



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES

TUESDAY, April 14, 2015 at 10:00 AM

Los Angeles City Hall, Room 1060  
200 North Spring Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90012

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Audio MP-3 Recording is available at [www.laanimalservices.com](http://www.laanimalservices.com)

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David Zaft, President  
Alana Yañez, Vice-President  
Jennifer Brent  
Larry Gross  
Roger Wolfson

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Board Secretary, Rita Moreno, Los Angeles Animal Services (**LAAS**). Roll call. Commissioners present were Zaft, Yañez, Brent, Gross and Wolfson. Also present: General Manager (GM) Brenda Barnette, Director of Field Operation (DFO) Jan Selder and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Dov S. Lesel.

Commissioner Zaft opened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda and direction on the appeal hearing process.

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING APPEAL**

1. Barking Dog Revocation Case: BR 142020 WL  
Respondent: Asta Elizabeth Bloze  
Complaining Witness: Charles Portney  
West Los Angeles Animal Care and Control: Captain Jorge Figueroa

Testimony was taken from the Respondent's Attorneys, Christian Molnar and Steven Boyers, and from Complaining Witnesses, Charles Portney and Dean Dennis. The Commission found that the evidence supported the General Manager's decision and that the hearing before the Hearing Examiner was conducted in accordance with LAMC § 53.18.5.

**Commissioner Zaft** moved to table the decision to the next meeting in order to provide sufficient time to review the additional materials provided by the Respondent and allow the Witness to submit any additional materials. **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded the motion which failed 3-2.

**Commissioner Brent** made a motion to uphold the order of the General Manager and revoke the licenses for **Nicky** (L15-242312), **Luca** (L15-242308) and **Aspen** (L15-337413) and ordered that the dogs be relinquished to the Department or removed from the City of Los Angeles. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Yañez** and was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Commissioner Zaft requested that a procedure be developed for the submission of additional documents.

**II. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS: Susan Taylor:** Stated she was at the Conference in New Orleans and that issues such as licensing, spay/neuter, enforcement and the lack of help remain; vet prices are high due to higher payments made initially by Maddie's Fund and discussed problems with Value Vet; discussed voucher distribution and need for timely payment and increased voucher amount.

2. **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- A. Approval of Minutes for March 24, 2015.

**Commissioner Yañez** made a motion to approve the minutes and **Commissioner Gross** seconded. The vote was 4 – 0 in favor and 1 abstention.

3. **ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER**

GM Barnette shared the following:

- Attended the Best Friend's leadership Forum, a group of approximately 30 national leaders in animal welfare who assemble by invitation. In previous meetings, the concentration has been on the subjects of Big Dogs and Sustainability of the No Kill Movement as a national model. This discussion continued with the object of defining some specific next steps and planning for them. In addition, I attended the national Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) National Conference and Expo.
- General Services has completed the Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) project at the Harbor animal shelter. These units replaced the in-efficient Evaporative Coolers and will now provide more energy efficient cooling to the dog and cat keeping areas located in the building.
- Two weeks ago the Director of Shelter Operations met with Recreation and Parks and held a Bid opening. The overall low bid came back at \$117,400 for landscape maintenance at all six shelters. We will be reviewing the bid proposals and discussing budget issues with Recreation and Parks prior to accepting any contracts.
- Beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, New Hope Partners adopting cats were required to pay the adoption fees of \$50, unless the cat has been red or blue alerted for medical or space. The Petrie Grant is covering the adoption fees for all dog adoptions until the funds are exhausted. The Department notified all New Hope Partners of the March 31 expiration of the Pit Bull incentive. The New Hope dog pull fees are covered by the remaining Petrie incentive funds as of April 1<sup>st</sup> and New Hope will now be required to begin paying the \$50 cat pull.

There is the potential of another HSUS grant to cover the pull fees for Pit bulls, Chihuahua's and cats.

- Challenges with clerical staffing so they are being shifted from shelter to shelter to ensure coverage.

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- On March 28<sup>th</sup>, Field Services responded to assist LAPD with a welfare check on the 14400 block of Tiara St. in Van Nuys. LAPD Officers were unable to gain entry into the residence due to a large aggressive dog. Field Services responded to assist and found several neglected animals in horrible conditions. Three live dogs and three live reptiles were immediately taken into protective custody and three dead reptiles were seized. The owner has been in contact with staff and has been advised the animals will be held as evidence pending completion of the investigation.
- On March 29<sup>th</sup> at the West Los Angeles Shelter a UCLA filming group filmed their production of a movie titled, "Owen" about a woman who has lost her home and is considering leaving her dog at the shelter.
- On March 30<sup>th</sup>, Park Productions began filming a 'Pedigree' dog food commercial at The North Central Shelter, portraying what 'shelter life' is like. The film crew adopted the dogs they featured in the commercial and gave the shelter a \$5,000 donation!
- April 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> The Pet Care Foundation will host a shelter wide adoption event, "Spring 'Em" with \$25 off the price of adoption for all dogs and cats.
- Repairs are needed for repairs of the three Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) units at the North Central animal shelter. General Services will address as Proposition F Phase II Renovations have been delayed. The return of high bids placed the project \$4 million over budget and the Prop F Committee recommended re-bidding the project. General Services will put it out to bid.
- Cmdr. Dedeaux is on the Mayor's Water and Energy Working Group to help conserve water.
- DFO Salazar attended the annual Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Animal care Expo. March 30<sup>th</sup> through April 2. The director applied for and received a full grant scholarship awarded by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) for this event.
- Two weekends ago Councilman Parks visited the (closed) new South Los Angeles Animal Care Center Annex located at the 6000 – 6100 block of St. Andrews Place. Upon his arrival/inspection, he called the Chesterfield Square animal shelter and notified the shelter staff of his findings. Councilman Parks advised the staff that the construction fence was down allowing cars to enter and park on the property and that a construction cone was being used to prop the gates open to the dog play yards. Our staff immediately walked to the facility to conduct a follow up inspection and found the same along with evidence of vagrants living on the property and vandalism to the facility which included remains of narcotics, drug paraphernalia, tagging and other various hazardous materials. The Department is currently working with CD 8 and a city vendor RD Systems to have surveillance camera's installed and routed to L.A.P.D.'s 77<sup>th</sup> Division.
- On March 27<sup>th</sup>, Animal Control Officers served a search warrant on the 15800 block of Mayall St. Officers impounded two Bull Terriers found in poor conditions

without any access to water. One dog was kept inside a dog kennel inside the bed of a truck in an enclosed garage. The dog was standing in an accumulation of feces. Humane charges are pending.

- Officers will be submitting a case to the City Attorney's Office this week regarding a possible humane complaint received last July about the condition and treatment of Elephants associated with the Ringling Bros. event at the Staple Center. The case is very extensive and consists of over 180 pages in the submission. The City Attorney's Office will review and determine if the matter will be filed.
- There is a rumored job action (strike) by the labor unions. At this time, we do not know what day it is to occur. As the General Manager, it is my responsibility to ensure the operation of the Department and the safety of the animals. We may need your assistance in caring for the animals during this period. I will get back to you as soon as I have definitive information.
- The Mountain lion was confirmed by Fish and Wildlife to be P22. We tried nudging him with a long pole then launching tennis balls in his immediate area, but none of these methods moved him out. F&W resorted to firing three bean bag rounds at the cat but that did not work either. F&W made the call to leave the cat alone and have everyone leave so that it may exit tonight on its own. They added that they were not going to tranquilize it due to human and animal safety reasons.
- The Department is scheduled to move to the new location at 2 Cal Plaza on April 24<sup>th</sup>. We had 17,000 square feet in Fig Plaza and will have 10,000 square feet in the new location. The new facility is not public friendly and parking is expensive.

**Commissioner Zaft** recommended providing information to the neighborhood about the P22 incident.

Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugharty:** Stated that problems that arose as a result of shift of duties from South L.A. to North Central were predicted as was the park; department is shifting staff from Harbor to South L.A. shelter; LAAS does not have jurisdiction over wildlife and staff put themselves and the public at risk.

#### 4. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

**Commissioner Gross:** Reported that LA City Councilmember Tom LaBonge stopped by prior to the start of the meeting to ask about the Department's response to the P-22 situation. Observed the Amanda Foundation Spay Neuter Mobile Clinic in North Hollywood. Was well attended with people getting their dogs and cats spayed and neutered. The Clinic operation was impressive and appeared to be run extremely effectively; Teri Austin stated she would be happy to distribute licensing information to people, if leaflets were provided by the Department; Seems we should be putting more resources into having more mobile clinics in the community, especially if spay/neuter funds are not being spent by other contractors.

**Commissioner Yañez:** Mentioned HUHS Conference in New Orleans and participated in door-to-door outreach – one of the most attended tracks at the conference; next outreach event in May.

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**Commissioner Brent:** Attended Mayor's Status of Women and Girls event; met with staff at West Valley - concerns about replacing grass with artificial turf; recognized death of Leonard Aube from the Annenberg Foundation, which gave over 2 billion dollars.

**Commissioner Wolfson:** Asked ACA Lesel about the possibility of an RFP to allow pet stores kiosks in the shelters to sell basic items for initial pet adoption and give LAAS a percentage of sales; would like consideration of placement of photo booth in the shelters.

Public Comment  
None

## 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### A. Volunteer Program Update

DFO Selder mentioned success of volunteer kiosk at West Valley, discussed the staff report, provided information on the foster program and responded to questions.

**Commissioner Gross** suggested using the Honda pop-up tent logo on t-shirts and caps for the department. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if the Lead Volunteer will be assigned to a specific shelter. **DFO Selder** responded that the decision had not yet been made, that perhaps each shelter will have their own. **Commissioner Brent** asked when the dog walking training would be completed. **DFO Selder** responded that Cmdr. Dedeaux thinks that by the end of April the "during the week train-the-trainer" training will be completed. **Commissioner Zaft** asked for a report on the playgroups; asked about how dog walking levels are assigned. **Commissioner Brent** asked about a general volunteer opportunities tab on the website and missing volunteer application; suggested using Volunteer Match or Idealist to list opportunities free of charge. **Commissioner Wolfson** mentioned volunteer training at North Central and asked for clarification as to why there is not a full-time volunteer coordinator (**GM Barnette** responded that it is a staffing issue; **DFO Selder** added that it has been ACTs who have been serving on a part-time basis); would like to have orientation and hands-on training occur on the same day – mentioned having to do 10 hours of cage cleaning (**GM Barnette** will look into the cage cleaning requirement); suggested using experienced volunteers or staff as mentors, and having roles for certain volunteers such as recruitment and maintaining the calendar; empower volunteers to inform dog owners at dog parks about leash laws. **Commissioner Zaft** expressed concern that it may put volunteers in an unsafe situation (**GM Barnette** responded that volunteers can be trained to help with positive outreach; **DFO Selder** added that dog park at Woodley and Balboa asked for outreach at Father's Day event). **Commissioner Wolfson** asked if Arleen can take volunteers with her for media events. **Commissioner Gross** asked how we are staying on top of community events and whether we are connecting with Council Offices (**DFO Selder** responded that she is working with Neighborhood Councils and with Council Members on their events). **Commissioner Zaft** suggested having prominent displays at shelters informing about orientation sessions and schedules; asked for report back in 4 months with

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Best Friends Client Service Specialist presentation on orientation; ensure determination of volunteer level should be done by people we can trust. **Commissioner Gross** recommended that this topic be heard at a night meeting.

Public Comment

**Michelle Cornelius:** Mentioned that volunteers are now able to socialize cats in the back; discussed “Bruno” and his assessment and that playgroups not be used for this. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that volunteers should not be called to assist in case of a strike – supervisors and management are supposed to step in.

**B. Discussion on Donated Art Piece and Possible Fund Raising Ideas**

**DFO Selder** provided a summary of the history of the art piece “Cali Chis” – an ACT took picture of dogs brought into shelter and posted on facebook that went viral. Painter in Switzerland made painting of facebook image and sent to pen pal in Pennsylvania who became ill and sent to LAAS to raise money for animals.

**Commissioner Zaft** recommended that prints be made if original is sold (**DFO Selder** agreed and stated that she wanted to send a print to the person in Pennsylvania and keep one at East Valley Shelter). **Commissioner Brent** asked what the department has done in the past (**DFO Selder** responded that the department hasn’t done this before). **Commissioner Zaft** mentioned the non-profit and that it could be auctioned. **Commissioner Brent** added that there are many ways to sell the piece, but someone needed to be responsible and that a valuation is needed (**DFO Selder** added that no one has experience doing this). **Commissioner Zaft** added that perhaps we can work with a non-profit to auction it. **ACA Lesel** asked if we have any information on the artist (**DFO Selder** responded that she will do we have the name, but will do research). **Commissioner Wolfson** recommended posting in prominent location at May 2<sup>nd</sup> event to auction it off.

Public Comment

**Sue Taylor:** Suggested the story be a cautionary story about not spaying / neutering.

**Commissioner Brent** recommended using café press. **Commissioner Zaft** asked for information on what happened with the case (**DFO Selder** responded that owner brought in on his own and entire family involved, and is in compliance now).

**6. BOARD REPORTS**

**A. MOU with Found Animals for Acceptance of Microchip Donation (Commissioners Yañez and Brent recused themselves and left the meeting)**

**Aimee Gilbreath** of Found Animals provided a handout with a summary of the terms of the agreement and responded to questions.

**Commissioner Gross** asked for clarification of information in handout with red and blue arrows. **Ms Gilbreath** responded that the illustration signifies that any brand of microchip can be registered with any registry. **Commissioner Zaft** asked which

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registry companies participate in the universal lookup. **Ms Gilbreath** responded that only AVID does not participate; the tool is run by the American Animal Hospital Association which does not provide owner contact information, rather it shows where the chip is registered and the contact information, and shows the history with the most current. **Commissioner Gross** asked for clarification about grant. **Ms Gilbreath** responded that the preference is to keep the contract work and grant separate. **Commissioner Wolfson** thanked Found Animals for the donation of free microchips. **Commissioner Zaft** asked whether the agreement is for two years with an option to renew, and about the 150/30 days notice to terminate. **ACA Lesel** responded that it is written as a donor agreement for two years which both parties can terminate and Found Animals can continue to provide the donation. **Commissioner Zaft** asked whether the scanners meet the department's needs. **ACA Lesel** responded affirmatively. **Commissioner Zaft** confirmed that there is a required opt-in for marketing; asked what staff does when stray animals are turned in (**GM Barnette** responded that they are scanned on intake and letter is sent to owner and call placed). **Commissioner Gross** thanked Found Animals.

Public Comment  
None

**Commissioner Gross** made a motion to accept the microchip donation and approve the donor agreement from Found Animals and **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded. The vote was 3 – 0 in favor.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

**Commissioner Wolfson** made a motion to adjourn the meeting in honor of Leonard Aube of the Annenberg Foundation and **Commissioner Zaft** seconded. Motion carried 3 - 0.

Meeting ended at 12:34 p.m.