



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Tuesday, March 23, 2010
10:00 A.M.
**Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Room 1060
Los Angeles, California 90012**

Melanie Ramsayer, President
Irene Ponce, Vice-President
Tariq Khero
Kathleen Riordan
Ruthanne Secunda

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

COMMISSION MEETING

1. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Presentation of Service Awards to:

Linda Gordon	30 Years	Nashaat Eskander	20 Years
Keith Kramer	25 Years	Edmund Loria	20 Years

B. Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes for February 9 and 23, 2010

C. Oral Report by the Commissioners on Meetings and Events attended

D. Oral Report on Status of the General Manager Recruitment

2. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

None

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. **(Continued from the February 9, and 23, 2010 Commission Meeting)**
Discussion and input from the public on effective and efficient ideas for raising money to supplement funding for Department core responsibilities of greatest financial need, and direction to staff relative to ideas presented.
- B. Discussion and direction to staff on including in the scope of Proposition F (Animal Facilities Bond) Phase II work at the North Central Animal Care Center sufficient office, storage, and meeting space to accommodate all administrative, licensing and support staff of the Department.
- C. Discussion of Dog Licensing, including current processes and statistics, process changes, other possible improvements, and streamlining efforts, and direction to staff about possible actions or recommendations to return to the Board at a future meeting.

4. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

5. 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.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Requests from Commissioners for future Agenda Items.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Next Commission Meeting is scheduled for 10:00 A.M., April 13, 2010, Los Angeles City Hall, Room 1060, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, California 90012.

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 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".

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.



CITY OF LOS ANGELES
L A ANIMAL SERVICES



Date: March 23, 2010

To: Board of Animal Services Commissioners

From: Kathleen J. Davis, Interim General Manager

Subject: Dog Licensing: Process Changes, Improvements, and Streamlining

At the Board meeting of February 23, 2010, the Board requested current information on the status of dog licensing in the City. The purpose was to consider goals and objectives of licensing, as well as the potential for improvements to the licensing process that would ultimately increase the proportion of dogs licensed in the City, which is currently at about one-third of the estimated population of dogs. Changes and recommendations discussed will be subject of an action Report at the next meeting.

Summary of Statistics

Dog licensing trends have been static over the last three years. The only change of note is that the number of dogs for which unaltered licenses (and in many cases breeding permits) have been paid for and issued has dropped since implementation of mandatory spay/neuter. Because of the steep license differential, loss of higher priced licenses have resulted in lower revenue trends, even while total license numbers are static.

	Fee	Calendar Years		
		2007	2008	2009
Altered	\$15.00	97,874	101,240	101,158
Unaltered	\$100.00	10,076	8,327	5,162
Senior	free	3,735	4,431	4,345
Disabled	free	212	286	303
New Hope (tax)	\$5.50	941	1,105	1,357
Guide/Service	free	116	113	100
Sentry	\$50.00	5	4	3
Junkyard Altered	\$50.00	210	187	137
Junkyard Unaltered	\$150.00	174	121	83
Cat	\$5.00	13	18	25
Equine (100% Trust Fund)	\$14.00	1,372	1,819	1,744
Total		114,728	117,651	114,417
Revenue (ex. Equine)		\$2,465,094	\$2,371,349	\$2,052,938
Portion to General Fund		\$1,833,191	\$1,705,799	\$1,391,853
Breeders Permit	\$120.00	568	832	1952

Only 1% of licensing now occurs on-line. Only dog license renewals with no rabies requirement can use the on-line feature at this time.

Key Facts about Dog Licensing Fees and Requirements

- Altered License: \$15, split \$7 to Spay/Neuter Trust Fund (Fund 543), \$8 to City's General Fund.
- Unaltered License: \$100, split \$2 to Spay/Neuter Trust Fund (Fund 543), \$98 to City's General Fund
- Typical surcharge allocated to the Spay/Neuter Trust Fund (Fund 543) annually from licensing has been about \$640,000 per year.
- Exemptions must be met for an owner to keep a dog unaltered. A license cannot be sold until the dog is sterilized or an exemption is verified.
- License tags are not issued, even if payment has been received, without written certificates proving rabies vaccination and proving sterilization status. If a rabies certificate is not received upon expiration of an existing license, a renewed license is noted as "invalid" in the Chameleon database.
- Chameleon does not have a module to track partial payments and bill for a balance, or to calculate compounding fees.

	Unaltered Dog	Altered Dog	Sr Unaltered	Sr Altered Dog	Late Fee	Penalty
Orange County	\$100.00	\$24.00	n/a	\$12.00	\$41.00	\$75.00
Long Beach	\$90.00	\$20.00	n/a	\$10.00	none	200%
San Jose	\$60.00	\$20.00	n/a	free	\$15.00	
Los Angeles County ¹	\$60.00	\$20.00	n/a	\$7.50	\$20.00 ²	\$40.00 ²
SEAACA ¹	\$40.00	\$20.00	\$40.00	\$10.00	\$20.00	
City of Riverside ¹	\$100.00	\$16.00	n/a	\$10.00	\$25.00	
City of Los Angeles	\$100.00	\$15.00	n/a	free	none	\$500.00
San Francisco	\$28.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$9.00	\$12.00	
San Diego	\$30.00	\$14.00	n/a	n/a	\$10.00	
Sacramento ³	\$150.00	\$12.00	n/a	\$8.00	\$10/\$20/\$100	

¹ Typical, some cities served vary, rural service areas may have much lower fees

² Late penalty is 100%, field collection fee is \$40

³ Late fees grow with time

Recommendations Previously Approved by the Board, Mayor, and Council

On February 23, 2009, subsequent to review and discussion of the "Study of the Dog Licensing Program of the Department of Animal Services" dated October 2008, and the February 2009 report of the Joint Labor Management Committee on Licensing, the Board approved a series of recommendations to update and streamline the dog licensing process. The Mayor and Council approved the recommendations and directed the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending the Los Angeles Municipal Code (Council File 09-1064). The highlights of these recommended changes are summarized below.

RELEASING UNNECESSARY RESTRICTIONS IN THE LAMC, ADDING PROTECTIONS	
LAMC Section*	Summary of Changes
53.15	Allow puppy registration. Allow 3-year licenses to coincide with rabies vaccination period and establish all license terms to run currently with rabies vaccination period, whether one-year or three-year by making the license term date from the rabies vaccination date.
53.15	Streamline the language to make clear that application, fees, and proof of rabies vaccination are required, and remove specific references to one-year or two-year licenses.
53.15	Update language and expressly allow for both rabies vaccination and spay/neuter to be proved through satisfactory evidence, and not only by an express type of written certificate.
53.15.2(c)(4)(G), 53.15.2(e)(1)	Make consistent and emphasize the responsibility of breeders, commercial establishments, and others to report information to the Department on dogs sold for licensing follow-up.
CONSOLIDATING AND SIMPLIFYING FEE AND TAX PROVISIONS	
LAMC Section*	Summary of Changes
53.15	Authorize a fee setting process for late fees and other penalties through the Board with approval of the Mayor and Council. Does not change the process for setting licenses fees. The fee setting process could include establishing waivers of late fees or penalties for special circumstances or timeframes, for example an amnesty program.
53.15 (new)	Add a provision authorizing charge of late fees to motivate compliance with payment of licenses due.
53.15 (new)	Add a provision expressly exempting from any license tax or any license payment the New Hope partners or any enterprises partnering with the Department to adopt dogs. Other provisions expressly require that the new owner information must be provided to the Department for follow up.
53.15.2(c)(4)(G), 53.15.2(e)(1), 53.15.4	Expand the responsibility of veterinarians and others to distribute license information or applications to allow the Department to authorize veterinarians and commercial entities to take applications and sell licenses, remitting fees with the information to the Department, in exchange for a service fee to be set by the Board and approved by the Mayor and Council.
53.15.4	Provision inserted and updated to allow a contractor to sell licenses but then be paid a fee after remitting license revenue collected.
TECHNICAL CHANGES	
LAMC Sections*	Summary of Changes
53.00, 53.11(f), 53.11(l), 53.13, 53.15, 53.15.3, 53.26	Revise language to indicate that dog licensing where mentioned, such as when a dog is adopted, shall be in conformance with provisions in 53.15 and other revised sections as appropriate, rather than giving specific terms, fees, or rules within various sections that may then turn into conflicts. Remove specific references to one-year licenses.
53.15.2(b)	Modify language so that licenses can be applied for (and fees paid) pending a delayed spay/neuter surgery so that the owner of a dog being adopted or redeemed can purchase the unaltered license even though there may be a delay in getting surgery for the dog.

As the City Attorney is in process on preparing the ordinance, opportunity exists to add additional changes if approved by Council, to expedite implementation.

Council Direction Relative to Licensing

As part of the three-year strategic planning on the City's budget, the City Council recently has given several directives regarding licensing.

- The Department must report back to Council in April on the feasibility of partnering with Los Angeles County on their dog license canvassing program. In response to this direction, the Department has met with Los Angeles County program management. The County's program uses animal control officers who sell tags directly and give citations as needed in the course of their canvass. The County deducts costs from revenue owed, rather than requiring advance payment. A number of additional changes to the LAMC would be required so that our licensing law conforms to their program practices.
- Council ordered the Department of Water and Power (DWP) to generate a report for the Department showing all addresses at which meter-readers noted a dog or dogs present. DWP has pledged to provide such information after a Memorandum of Understanding is prepared by them and executed by the Department that will strictly define use of the information. A similar effort in 2005 yielded a small amount of out-dated information, but the current information is more promising according to DWP's summary. Until on-line licensing for new enrollment can be implemented, we will use the DWP data in phases, because of insufficient staff to enroll a large number of licensees at once.
- Council requested consideration and analysis of a cat licensing program.

Licensing Issues for Discussion

These changes or improvements as discussed, or others that may arise in the discussion, will be the subject of a Recommendations of the General Manager Report at the next meeting of the Board, scheduled for April 13, 2010.

ESTABLISHING LATE FEES AND PENALTIES: Establishing late fees for dog licensing was one of the elements approved by the Board on February 23, 2009, however, specific late fees were not recommended in that report. A report was presented to the Board on December 8, 2009, with suggestion for a 50% late fee (\$7.50 or \$50.00) and also changing the existing \$500 penalty to activate after 180 days in place of the current 45 days. Questions raised by the Board and members of the public led to deferring the report.

The \$500 penalty has been in place since the 1960s, the last period in which fears of rabies deaths were rampant. Other jurisdictions focus on more reasonable and immediate penalties and late fees to compel compliance, rather than a fast-acting punitive fee that compels avoidance.

The County has a 100% late fee, in place of attempting to track the number of years a dog owner has been in arrears. Late fees apply after 10 days. Canvassing officers charge a \$40 field collection fee. A dog must be licensed after 15 days in the County or 15 days after becoming four months of age (LAMC provides 30 days).

County canvassing officers assess a dog license regardless of whether the person claims to “own” a dog, since County code, like LAMC, makes the owner or person having custody or control liable for obtaining a license.

LICENSING AND SPAY/NEUTER COMPLIANCE ENFORCED ON PARALLEL TRACKS: Los Angeles County canvassing officers sell a license regardless of immediate ability to meet mandatory spay/neuter requirements. If an owner cannot prove sterilization of a dog, the higher unaltered fee is charged. The owner is advised about the spay/neuter requirements in the County and expected to comply in conformance with the law.

AMNESTY PROGRAM: Any amnesty campaign implemented would be based on waiving late fees or other minor penalties, not waiving the base license fee or a civil penalty. When on-line license registration is feasible, a greater waiver might be considered for persons who self-subscribe than mail in or go to a care center. The field collection fee of \$40, if instituted, would be a motive to license one’s dog before officers arrive.

REDUCE FREE LICENSES: Few jurisdictions offer free licenses for senior and disabled dog owners, although most offer discounts. A modest fee might be considered given that processing the senior and disabled licenses takes the same staff resources as processing a full-charge license. Charging a license fee for service animals might be more problematic given Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.