



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES

TUESDAY, February 10, 2015 at 10:00 AM

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

Audio MP-3 Recording is available at www.laanimalservices.com

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

Meeting called to order at 10:05 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, Assistant General Manager (AGM) John Chavez and Deputy City Attorney III (DCA) Kimberly Miera.

Commissioner Zaft opened the meeting.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING APPEAL

1. Dangerous Animal Case: DA 142004 WL
Respondent: Jay, Sandra, and Robert Lake
Complaining Witness: Kathryn Parsons Hoek
West Valley Animal Care and Control: Captain Jorge Figueroa

Commissioner Zaft noted that the Respondent had requested an extension to the appeal, that the reasons for the request had not been provided in writing, and that the animals have been in custody since the summer; recommended that no more extensions be granted, indicated that AGM Chavez had discussed the issue with DCA Miera, who agreed; recommended going forward with appeal (Commissioners agreed); stated that grounds for the appeal were that Respondent felt that one of the dogs, Duke, should not be the subject of the order; however, the record shows that at least three dogs were involved in, at least, one of the recent incidents and that Duke had been living at the house since 2012; that the dogs are not the subject of the order, rather the owners inability to maintain and control; that the order revokes their licenses and the dogs can be relocated to a new owner outside the city or can be adopted out from Animal Services.

Commissioner Gross made a motion to uphold the order of the General Manager. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Yañez** and was approved by a vote of 5-0.

II. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS: Ophir Benami:** Read letter discussing her rescue efforts and regarding being deemed "do not adopt" or DNA by East Valley Animal Shelter and her inability to discuss and refute the claims with the department.
Phyllis Daugherty: Showed images of dogs attacks in the shelters; concerned that

new administrative offices location on Grand is economically inaccessible to the public and requested that hearings be held at the corresponding animal shelter; questioned statistics provided on staff response times to calls for investigations.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Election of Board Officers

Commissioner Zaft provided an overview and indicated that current elections are inconsistent with the July election timeline indicated in the City Charter. **Commissioner Gross** indicated that the inconsistency is likely due to the time new Commissioners are appointed and elected to finish the predecessor's term; proposed that an election take place to finish the current term and that elections take place again in July to bring elections into compliance with existing code; proposed that the Vice-President be named the Appeals Commissioner in order to provide a greater role to the office. **Commissioner Brent** supported the proposal. **Commissioner Wolfson** asked whether there were additional responsibilities that the Vice President might want to undertake to alleviate those of the President. **Commissioner Yañez** agreed with the proposals. **GM Barnette** added that the Vice-President can be included in drafting the agenda. **Commissioner Gross** agreed that the Vice-President should be included.

Commissioner Gross made a motion to hold elections to fill out the existing term of officers and that at the second meeting in July another election is held; and that the Vice-President have the responsibility as the "Appeals Hearing Commissioner" to take effect at the same meeting in July. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Brent** and was approved unanimously (5-0).

Commissioner Brent nominated Commissioner Zaft to continue the term as President of the Commission and **Commissioner Gross** seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously (5-0).

Commissioner Wolfson nominated Commissioner Yañez to serve as the Vice-President of the Commission and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously (5-0).

B. Approval of Minutes for January 27, 2015.

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to approve the minutes and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. The vote was 5 – 0 in favor.

3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

GM Barnette shared the following:

- On February 1, during the 11:00 p.m. broadcast, NBC4 aired a story on dangerous dogs. The reporter, Joel Grover, stated that the Department is not tracking dogs declared "dangerous" to ensure they remain outside the City, that it is not declaring some dogs dangerous when bite victims believe they should, and are not monitoring potentially dangerous dogs. They ran a follow-up segment on February 2nd. In our own internal evaluation of the cases, we determined that

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staff handled these cases appropriately. We will continue to discuss our policies and protocols to determine if changes should be made.

- On Thursday, we will be having a retreat debriefing with Commissioner Zafft, the facilitator and Ryan Carpio of the Mayor's Office. The notes provided will help develop guidelines to help prioritize the many items and will be useful in the strategic planning process.
- Last Tuesday, the PAW Committee approved agreements with SNP LA and Value Vet to provide spay/neuter surgeries at the Harbor and West Los Angeles shelters, respectively. These agreements are being heard today in City Council and John is monitoring just in case he needs to go down to Council chambers.
- As you know, Found Animals was approved as the new microchip contractor. The Board's recommendation was sent to the Mayor's office and is currently awaiting a report from the CAO so it can be heard in the PAW Committee. However, we received word that Found Animals may *donate* these microchips to the Department to the City, rather than selling them to us. (They had a similar deal with the County of Los Angeles.) Because this development is a significant change from what was approved by the Board, we will provide you a report relative to this donation at the next meeting.
- I was invited to attend a planning meeting with staff from the ASPCA last Tuesday to discuss what worked this past year, current needs, and how they may be able to help us in their next funding cycle. We will be entering year two of a five-year program by the ASPCA to donate \$5,000,000 annually to the City and County of Los Angeles to help save animals' lives.
- I was a guest lecturer for a class of MPA students at the invitation of Ariane David, PhD, of The Veritas Group. The topic was about understanding your own leadership style and using that to build your team.
- Staff is planning an event for several dogs impounded in July 2014 from a hoarder. The dogs have been released from their evidence hold and some of the dogs will be available for adoption. The plan is to hold a special adoption event for the 80 dogs still impounded. The tentative date for the event is February 21st. As many of the dogs are "hound" breeds, the working title for the event is "Release the Hounds."
- Five of our six shelters have been provided training for dog playgroups for shelter dogs. The six shelters will receive the training on Monday. This has been a very positive step for the dogs and the Department. Some dogs have been adopted immediately after potential adopters have watched them in the playgroups.
- On February 14th, the "Council District 3 Pet Fair" will be held at Councilmember Bloomfield's field office in Reseda. Pets from the West Valley shelter will be available for adoption. There will also be low-cost vaccines, pet care booths and information about animal care, licensing and spay and neuter.
- On February 14th and 15th, the "My Furry Valentine" discount adoptions, sponsored by The Pet Care Foundation, will take place at our shelters.

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- On February 15th, Moorpark Park mobile adoption will be sponsored by “GoldiePup” and feature special giveaways. “The Great Escape” will be from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. East Valley, North Central, and South Los Angeles shelters will be bringing pets.
- On February 21st, Councilmember Jose Huizar will be hosting “Dog Day.” Animal Services will be there with an informational booth. The event will be held in the Arts District, flier pending.
- An LAUSD teacher, Pamela Calleton, sent me an email yesterday about her fourth-grade students who are trying to save “Rockwell,” a one-year-old pit bull at the North Central shelter. She sent a YouTube link [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fr7-VEEjncY>] and a request to share the video with as many people as possible.
- A dog, “Lucky,” was pulled from the Los Angeles River on Friday, January 30. He was put up for adoption on February 5 and was adopted by Rachel Dalby, the person who called 9-1-1. The media attended and filmed Lucky's adoption. We got to talk about the fact that anyone can be a hero, like Rachel was for Lucky, by adopting a pet from Animal Services. A picture of Rachel and Lucky is in your binders.
- Per Ordinance 181930 Section 53.34.3 Restricted Dog Permit, Hearing Officers have been instructed to require a restricted dog permit when a dog has bitten or injured a person or another animal if terms and conditions have been given and the dogs have not been taken in.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Mentioned dog attacks at the West Valley Animal Shelter and the need to retrain volunteers; in one case a volunteer took a pit bull out on a long leash and it bit a skateboarder; in another a pit bull broke through the door and attacked a senior dog.

GM Barnette: Added that the volunteer took the dog outside and is now being restricted to walking dogs inside the shelter.

4. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Wolfson: Asked for status on LAASEE awards; thanked AGM Chavez for follow-up on initiatives to build partnerships to increase licensing; asked about average amount of time it takes to respond to calls from the public when there is a concern; mentioned volunteers are an extension of staff and that Nori Wolfson has offered to serve as the volunteer Volunteer Coordinator for a month as a pilot in North Central; asked about SOP for fosters to be available the same day for adoption; requested that there be a volunteer item on every agenda.

Commissioner Brent: Wants people who email the Commission or speak during public comment to know that their concerns are being heard and addressed even if the issue is not discussed or a response is not provided via email.

Commissioner Yañez: Announced Pets for Life outreach event on February 28, 2015 at Hollenbeck Park from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; it is the first of four events and the next event will be held in May.

Commissioner Gross: Mentioned HCID's workshops on the Rent Stabilization Ordinance for tenants and landlords; was contacted by Director about future workshop regarding laws related to pets and rental housing; suggested that such workshops be held at the shelters and information be provided to public by shelter staff.

Commissioner Zaft: Mentioned Commission retreat debriefing meeting and that outcomes can help prioritize the Commission agenda and help reach out to the community to develop a strategic plan; thanked staff for participation.

5. BOARD REPORTS

A. Report on January 5, 2015 Retreat Priorities Identified and the Incorporation of Commission-Requested Agenda Items

GM Barnette discussed notes on Commission requests for staff reports and their alignment with priorities discussed at the retreat; mentioned debriefing session with the facilitator and the incorporation of retreat outcomes into a strategic planning process; mentioned that items in process require significant staff time

Commissioner Gross: Suggested that sub-goals under each goal be listed as priorities; items discussed by Board should tie into goals. **Commissioner Zaft:** Reiterated three goals and how they encompass sub-goals. **GM Barnette:** Added that licensing, for example, is also about public safety and spay/neuter. **Commissioner Zaft:** Asked whether Commission needed to ratify the retreat priorities. **Board Secretary Moreno:** Responded that there was no need to act at this time; clarified that information is to assist Commission in determining priority agenda items. **Commissioner Zaft:** Discussed establishing a calendar of tentative agenda items to give more transparency and provide staff more time to work on reports; serving in the development of the strategic planning process. **Commissioner Yañez:** Indicated that it would serve as a road map for the Commission. **Commissioner Gross:** Added that refinement was needed to develop a working document. **Commissioner Zaft:** Agreed to assist in developing plan. **Commissioner Brent:** Added that it would help show the public that items of interest to them will be addressed. **AGM Chavez:** Added that agendas would include regular monthly reports such as the DFO reports and such reports would include items like response times; therefore, it is not include on the list; important items can be prioritized such as LAASEE program vetting process. **Commissioner Zaft:** Indicated that there would be time-sensitive items that don't fit under the three goals and will not be dropped.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugherty: Disappointed that no mention of law enforcement and administrative citations – items for which the department is budgeted; no such thing as “No Kill” – animals are shifted around; only way to reduce intake by not picking up the animals, discouraging relinquishments, not euthanizing dangerous dogs, and shipping animals; need to concentrate on animal control.

Commissioner Gross: Mentioned that licensing and enforcement go hand-in-hand.

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6. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gross motioned to adjourn the meeting and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. Motion carried 5 - 0.

Meeting ended at 11:07 a.m.