



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES

TUESDAY, August 25, 2015 at 10:00 AM

LOS ANGELES CITY HALL, ROOM 1060  
200 NORTH SPRING STREET  
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  
Larry Gross, Vice-President  
Jennifer Brent  
Roger Wolfson  
Alana Yañez

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. Commissioners present were Zaft, Gross, Brent and Yañez. Commissioner Wolfson was absent. Also present Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) Board Secretary, Rita Moreno; General Manager, Brenda Barnette; Assistant General Manager (AGM), Dana Brown; and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Dov Lesel.

Commissioner Zaft opened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

**REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS: Phyllis Daugherty:** Discussed guard dog issue and inconsistency in wording; need for funds for inspections; tax permit issue for breeders. **Susan Taylor:** Discussed breeders and requested update on Woofstat information re intact dog licenses (1,396) as compared to breeder's licenses (843), leaving 556 intact dogs without a breeder's permit. **Nazila Mahgerefteh:** Discussed Persian Jewish Kapparot ritual – not practiced in Iran anymore; chickens go to garbage. **Lola Kay:** Discussed Kapparot and asked to agendized the issuance of warning to community about breaking city, county, federal laws; requested coordination between departments. **Alice Lewis:** Discussed Kapparot and conditions in which chickens are kept. **Jonathan Klein:** Discussed Kapparot and that laws are not being observed or acknowledged; practitioners have little experience handling poultry resulting in extreme cruelty for the animals; chickens slaughtered in neighborhoods creating a nuisance; asked for: week long enforcement by LAAS; coordination between state and county agencies including sanitation, health and CA Food and Agriculture; notice ahead of time to Kapparot purveyors to follow law; notice to Jewish community of legal issues. **Niloo Khodadadeh:** Stated that children are affected by animal cruelty; need for community awareness; Iranian-Jewish community unaware of alternatives.

**2. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

**A. Approval of Minutes for August 11, 2015.**

Public Comment  
None

**Commissioner Gross** moved to approve the minutes of August 11, 2015, and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. **Commissioner Brent** abstained. The motion carried 3 – 0 – 1.

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

GM Barnette reported on the following:

- Introduced Jastine Tabangin, the new Public Relations Specialist.
- Meeting with Ryan Carpio from the Mayor's Office, Joan Pelico from Council District 5 and Joseph Galloway to discuss the RACO program; Galloway will assess the outreach and determine tools to disseminate information.
- ACO exam held last Saturday; will continue to accept applications and continue to test.
- January – Officers responded to humane issue in Reseda; dog was seized and examined by private veterinarian and euthanized; the judge did not charge the defendant with any crime, but will take 16 animal neglect classes and report back to court.
- August 12<sup>th</sup>, Officers responded to Wilmington address for too many dogs; called by Social Services because special needs children involved; 20 dogs were taken and additional number will be relinquished to be in compliance with law.
- Officers called to humane investigation with underweight dog; owner said someone poisoned dog and showed a dead dog in trash can; LAPD responded and necropsy was handled by Department Vet.
- Lucky Dog filmed three adoptions at the West Valley Shelter; working on weekly series to spotlight adoptions and how to train dog
- Plumbing problems at North Central continue; leak under cement of dog run areas; sprinklers went out during heat wave in one shelter and part needed to be ordered for repair.
- Some clerk typist positions are being filled.
- In early August two volunteers were suspended temporarily for failing to follow instructions, which led to fight between two dogs that caused injury to both dogs.
- At East Valley in August, a volunteer was bitten on both arms by dog he was working with inside the kennel.
- Continuing conversations with Koretz' Office on approach to dealing with coyotes – setting up neighborhood watches to do humane hazing to instill fear in coyotes.
- Working with the City Administrative Officer (CAO) on RFP for the Mission Hills facility and include the old South L.A. Jefferson Park facility; would like to have someone do something to help cats and kittens; it will be Prop F and may involve City Attorney / CAO on panel, and may not include the department.
- PSA "Dogs can't drive, but they need license" – put out to encourage people to license dogs.
- Conversations with PetCo regarding licensing – invited to have cats in their stores for adoption; cats would stay for one to two weeks, and then will be rotated.
- AGM Brown keynote speaker at Inglewood Rotary meeting and they would like to do things with us
- Bureau of Engineering will start renovations at West Valley; waiting on time line and plans for North Central.
- ACE program pilot now moving to South and Harbor and will include Special Ops.
- L.A. will host annual Emergency Management Workshop re crisis leadership, recovery and operations; Mark will participate.
- Ended year with increase in live save rate; cats are our needy population; we are over 80% with dogs and 54% with cats; number of dogs and cats coming in is not that different.

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- “Clear the Shelters” day adopted out 507 animals from our shelters; sponsored by CBS and ASPCA provided grant to lower adoption fee; total of 2500 in Southern California; a lot of interest in doing this again – save the date 7/16/16.

Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that it is not a good time for reserve Officers (RACO); increase in attacks on Officers by gang members.

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

**Commissioner Brent:** Attended screening of documentary “Saved in America” on puppy mills and challenges in Southern CA, Elaine Bemis in Mojave; would like agenda item on the number of positions open, discussion on breeders and follow-up on postcards sent by Officers.

**Commissioner Zaft:** Thanked attendees on issue of Kapparot and invited them to next meeting where it will be on the agenda.

**Commissioner Yañez:** Stated that Sue Taylor’s list is easy to target with Canvassers or ACOs – 524 easy targets to get additional funding; asked for status of 15 Canvassers (GM Barnette responded we have two; on breeders permit, if exempt, they can get an intact license for \$100 and don’t have to pay the \$235); would like to refer people to Canvasser positions, but don’t know where it is posted (AGM Brown responded not sure if there are recruitment issues and will get update from Personnel; GM Barnette added that Canvassers have to have own cars and had problem with department’s hours); would like Canvassers to carry vouchers.

**Commissioner Gross:** Noted correction to “Clear the Shelters” that it was NBC and Telemundo; is editing the appeal form to clarify the basis for which respondents can appeal; discussions with Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce to secure a booth at the upcoming Street Fair on 10/18/15, 100,000 people expected; thanked people on Kapparot issue.

Commissioners welcomed Jastine.

Public Comment

None

#### 5. Board Reports

- A. Board Report re Update on Enforcement of Potentially Dangerous Animal Directive and Related Administrative Hearings

**Lt. Annette Ramirez** and **AGM Brown** provided an overview of the staff report.

**Commissioner Gross** asked if there is a goal of a certain number of hearings per week. **AGM Brown** responded two per day per Hearing Officer. **Commissioner Brent** expressed happiness at progress and noted urgency in hiring of third Hearing Officer. **Commissioner Zaft** asked what changed in the May order that helped bring down number of impounds; were dogs returned pending a hearing or was it determined that there would not be a hearing. **Lt. Ramirez** responded that there were hard dates placed on Field Supervisor to conduct follow-up; dogs can be returned and a hearing can still be

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held, but temporary terms and conditions are issued. **GM Barnette** added that dogs being held are those that have done severe damage and the Officers feel they should not be out in the community. **Commissioner Zaft** asked how far out hearings are being set. **AGM Brown** responded about five or six weeks after seven day notice; cases where there is a confinement issue, time is given to fix the problem and they can get their dog back before the hearing; some people are afraid of heights and accommodation is being given. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if people have to pay for the boarding of dogs while they are impounded and even when the animal is released and found not to be dangerous. **Lt. Ramirez** responded that they are required to pay an evidence holding fee by code; when dogs impounded there is a violation and they need to make correction before dogs can be released to them. **Commissioner Brent** noted that is the reason many are up for adoption because even though owners go to face order, they don't want to pay fee to City to maintain and stop paying the fee. **GM Barnette** added there is discussion on a proposal to reduce or waive some of the fees. **Commissioner Yañez** asked the amount of the daily fee. **Lt. Ramirez** responded that for a quarantined or evidence dog it is \$30 per day for the first seven days, then it is reduced to \$14. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that he would like to hear proposal to reduce fees for cases where dog was not confined correctly and it's not a serious violation, discretion could be given to Hearing Officer or Field Supervisor to waive the fee. **GM Barnette** asked for thoughts about whether it should be for low-income or all to work on a report. **Commissioner Yañez** asked if it is a big problem. **Lt. Ramirez** responded that it is not, but the issue does come up. **Commissioner Brent** said she would be in support of a proposal to give someone the latitude to reduce or waive fees. **Commissioner Zaft** noted the reduction in impounded animals over the last five months and applauded the department's efforts. **ACA Lesel** indicated that the main difference in the directives was the allowance of Staff to make the determination whether an animal could be safely re-housed with owners while waiting for hearing to take place. **Commissioner Gross** asked about the three cats out of 258 dangerous animals. **Lt. Ramirez** responded that she was unable to do the research to find out.

Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Asked about captains being hired and whether it is a promotion; asked the department's dangerous dog task force to collect number of reported attacks and bites; we're the number one in the nation, but we don't keep statistics.

**B. Board Report re Update on the Rollout of the Administrative Citation Enforcement (ACE) Pilot Program**

**Lt. Annette Ramirez** provided an oral report: started in June at North Central with Field Staff and License Canvassers; as of the 15<sup>th</sup> – 473 ACE citations issued, of those 62 have been forwarded to City Attorney review prior to imposing fines; only 62 people failed to comply for a 87% compliance rate; program is being extended to other shelters; City Attorney's Office provided additional training for staff on August 19 to roll out to South L.A. and Harbor shelters, Wildlife Program and the permits program to begin on the 31<sup>st</sup>; yesterday the ACE clerk started and will be main point of contact to gather ACE information; no set dates for West L.A., East and West Valley shelters.

**Commissioner Yañez** asked what the primary citations are for (**Lt. Ramirez** responded that she does not know, but most common is licensing; people are allowed time for compliance); **Commissioner Yañez** asked if ACE clerk is for all shelters or only one; **Lt. Ramirez** responded she is the main point of contact; a non-correctible citation is off-

leash. **Commissioner Brent** asked if information synchs to chameleon for record keeping; and whether it is being used for other issues such as guard dog complaint – would like to get the kind of citations being issued. **GM Barnette** responded that when they get their license it would be in chameleon; **Lt. Ramirez** responded every single municipal code violation can be cited. **Commissioner Gross** asked barking dog complaints and about how the citations interact with the hearing process. **Lt. Ramirez** responded that we are not citing for barking dog; **GM Barnette** added that an agreement can be worked out in the administrative process with a stipulated agreement that is not appealable, if cited again then it goes to the next level. **Commissioner Zaft** added that it is more subjective and appropriate to go through the hearing process to develop a record. **Commissioner Yañez** asked when the Commission can get the stats on the breakdown of the 473 citations. **Commissioner Zaft** recommended getting stats in October after the program has been expanded and is more complete (**GM Barnette** added that the information can include if the person got the license, spay neuter and whether it had to go to the second level; **Lt. Ramirez** responded that the 62 processed by City Attorney are easy to obtain, but the ACE clerk needs to get the others). **Commissioner Zaft** recommended having the ACE Officers carry the vouchers so that when they are citing someone for an unaltered animal, they can distribute a voucher; how do we leverage this tool to go after other behavior like breeding operations once we hire more Officers. **Commissioner Yañez** responded that the Notice to Comply is not being used and citations are being issued instead.

#### Public Comment

**Sue Taylor:** Discussed need for tool for breeders; unable to review or figure out how to unless they have all the stats; how are Officers going out to meet the people to give them the citation; put info on Woofstats. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that now penalties are lower and more people are complying – maybe Officers are not properly trained; ACE is supposed to make revenue to pay for Officers; other jurisdictions issue it like a monetary fine because someone has to pay for enforcement.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

**Commissioner Brent** made a motion to adjourn the meeting and **Commissioner Gross** seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

Meeting ended at 11:19 a.m.