

MINUTES



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Monday, January 12, 2009
10:00 am
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012



Vacant, President
Kathleen Riordan, Vice-President
Tariq Khero
Irene Ponce
Archie J. Quincey, Jr.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL HEARING 10:00 A.M. (Continued from September 22, 2008)

Meeting called to order at 10:15 AM. Present were Commissioners Quincey, Riordan, and Ponce.

1. Continuation of an Appeal of the General Manager's Decision in Barking Dog Revocation Case - **BR08513WL**

Appellant: Daniel and Chantly Geoulla
Complaining Witness: Michael Cianfrani
District Manager, West Los Angeles Shelter, Louis Dedoux, Captain
Hearing Coordinator, Department of Animal Services, Ross Pool, Management Analyst

Commissioner Quincey made a motion to maintain the original General Manager's terms and conditions. Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion and the motion passed 3-0.

Determination: General Manager's Original Terms and Conditions Upheld.

COMMISSION MEETING

1. PRESENTATION OF SCHEMATIC DESIGN CONCEPT FOR THE NEW SOUTH LOS ANGELES ANIMAL CARE CENTER (ST. ANDREWS AND 60TH STREET) BY RA-DA ARCHITECTS AND BUREAU OF ENGINEERING

Rania Alomar and Sofia Ames from RA-DA Architects gave a PowerPoint presentation of the design concept for the new South LA Animal Care Center and the Commission gave feedback on the plan.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugharty- Expressed concern that the exterior of the new building would be graffitied and that there was no roof over the outdoor kennel area.

Sue Taylor – Commented that synthetic grass can get extremely hot in the summer sun and asked about including separate entrances for public and shelter animals in the S/N clinic.

2. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

- 2009 is LA Animal Services' 100th Anniversary.
- **2008 Overview:**

Adoptions: 20,994
New Hope Placements: 5,297
Total: 26,291

Adoptions:

December 2008 was the highest month for adoptions (2,212) since the Department started keeping statistics (the second highest was 2,206, set in July 2008).

In December, a Secret Santa stepped up and paid the Adoption Fees for nearly 350 families in the three days before Christmas (\$22,000). This prompted a second Santa to step up and donate \$500 to help families adopt a pet.

2008 realized a 29% increase in adoptions over last year. This is the most animals the Department has ever placed in one year!

Intakes:

Up 20.5% (54,191 compared to 44,964 in 2007). The increase was largely due to the housing foreclosure crisis. The last year the Department took in this many animals was 2002.

Euthanasia:

Up 30% (19,617 in 08 compared to 09 = 15,012). While 2008 showed an increase it was to the level we saw in 2006 at 19,226. The last three years achieved the lowest euthanasia rates in the Department's history. The worst was 1971 when over 110,000 animals were euthanized.

- **Shelter Population Management:** Transfers between Centers has tripled (from 144 in Nov/2007 to 314 in Nov/2008) to facilitate higher adoptions in response to the increased impoundments. Our animal population is now slightly below capacity, thanks to the hard work and high adoptions accomplished by staff. I commend AGM Davis and Capt. Helen Brakemeier for their shelter management.

- **Emergency Plan:** The Golden Guardian Exercise (Nov 13 & 14, 2008) and the Sesnon and Marek Fires last year served as an excellent impetus to review and update the Department's Emergency Plan. This review is expected every January in all City Departments. I commend Chris Carroll for taking the lead on updating this critical document.
- **Animal Cruelty Task Force (ACTF)** – The ACTF has been reorganized to afford better efficiency of staffing during the current hiring freeze. The MOU with LAPD is still under review. Management met with City Attorney's Office in effort to streamline cruelty cases and we are meeting with the District Attorney's Office on training and identifying similar efficiencies.
- **LAX Border Patrol and Survey Results:** The December 11th press conference about the Puppy Mill Survivors received tremendous media coverage and resulted in over 500 people attending the auction, many coming to an LAAS Care Center for the first time. The Muni code required that each one be made available through an auction if more than one party wants to adopt the animal. More than \$20,000 was raised in adoption fees to help offset the care these animals received while in our charge. Pet Adoptions on that day also were up 97% at EV and 47% system wide.
- **Pet Adoption Events:** The Department is partnering with the Found Animal Foundation and the Pet Care Foundation on a series of pet adoption events. Valentine's Day is the next upcoming event.

Spay Day II is planned for February 28th – LA's Official Spay Day by City Council motion (Alarcon).

- **Strategic Plan**
We have launched work in earnest on a five-Year Strategic Plan for Animal Services. In November 2008, we were gifted with the guidance of Varouj Abkian, Assistant Director of Sanitation, and the well-respected author of Sanitation's strategic planning process. This month, we will finalize our strategic objectives for the Department and begin to assemble employee teams to recommend goals and programs to achieve the objectives in 2009-2010. I will be meeting with the unions to apprise them of the process, which they are already familiar with from the strategic planning process in other Departments that have been assisted by Mr. Abkian. I will also bring the proposed final goals for 2009-2010 to the Board.
- **Permits Database**
Our Information Technology Division developed a database program that registers information on all animal-related businesses in the City that have permits under the Municipal Code. Any member of the Department can search the database to find out the current status of a permit tee, and the application automatically calculates permit expirations to create notices. Inspections and complaints can also be logged in the database, which should be helpful now that our permits officers are enforcing the stricter state laws on pet store conditions that went into effect on January 1st.

- **Bank Transfer**

As a result of an RFP process, the City will be closing its relationships with Bank of America and most Departments will be moved to accounts with Wachovia. This will include all our credit card transactions, the daily cash deposited from the animal care centers, and the lockbox system that processes animal license renewals. This transition started in the fall and the coordination with Bank staff and the Department will accelerate now to complete the transfer early this year.

- **New Fees**

City Council approved the fee study provided by the Department in December of 2007, and adopted the new fees proposed by the Board about one year ago. We await completion of the Municipal Code changes necessary to enable the new fees; the ordinance should go back to the Council for adoption very soon. We can apply the new fees 30 days after the ordinance is adopted.

- **Early Separation Incentive**

Every Department was asked by the Mayor to provide an analysis of the impact of a program of separation and/or early retirement incentives. At this time, we have no information about whether any such program will be proposed or what the terms might be. Generally, our analysis suggested that the Department would by necessity need to backfill more than 50% of positions that might be vacated and that the cost of sick time, overtime, and vacation payouts would negate any salary savings at first but savings might be achieved in future years, however.

Public Comment

Sue Taylor- Commended the Secret Santa but is concerned about the numbers of adopted animals that may be returned to the Department.

Phyllis Daugharty- She would prefer that the donation be used for adoption or spay/neuter gift certificates.

Commissioner Riordan suggested that GM Boks get in contact with the Equine Community ETI regarding disaster planning and coordination.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes for November 17, 2008.

Commissioner Quincey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes for November 17, 2008. Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion and the motion passed 3-0.

B. Oral Report by the Commission on Meetings and Events attended.

Commissioner Ponce met with Barry Hall to discuss rescheduling of the wine tasting fundraiser which has been cancelled November 2008 and rescheduled for 2009.

Commissioner Riordan attended the LA County Bar Luncheon on the topic of Pet Wills. She also attended the West Valley Animal Care Center staff Holiday party.

Commissioner Quincey had nothing to report.

5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Three-Year Agreement to Provide an Animal Electronic Identification System

That the Board award a three-year Agreement, with one three-year renewal option, substantially in the form as on file, to AVID Identification Systems, Inc., to provide an Animal Electronic Identification System, direct Staff to transmit the proposed Agreement concurrently to the Office of the Mayor, and the Office of the City Attorney for approval as to form, and subsequently to the City Council, and authorize the General Manager of the Department of Animal Services to execute the subject Agreement upon receipt of necessary approvals and find that the proposal received from Schering-Plough Home Again does not meet the Department's needs to provide microchip readers that are safe for staff to use in our shelter environment, as described in the body of this report, and therefore reject that proposal as non-responsive.

Commissioner Riordan questioned whether our concerns about the Home Again scanners was shared with the company and if they were given an option to produce a scanner that would be safe for shelter staff to use. AGM Barth assured the Commission that Department staff spoke extensively to both proposers regarding safety and package issues.

Anthony Sanchez (LAAS) and Peter Friss (AVID) gave a demonstration of the scanners. Peter Troesch (VP, AVID) assured the Commission that the scanners are manufactured and repaired at the AVID facility in Norco, CA.

Commissioner Quincey made a motion to accept the General Manager's recommendation. Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Summary of the Fiscal Year 2009-10 Proposed Budget Submittal

AGM Barth informed the Board that the budget proposal was submitted on December 8, 2008 and the Mayor directed the Department to submit two scenarios, (1) to maintain the status quo and (2) a 9% cut. She explained that the Department is trying to maintain the status quo. The Department has to find approximately \$1.9 million of savings to ensure that no employees face lay-offs. Identified savings include holding vacant funded positions such as ACOs, ACTs, Clerical, and Canvassers. The Department may also have to give back or take less Spay/Neuter funds.

Commissioner Riordan asked for clarification about the vacancies.

Commissioner Ponce wanted to know how much the department is currently charging for spay/neuter.

Commissioner Ponce suggested that the commission look for ways to fundraise for the department.

Commissioner Riordan suggested that the Board brainstorm some income generating ideas.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugharty- She expressed concern that the all of the proposed layoffs are at the shelter level.

B. Review of Current Operating Status of Veterinary, Field and Shelter Divisions,
Dr. Prupas, Captain Bowers, Captain Brakemeier **-POSTPONED**

Staff was unable to attend the meeting and this item will be rescheduled.

C. Oral Report on Status of Spay and Neuter Clinics

AGM Barth gave a status report on the Spay/Neuter Clinics. The proposals are due January 27, 2008 and there is a proposer anticipated for each facility. Contracts for the Harbor and WLA clinics have been executed and the clinics are expected to open by the end of the month. The East Valley clinic is expected to open in April 2009 and the Mission clinic in June or July 2009.

Commissioner Riordan requested to see the statistics for the last quarter regarding the number of animals released on a D-300 and the follow-up.

Public Comment

Sue Taylor – She asked questions about the Spay/Neuter clinic contracts.

Commissioner Riordan suggested posting the prices charged by the Spay/Neuter clinics on the Department website.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – (Item 8 taken out of order)

Phyllis Daugharty – Talked about recent dog fighting conviction. She is helping to start a training academy for ACTs on dog and cock fighting.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - (Item 9 taken out of order)

Commissioner Ponce would like to know the status of her motion regarding pets in subsidized housing.

Commissioner Riordan would like an accounting of field service activities in the last 90 days, per district, including the outcomes for: (1) strays, (2) humane investigations, (3) licenses, (4) citations, (5) notices to comply, and (6) how many officers per district.

9. ADJOURNMENT - (Item 10 taken out of order)

Commissioner Quincey made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0 and the regular meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

10. A. CLOSED SESSION

The Board of Animal Services Commissioners will meet in closed session with the City Attorney as its legal counsel pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(a) to discuss pending litigation involving Trap-Neuter-Return in case No. BS115483, The Urban Wildlands Group, Endangered Habitats League, Los Angeles Audubon Society et al vs. City of Los Angeles, et al.