

## MEETING SUMMARY



### BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009  
4:00 P.M.

**West Los Angeles Animal Shelter  
11361 West Pico Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90064**



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

**mp3 Minutes are available at [www.laanimalservices.com](http://www.laanimalservices.com)**

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm. Commissioners Riordan, Ramsayer and Secunda were present. Commissioners Khero and Ponce were absent.

### **COMMISSION MEETING**

#### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

##### **A. Shelter Tour of the West Los Angeles Shelter**

Commissioners Ramsayer and Secunda took the tour of the West LA Animal Care Center at 4 pm.

##### **B Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes for November 10, 2009**

Commissioner Riordan made a motion to approve the minutes based on the suggested changes. The motion was seconded and approved 3-0.

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

Commissioner Riordan had nothing to report.

Commissioner Ramsayer attended the Best Friend's Adoption Event on 11/15, the Roots and Shoots teen summit in Temescal Canyon where teens made banners and signs for kennels for the South LA Animal Care Center, and Met with USC Engineering students regarding designing a meet and greet area at the South LA Animal Care Center on 12/1.

Commissioner Secunda attended the Best Friends Adoption Event on 11/15, Helped with a poll for Much Love Animal Rescue at the South LA Animal Care Center, and attended two adoption events for Much Love Animal Rescue.

D. Reconsideration of Night Meetings for 2010.

Due to budget cuts, ITA will not be able to attend night meetings to record the meetings. It is suggested that all meetings take place during regular business hours at City Hall to take advantage of the systems already in place there.

Commissioner Ramsayer suggested that if it is economically feasible, the Department continue to hold quarterly meetings in the field during business hours. Commissioner Secunda suggested that the Commissioners continue to tour the various shelters and meet with staff under "non-official business" meeting status.

**2. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION**

*A. Income Eligibility for Free Department Benefits in Licensing, Spay/Neuter, Impounds, and Redemptions*

That the Board request that the Mayor, and subsequently the City Council, direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Sections 53.12, 53.15, and 53.31 in regard to income eligibility limits for the waiving of redemption and impound fees and issuance of a free dog license for qualified senior and disabled residents, and to add language clearly establishing income eligibility for all Department-sponsored Free Spay and Neuter Programs available to all low income residents regardless of age or disability as described in the body of this report.

This item was agendized formally, but not voted upon.

Department proposes that the very low-income qualifications to qualify for certain programs use the HUD levels, which are already used by many City, State, and Federal programs.

Commissioner Riordan questioned if less vouchers are now being distributed due to the new restrictions. AGM Barth clarified that a few less low income vouchers are being distributed because applicants now have to prove their low-income status with verifiable documentation (i.e. DWP lifeline bill, proof of City residency) and an application process. The new structure and administration of the voucher program did not exist before April 1, 2009. While a few less vouchers are being distributed, the Department is now better able to ensure that the vouchers being distributed are going to the correct target population and will ultimately result in higher redemptions.

Current HUD very low income levels are:

A four person household is \$39,600

A five person household is \$42,800

Public Comment

Laura Beth Heisen – She questioned how people prove the number of people in their household. She feels that the application process inhibits people from using the vouchers. She requested that the HUD information be in the public reports. Her proposed solution is to open the City's spay/neuter clinics.

Phyllis Daugherty – Historically the vouchers have been misused. She likes the idea of the application process and it is a step toward getting the vouchers to the people who need them the most.

Commissioner Ramsayer made a motion to approve the General Manager's recommendation with the addendum that a report will be made to the Commission within six months on the progress of the program. Commissioner Secunda seconded the motion and the motion passed 3-0.

*B. Late Fees for Dog Licensing and Extension of the Compliance Period  
Prior to Imposition of the \$500 Civil Penalty*

That the Board request that the Mayor, and subsequently the City Council to establish as late fees \$7.50 for altered dogs and \$25 for unaltered dogs for failing to license a dog within 45 days of requirement to license, for fiscal year 2009-2010; and, direct the City Attorney to include in the ordinance revising the dog licensing process that the period prior to imposition of the \$500 civil penalty for failure to license be extended from 45 days to 180 days.

City Attorney Lesel suggested that the language "for fiscal year 2009-2010" be struck from the motion to make the meaning of the motion more clear.

A discussion of current and proposed penalties and the ramifications for licensing ensued.

Interim GM Davis stated the Department feels this is a reasonable and rational approach to provide an incentive to City residents for timely licensing of their dogs.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugherty – Mailings are costly. The Department should be thinking about cost recovery. \$7.50 does not compensate for multiple mailings– the Department should consider a \$100 penalty at 100 days, which will provide cost recovery.

Laura Beth Heisen – The reduction in the penalty was recommended in the spay/neuter report by the Spay/Neuter Committee. The Department needs to maintain the licensing differential in the licensing penalty. She suggested dumping the \$500 penalty and reducing the penalty to a figure low enough to be enforced.

Commissioner Secunda stated her concerns about the \$500 penalty and she would like to see something more incremental.

Commissioner Secunda made a motion to hold voting on this recommendation pending a future report by staff that takes into consideration the discussion held on the item at this meeting. Commissioner Riordan seconded the motion and the motion passed 3-0. A five minute recess was taken at 7:36 pm.

Meeting resumed at 7:40 pm.

### **3. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

None

### **4. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER**

Interim General Manager, Kathy Davis presented the following:

- November was another good month compared to last year. This was the fifth month in a row that both impounds and euthanasia were down. Impounds were down by 317 and euthanasia was down by 16. We certainly hope the trend continues.
- Pedigree filmed a commercial at North Central this month and they left behind a very nice \$5,000 donation.
- As you may recall, The Heigl Foundation graciously donated \$18,000 in October to pay for the cost of 450 New Hope Adoptions. I am very pleased to tell you that they provided an additional \$20,000 donation to replenish the fund for New Hope Adoptions, bringing their total to \$38,000 which is funding for 950 NH adoptions.
- Saturday, December 5, we held another Pits and Pals Spay Day at East Valley. Income qualified pet owners received free sterilization surgeries for their pets. We accomplished 126 surgeries, which were funded by The Heigl Foundation.
- On Tuesday, December 2, we partnered with New Hope Partner Laurel Kinder, and the Nashua County Humane Society on a venture to send 25 Chihuahuas to New Hampshire. The dogs were warmly received and almost immediately adopted. We will be discussing a further flight of dogs for the upcoming week.
- K Earth 101 hosted a Pet and People Food Drive at the Smart & Final on Pico in WLA. Their 2-day promotion gained us tons of pet food and kitty litter, as well as on-line donations totaling more than \$1,100.
- We are now ready to formally announce and celebrate our Twitter and Facebook presence with our thanks to Commissioner Melanie Ramsayer and the Mayor's Office who suggested these two new venues. Miki Shaler is doing a wonderful job as the lead on this project. We have 175 followers on Twitter, many of them adoption-related groups, and it's growing daily. We're just getting started on Facebook so we'll provide future updates. Currently, we are featuring much useful information, such as spay/neuter resources and SmART rescues. If you tweet, you can find us @lacitypets. On Facebook, you can find us at LA Animal Services Fan Page.

**Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalservices.com](http://www.LAAnimalservices.com)**

- Currently, we have been activated to staff the Command Post at Sunland Park due to the threat of mudslides in the immediate area of the Station Fire.
- Linda and I continue to attend Budget Meetings to discuss the bleak outlook for the City's financial situation. To date, the Department sustained a 15% cut for the FY09-10 fiscal year. We anticipate the closing of at least two animal care centers next year. They have asked us to prepare exercises for both a 10% and a 20% reduction for next fiscal year. Depending on the severity of the cuts, we may have to close additional centers, which will be disastrous for our pets as well as for our residents. We will keep you informed as we receive further updates.
- Upcoming Events:
  - Working with Found Animals Foundation on "Save a Stray for the Holidays" adoption event that will coincide with our discount days on December 19.

**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.)

Laura Beth Heisen – There are 7 Spay/Neuter clinics – 3 are open, 4 are unoccupied, and 2 are spoken for by Clinico. She asked the Department to urge Clinico to state their intentions for opening the clinic at NEV. She is outraged that the clinics have gone unused for years and she feels that the Department should run the clinics themselves. She also thinks the Tues/Thurs hours should be changed to open the shelters later and leave them open until 7pm.

Phyllis Daugherty – The County does not do S/N for the public because they can not afford it. They only S/N shelter animals. Two months to consider a government issue is very quick. Council will not approve any fines that will involve the Department not giving a warning in writing. Everything should involve cost recovery.

## **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioner Riordan would like:

- a report on the obstacles and possibilities to establishing a 501 (c ) 3 in the Department,
- a report about animal cruelty prosecutions including how many and what were the charges. She requested that the report be scheduled for a date that the District Attorney can attend.

Commissioner Ramsayer requested that the USC Engineering students be scheduled to make a presentation on their recommendations for building a meet-and-greet area at the South LA Animal Care Center.

Commissioner Secunda requested a meeting dedicated to fundraising.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Riordan made a motion to adjourn and Commissioner Secunda seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

The meeting concluded at 8:15 pm

The next Commission Meeting is scheduled for 10:00 A.M., January 12, 2010 Los Angeles, City Hall, Room 1060, 200 N. Spring Street, Los Angeles, California 90012.