development and use of the ASPCA Animal Stats Dashboard, the tool used by the ASPCA to measure progress in shelters and S/N clinics. Recently, Dr. Weiss' work has focused on developing program and processes to increase the LRR in shelters around the country.

II. BACKGROUND:

In August 2003, Department Captain Louis Dedeaux gave the Board of Animal Services Commissioners a historical overview and update of the Department's Behavioral Assessment Program. Dedeaux explained that the intent of the program is to identify an animal's personality, enhance the lives of the animals while at the shelter, and to place more animals in homes of their own. At or around this time, the Board adopted a policy prohibiting the use of "temperament testing" for any purpose, with an emphasis on prohibiting its use for the purpose of determining whether an animal should be deemed "unadoptable."

In August 2005, the Board held a hearing on a proposal for the Department to affiliate with PetSmart Charities' "Rescue Waggin'" program, which employs SAFER® as one of the methodologies it uses for choosing animals to transfer from crowded shelters to less crowded ones with the goal of enhancing an animal's chances for adoption. Upon learning of the proposed use of SAFER® unaccompanied by any program to train staff so as to prevent its misapplication, the Board concluded that affiliating with Rescue Waggin' at that time would violate the 2003 policy and disapproved the proposal.

Again in 2008, staff prepared reports on proposals to assess both dogs and cats to enhance their lives while at the shelter, and to enhance the Department's ability to place more animals in homes of their own. The Commission again expressed a concern that the assessment of shelter animals would primarily be used to identify animals to be euthanized irrespective of the potential value of learning about the animal to help make a better match with an adopter, to identify helpful activities for the animal during the shelter stay, and to provide the adopter with guidance for the most successful transition to the new home.

Over the better part of the last nine to 10 years, the Board and some members of the public have consistently expressed two primary concerns relative to behavior assessment techniques it has discussed. First, there has been an ongoing concern that behavior assessments would be used more to identify animals to be euthanized rather than to improve their chances for adoption. Second, there also has been an ongoing concern that the majority of Department staff is not adequately trained to conduct assessments in a manner that would overcome the first concern.

III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND FAQs PROVIDED BY ASPCA

Implementation of the ASPCA®'s Meet Your Match® Program and SAFER® Assessment at City of Los Angeles Shelters

One of the ASPCA's most popular program, used extensively by shelters around the country, is the ASPCA®'s Meet Your Match® (MYM). This is a unique program that seeks to increase adoptions and decrease returns in shelters across the country, by assessing the "Canine-ality™" of adoptable dogs, as well as the "Feline-ality™" of adoptable cats, and matching them with their perfect pet parents.

The first component is assessing each animal. Dogs are first given an initial behavior screening: SAFER® (Safety Assessment For Evaluating Re-homing) by qualified, trained staff to assess if the dog is of need of support pre-adoption. Then, in the Canine-ality™ Assessment, trained shelter professionals determine the dog's social interaction, playfulness, energy level, motivation and drive. Cats are given the Feline-ality™ Assessment, which reliably predicts how each individual cat may behave with social interaction, vocal behavior, and interest in new things when they arrive in their new home. These assessments are science-based programs that are fun and highly-effective.

Based on their Canine-ality™ or Feline-ality™ Assessment, each animal is assigned one of nine different "-alities", which are grouped into three major color-coded categories. These categories are purple, orange, and green respectively, and an "-ality" description is added to the animal's cage card. Some examples of "-alities" include the relaxed and laid back "Couch Potato," the naturally playful, curious and trusting "Busy Bee," and action hero-type "Go-Getter."

The adopter survey is the second component of the process, which asks 19 different questions of the potential adopter to determine which Canine-ality™ or Feline-ality™ best matches their expectations, experience, lifestyle and home environment. The adopter is given a purple, orange or green guest pass – color coordinated to match the cage cards of the cats that best match them.

ASPCA's Meet Your Match® is the first research-based program of its kind to focus on both the animal's behavior and the owner's expectations. Launched in 2004, well over 100 shelters nationwide now use ASPCA's Meet Your Match®. The program provides kennel staff, adoption counselors and volunteers with a common base of knowledge about the unique behavioral characteristics of each animal in their shelter. Shelters using this program regularly report increased adoptions, and decreased returns of adopted animals.

ASPCA's Meet Your Match® was created in conjunction with Emily Weiss, Ph. D., C.A.A.B., Vice President of Shelter Research & Development for the ASPCA.

About the ASPCA®'s SAFER® Assessment

The ASPCA®'s SAFER® (Safety Assessment For Evaluating Re-homing) Assessment is a tool for assessing the probability of future canine aggression. Dr. Emily Weiss, Ph.D., C.A.A.B., developed the SAFER™ assessment in 2009. Dr. Weiss joined the ASPCA in 2005 and is currently Vice President of Shelter Research & Development.

The SAFER® Assessment is a seven-item, research-based assessment designed to identify the likelihood for aggression in individual dogs age six months and older by eliciting responses that are predictive of future behavior. SAFER® evaluates a dog's comfort level with restraint and touch, reaction to new experiences including movement and sound stimuli, bite inhibition, behavior around food and toys, and arousal level toward novel objects and other dogs. It is intended to be one of many tools to help identify the risk of future aggression and the individual behavioral support needed before adoption for each dog in a shelter.

The assessment can be completed in about six to 10 minutes utilizing an assessment team comprised of an Assessor and an Observer who are both knowledgeable and objective about canine behavior and possess excellent observation skills and safe animal handling skills.

SAFER® has helped animal-welfare professionals all over the country identify potential aggression and opportunities for behavior modification, ultimately leading to more adoptions through appropriate placement.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the ASPCA®'s Meet Your Match® Program?

- The ASPCA®'s Meet Your Match® (MYM) program is a unique adoption tool that seeks to increase adoption rates and decrease return rates in shelters across the country, by assessing the "Canine-ality™" of adoptable dogs, as well as the "Feline-ality™" of adoptable cats, and matching them with their pet parents.
- ASPCA®'s Meet Your Match® was created in conjunction with Emily Weiss, Ph.D., C.A.A.B., Vice President of Shelter Research & Development for the ASPCA.

How does the ASPCA®'s Meet Your Match® Program work?

- The first component is assessing each animal. Dogs are first given an initial behavior screening: SAFER® (Safety Assessment For Evaluating Rehoming) by qualified, trained staff to make sure the dog is a suitable candidate for adoption. Then, in the Canine-ality™ Assessment, trained shelter professionals determine the animal's friendliness, playfulness, energy level, motivation and drive. Cats are given the Feline-ality™ Assessment, which reliably predicts how each individual cat may behave with social interaction, vocal behavior, and interest in new things when they arrive in their new home. These assessments are science-based programs that are fun and highly-effective.

- Based on their Canine-ality™, or Feline-ality™ Assessment, each animal is assigned one of nine different “-alities”, which are grouped into three major color-coded categories. These categories are purple, orange, and green respectively, and the descriptions are added to the animal’s cage card. Some examples include the relaxed and laid back “Couch Potato,” the naturally playful, curious and trusting “Busy Bee,” and action hero-type “Go-Getter.”
- The adopter survey is the second component of the process, which asks 19 different questions of the potential adopter to determine which Canine-ality™ or Feline-ality™ best matches their expectations, experience, lifestyle and home environment. The adopter is given a purple, orange or green guest pass – color coordinated to match the cage cards of the cats that best match them.

How does the ASPCA®’s Meet Your Match® Program help shelters?

- ASPCA MYM is the first research-based program of its kind to focus on both the animal’s behavior and the owner’s expectations. Launched in 2004, hundreds of shelters nationwide now use ASPCA®’s Meet Your Match®.
- The program provides kennel staff, adoption counselors and volunteers with a common base of knowledge about the unique behavioral characteristics of each animal in their shelter. Shelters using this program regularly report increased adoptions, and decreased returns of adopted animals.
- Since these programs can be run by volunteers, staff time can be greater utilized for other life saving work.
- These programs allow for a common shared language which results in greater opportunities for transferring dogs and cats to other shelters or rescues with the goal of saving more lives.
- Adopters can complete their adopter survey on-line at home. This can entice people to come to the shelter because of a match they see on the shelter’s website and can minimize the shelter’s time to help the adopter find their match.

What is the ASPCA®’s SAFER® Assessment?

- The ASPCA®’s SAFER® (Safety Assessment For Evaluating Re-homing) Assessment is a seven-item, research-based tool for assessing the probability of future canine aggression.

What is the purpose of the ASPCA®’s SAFER® Assessment?

- The SAFER® Assessment is designed to identify the potential for aggression in individual dogs age six months and older through objective observations of the dog’s behavior.

- It is intended to be one of many tools used to help identify the risk of future aggression and the individual behavioral support needed before adoption for each dog in a shelter.

What kinds of behaviors are evaluated through the ASPCA®'s SAFER® Assessment?

- SAFER® evaluates a dog's comfort level with restraint and touch, reaction to new experiences including movement and sound stimuli, behavior around food and toys, and arousal level toward novel objects and other dogs.

How is the ASPCA®'s SAFER® Assessment conducted?

- The assessment can be completed in about 6-10 minutes utilizing an assessment team comprised of an Assessor and an Observer who are both knowledgeable and objective about canine behavior and possess excellent observation skills and safe animal handling skills.

How successful is the ASPCA®'s SAFER® Assessment?

- SAFER® has helped animal-welfare professionals all over the country identify potential aggression and opportunities for behavior modification, ultimately leading to more adoptions through appropriate placement.

Why is Los Angeles Animal Services bringing the ASPCA®'s Meet Your Match® and SAFER® Assessment to the Board for discussion?

- The Department is looking to explore the implementation of Meet Your Match® in order to increase adoptions, increase transfers to rescues, and decrease euthanasia at their facilities.
- The benefit of SAFER® compared to other behavior evaluation protocols is that, with SAFER®, there is no pass or fail; only a method of identifying the resources needed to support each dog and find the most appropriate placement for them. SAFER® can help shelters increase positive outcomes.

IV. PROGRAM OUTLINE:

- Identify a suitable LAAS shelter for introduction of the pilot program.
- ASPCA trains ACTs and volunteers at that shelter in the proper implementation of MYM and SAFER.
- ACTs and volunteers, operating in pairs, conduct SAFER assessments and results are noted for each animal for use in adoption placement efforts.
- The assessment sessions would all be recorded on video and kept as records available for review.
- Department will report to Board on results of the pilot program before any

consideration is given to expanding MYM to other shelters.

V. FISCAL IMPACT:

The impact would be minimal and would be limited to the staff time to train them in SAFER and MYM program implementation, acquisition of one video camera and minimal additional equipment. Time spent on training staff during work shifts is considered a normal part of Department personnel expenses. Training would be donated by ASPCA. Equipment costs are expected to be nominal.

Approved:

Brenda F. Barnette, General Manager

BOARD ACTION:

_____ Passed

Disapproved _____

_____ Passed with noted modifications

Continued _____

_____ Tabled

New Date _____