



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2015 at 10:00 AM

LOS ANGELES CITY HALL, ROOM 1060  
200 NORTH SPRING STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

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

Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m. Commissioners present were Zaft, Gross and Brent. Commissioner Yañez arrived at 10:05, and Commissioner Wolfson was absent. Also present Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) Board Secretary, Rita Moreno; General Manager, Brenda Barnette; and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Dov Lesel.

**Commissioner Zaft** opened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda. **Commissioner Gross** discussed the appeal hearing process and conducted the hearings.

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS**

1. **Dangerous Animal Case: DA 151013 NC** (*continued from 11/10/15*)  
Respondent: Casie Draeger and Billie Carlton  
Complaining Witness: Jennifer Richardson  
North Central Animal Care and Control: Lieutenant John Cessna

The decision on this item was pending to provide the Board the opportunity to review the audio of the administrative hearing with the Hearing Examiner. The Commissioners discussed the merits of the request and the evidence provided.

**Commissioner Zaft** made a motion to affirm the General Manager's decision to reissue the license for **Osito** (L15-08880) and **Penny** (L15-350351), and modify the terms and conditions to delete items 5, 10 and 11. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Brent** and was approved by a vote of 4-0.

2. **Dangerous Animal Case: DA 153007 EV**  
Respondent: Sybil Kohn  
Complaining Witness: Sally Wells Cook and Karen Heinick  
East Valley Animal Care and Control: Captain Wendell Bowers

Neither the Respondent nor the Complaining Witnesses were in attendance. The time was 10:20 a.m. and **ACA Lesel** stated that the Board has authority to rule on the appeal based on the grounds indicated in the request for the appeal hearing and the evidence provided in the case file. The Respondent's request stated that the evidence did not support the General Manager's decision and that the hearing process was not conducted in accordance with LAMC § 53.18.5(q). **Commissioner Gross** requested advice from **ACA Lesel** regarding the application of the decision to all three dogs, and adherence to the time line in the issuance of a decision. **ACA Lesel** advised that the Department has the authority to apply the restriction to all three dogs and that the Department does not lose jurisdiction over the matter as a result of the time lines. The

Commissioners discussed the merits of the request and the evidence provided.

**Commissioner Brent** made a motion to affirm the General Manager's decision to reissue the license for **Ringo** (L16-480952), **Tesla** (L16-480953) and **Buddy** (L16-480951) with terms, conditions and restrictions. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Yañez** and was approved by a vote of 4-0.

## II. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

### 1. PUBLIC COMMENT

**Mary Ledding:** Stated that the Department website does not have Board meeting minutes nor any information for permits issued.

### 2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

#### A. Approval of Minutes for October 27, 2015.

Public Comments  
None

**Commissioner Gross** moved to approve the minutes for October 27, 2015 and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. The motion passed 4 - 0.

#### B. Approval of Minutes for November 10, 2015.

Public Comment  
None

**Commissioner Zaft** continued the item to the December 8, 2015 meeting.

### 3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

**GM Barnette** discussed the following:

- Conducting interviews for Animal Care Technician Supervisors; there are 15 candidates for one position; the list will be certified in next couple of weeks
- Selection process for Animal Control Officers has begun; interviews will take place in early December; won't have new ACOs on board until March
- November 17 meeting with Bill Crowe, Director of Pet Care Foundation regarding calendar of events for 2016 that will be promoted and where adopters will receive a \$25-\$50 discount:
  - My Furry Valentine in mid-February
  - Woofstock at Roxbury Park on March 6
  - Spring 'Em event on April 23 and 24
  - Chikittypitty on May 14 and 15
  - Catapalooza on June 11 and 12
  - Chikittypitty II on June 23 and 24
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Catapalooza on August 27 and 28
  - My Buddy special promotion for senior dogs 5 years and older
  - The Fur Is Flying on October 15 and 16
  - Basic Black November 19 and 20

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- Whisker Wonderland December 10 and 11
- Jastine Tabangin, the Public Relations Specialist, has accepted another position with the Housing and Community Investment Department
- Jose Peña, Management Assistant working on contract administration and the budget, has accepted a promotion with LAPD
- There is a list of 20 or 25 candidates for the position of Assistant General Manager
- Upcoming events:
  - November 29 Moorpark Mobile Adoption at East Valley
  - December 13 radio personality Luz Maria broadcasting live from South L.A. sponsoring adoptions
  - December 8 Lucy Pet Foundation filming at a shelter doing beauty make-over to promote adoptions
- ASPCA filmed commercial at Chesterfield Square Animal Shelter earlier in week
- FOX network airing All Dog Rescue Celebration on Thanksgiving
- November 12 Field Services Specialized Mobile Animal Rescue Team had second swift water training in preparation for El Nino – NBC LA ran story
- November 10 called to rescue squirrel stuck for three days in pipe and surrounded by moving water in a wash; team rescued the squirrel Right This Minute filmed rescue
- Conducting open orientations for volunteers – first on 15<sup>th</sup> at South L.A.
- NKLA event at La Brea Tar Pits 156 animals for adoption (112 dogs and 44 cats); 102 were adopted (82 dogs and 20 cats) and remaining 54 taken by Best Friends
- November 7 Karma Rescue had group of 15 high school students attend day of service at West L.A. shelter – cleaned parking lot, flower beds, windows, counter tops in clerical and animal receiving areas and kennel cubbies
- Cases for prosecution:
  - November 10 - suspect failed to properly confine dog to property which escaped and severely injured a person; also failed to provide adequate food and shelter for three dogs; charges: violation of license, rabies, vaccines, vicious animals and neglect
  - November 10 – suspect failed to meet requirements for licensing, breeders permit, kennel, and adequate confinement for potentially dangerous dogs
- November 23 attended round table hosted by Found Animals; all vendors present except Amanda Foundation to talk about strategies and avoid duplication of services; breakout sessions for service providers and funders
- November 19 visited East Valley shelter for ribbon cutting – Sherman Oaks NC bought \$4,000 worth of special furniture for people to visit with cats and dogs; Councilman Ryu in attendance and NC Budget Advocates
- Will be working with Francisca Baxa to assist in strategic planning process; will assemble committee comprised of Commissioners, the Mayor's Office and Staff to discuss the process; previously discussed dates will be moved

Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that GM Barnette relieved three prior Assistant GMs - no stability in the Department; questioned the use of Gators to rescue squirrel - \$31,000 spent when \$21,000 would have put the metal vents in place of the windows in the vans for air circulation; new Officers won't have vehicles or equipment.

**4. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

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**Commissioner Brent:** Thanked Commissioner Zaft for placing items on the agenda; visited South L.A. shelter and impressed with staff, but concerned with locked cat room due to panleukopenia outbreak and difficulty for possible adopters.

**Commissioner Zaft:** Mentioned discussion with GM Barnette and ACA Lesel regarding future agenda item to submit request to Office of Finance for the inclusion of breeding to the list of businesses requiring business permit; Officers should be prepared to discuss how to leverage resources for additional enforcement.

**Commissioner Yañez:** Secured large donation of Wellness Cat Food – 26 pallets will be coming the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December; one pallet or more for each shelter will be delivered to Best Friends for storage; Stevo will be volunteering hours on Wednesday – possibly with North Central in the afternoon to do adoption promotion; OMD Media Agency would like to do volunteer work, asked if department can put together a day-long project for 10+ people – they will provide supplies; Pets for Life reached milestone - has served 100,000 pets as of last Tuesday – all pets from underserved communities – Pets for Life LA is leading in number of spay neuters nationally.

**Commissioner Gross:** Reported on final three Pets in Housing workshops conducted in coordination with HCID and Housing Rights Center held at West L.A., South L.A. and West Valley shelters; all well attended with about 150 attendees; most had never visited the shelters and were provided a tour; thanked DFO Mark Salazar, Lt. Susan Botta, ACO Karrie DeMacio; from Housing Department Susan Gosden and Malika Ibrahim; and from Housing Rights Center Marisol Arzate, Yazmin Guzman and Marlene Sanchez; the only suggestion was to have more workshops in the evening to make accessible; future agenda item – report on department coordination and plans to respond to El Niño at shelters to protect dogs in outside kennels, and how emergency situations will be handled.

**Commissioner Yañez** added that the Pets in Housing workshops were extremely informative and well done – HSUS is interested in replicating exact same presentation nationwide; conducted in unbiased manner and provided landlords with information on laws.

## 5. Discussion Items

### A. Discussion of Exotic Animal Permits for Private Events

**Commissioner Zaft** opened the discussion and mentioned a recent event involving an elephant brought in to a residential area and the question about the types of events that can be permitted to have exotic animals; the film industry and circuses are permitted for the use of exotic animals, but what types of events are appropriate to be permitted; would like to review permitting regulations and determine if there are any loopholes that need to be addressed. **GM Barnette** stated that she feels we should take steps to prevent the use of animals as party objects at homes; indicated that when activities are permitted, staff knows where it is and a large liability insurance is required of the owner of the animals, animal owners are licensed by the department, and determination can be made as to any traffic situations; conversely, animals can be at risk at parties, permits for filming are very controlled, but parties are different. **Commissioner Zaft** asked for information about

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the recent event. **GM Barnette** responded that the company that provided the animal has been registered with the department for a number of years and usually does Hollywood things; thinks the concern is the increase in the number of animals used at peoples' homes for parties. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if there was a permit for filming or to bring the animal to a location for any purpose. **GM Barnette** responded that she believes they have a permit to bring the animal to the location. **Commissioner Gross** asked how many of these types of situations have occurred throughout the years. **GM Barnette** responded that she did not run a report in preparation for the discussion. **Commissioner Brent** mentioned the possibility of raising the permit cost for this type of an event to preclude it from occurring since enacting a new law will take a long time. **GM Barnette** responded that money is no object for these people, but it can be considered. **Commissioner Zaft** requested reviewing the permitting regulations at a future meeting - permits can specify the allowable activities. **GM Barnette** responded that there is interest by some Councilmembers to change the Municipal Code to address this issue. **Commissioner Brent** asked if there is a stipulation that an exotic veterinarian be on-site – can be part of permit. **Commissioner Gross** stated that he would prefer to ban the practice than impose hurdles. **Commissioner Yañez** agreed; HSUS has long history of trying to disallow this type of activity; animals in a high stress atmosphere can snap and people can and have been mutilated and killed. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if there was anyone present from the department to provide more information. **GM Barnette** responded that not at this preliminary step.

**Commissioner Zaft** asked the representative from Councilmember Ryu to speak before public comment, stated that the Board's inclination is to ask the department to propose changes to the regulations to restrict these types of events. **Nicholas Greif**, Director of Policy and Legislation for Councilmember Ryu, represents Hollywood - Dell area where event occurred and expressed concern that a permit had been issued; read letter into the record; stated that it will be difficult to get ACO to respond at 11:00 p.m. on a Saturday night, and would like to give LAPD and ACOs authority to revoke an issued permit if situation deemed unsafe; two types of permits: filming and circuses / entertainment, exhibitions should be reviewed. **Commissioner Zaft** clarified that ACOs work around the clock; happy to work together with LAPD.

#### Public Comment

**Skip Haynes:** Stated that increased property values have brought in people who don't care about the community; community against bringing wild animals to parties; Randy Miller, owner of New York Seltzer used to have wild animal park – trainer killed by bear; 500 ft room in home with wild life that escaped – black panther running around neighborhood; city issues permits in error constantly; practice should be banned. **George Skarpelos:** Showed photos of elephant and lion in neighborhood, party with fireworks; homes are not used as residence, rather as party venue; permit for elephant is good for a year; animals are used as props. **Judy Dowden:** Stated she witnessed event - elephant used as party prop, hillside community has windy streets, animals parked on city streets not private property, lots of cars, 80 - 85% people in neighborhood are opposed. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated this is not new, prior event with painted elephant on display; only two ACOs for 469 square miles and 4 million people – they can't remain at party to make sure everything is under control; Mr. Boks had two ACOs permanently assigned to these events; Officers need to have the type of weapons to stop anything from



happening; Officers are issued target ammunition that is designed for paper and can ricochet and hit someone, rather than hollow points that can end an animal's suffering. **Mary Ledding:** Lives across from party house; used to work at MGM where animals were used for filming, but very controlled; money is not an issue so increasing permit will not solve problem; questioned allowing using exotic animals as party props; people are drunk and put everyone at risk; elephant was walked up a public street. **LAPD Officer Ralph Sanchez:** Discussed nuisance properties: 2649 LaCuesta had permit for a lion and said they would sedate it if it got out of control; Bluejay Way party for D.J. Steve Aoki had permits for giraffe that had to be taken up through streets in awkward position; Weidlake event had a lion and now also an elephant; streets have weight limit and neighborhood has natural wildlife like coyotes, mountain lions, cougars and bobcats – they can smell the animals and it brings them into the neighborhood – lots of missing dogs and cats after each of these events; LAPD requests that the issuance of permits be looked at carefully – not being used for filming, used for personal gain; many people are intoxicated. **LAPD Officer Tracye Fields:** Stated that it makes emergency response difficult – cars stacked up on the street, it takes at least six cars to clear the street, would require air ship assistance – effect of sound of air ship on lion / elephant; dangerous for party goers, neighborhood and emergency responders; elephant event did not allow any pictures or filming – a lot of security to make sure – so it was not a film permit. **Deputy City Attorney Jacquelyn Lawson:** Neighborhood Prosecutor for the Hollywood area, previously worked animal protection unit; stated there are 70 identified problem / party nuisance locations; profit-making one night only events; June 6 was the lion event at 6447 Weidlake – Officers responded in ½ hour and issued ACE citation, and lion was gone; two weeks ago at same location, elephant walking up the street with fireworks; also prosecuting people using animals as props at Hollywood and Highland – 10 ft snake plus one dead and one dying in a bag; Santa Monica has statute that disallows display of animals; need protocols to ensure handlers issued permits are handling animals are doing so in humane manner; Guila Monster, rattlesnakes.

**Commissioner Gross** asked about the provisions of the permit. **GM Barnette** responded that she did not know and was trying to find out the length of period permitted. **Commissioner Yañez** asked whether the Board has the authority to revoke the permit if it was issued for a year. **Commissioner Zaft** added that perhaps the department can suspend it while it is being reviewed. **ACA Lesel** responded that he needs to look at it and the LAMC; permits are issued to businesses that use animals – need to look at two different types of permits: one for companies that rent out animals and one for a specific day, period of time and specific purpose that is required by the venue so that can be reviewed for compliance. **Commissioner Zaft** added that if event specific, include provision that does not allow consumption of alcohol or controlled substances; should be a requirement for neighborhood notification such as that required for filming; suggested disallowing permits for identified nuisance properties.

**Commissioner Zaft** requested the department take interim steps to suspend permits to identified nuisance properties; recommended department work in coordination with LAPD and City Attorney to craft language – film industry may have some expertise in area. **Commissioner Gross** requested that department act swiftly. **Commissioner Brent** asked whether permits are issued by vendor and not location. **ACA Lesel** responded that both are permitted, but may not be differentiated in the

code; permit for a location should be issued for specific event and include limitations, and not for a year. **Commissioner Zaft** asked about the circus. **ACA Lesel** responded that although it is used for a set period of time, the permit is issued for a year. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that event specific permits should inform the city that a certain exotic animal will be at a certain location on a particular day and time.

## 6. Board Reports

### A. Update from Contract Spay/Neuter Clinics at Shelters

**Commissioner Zaft** discussed the purpose for inviting the spay neuter contractors. **GM Barnette** informed that ASPCA was not informed with enough time and could not attend, but SNP LA and Value Vet were present.

SNP LA provided handouts discussing the history of the organization and the services they provide, and the Director of Operations presented the information: three locations – Van Nuys and Harbor locations are adjacent to shelters, third location in Pico Rivera; run spay neuter surgeries four days a week – Wednesday thru Saturday at all three locations; low-cost wellness clinics on Sundays at Harbor, Sundays and Mondays at Van Nuys, and Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays at Pico Rivera; walk-in vaccine clinic every day from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. provides low-cost vaccines, microchips, flea/tick treatment, nail trimming; de-worming; mobile vaccine clinic services 6-8 city and county locations each month using hot-spot maps provided by Humane Society and Dr. Scott of L.A. County; will serve over 40,000 animals in 2015 focusing mainly on public animals – 20,000 will be through spay neuter surgeries and include accessory services with just under 50% for low-income public with under \$40,000 income, next are shelter pets, 18% receive free surgeries provided by grants (low-income or targeted breeds most euthanized), 13% will receive regular prices services; highest demand - large dog surgeries booked four weeks in advance; split between species is about 50/50; vaccines given to over 20,000 clients; wellness services to over 2,500 pets – ear infections, skin issues, mass removals, dental issues (\$175), end of life counseling and euthanasia; contract language for East Valley: maximum of 5 dogs, 5 female cats and unlimited male cats adopted from the center, 4 days per week; Harbor: Cmdr. Dedeaux requested extra surgery slots on Sundays and to remove species and gender restrictions; August 2015: East Valley required 17 surgery days, 5 dogs and 5 cats = 85 dogs and 85 cats or 170 shelter animals for the month; actual: received 138 dogs (53 more than required) and 57 cats (all the cats that were brought by shelter) = 195 animals or 25 more than required; Harbor required 17 surgery days, plus 4 Sundays for 19 surgery days, 10 shelter pets = 190 shelter animals; actual: 128 dogs and 63 cats = 191 total pets, or 1 more than required; YTD thru October for East Valley: performed 1,761 surgeries, goal 1,740 based on days; most months hits target, but not enough cats provided by shelter; 77 – 78% dogs; exceeding contractual obligations at East Valley; Harbor: not enough cats brought over to meet contractual requirement; issue of free rent: YTD thru October East Valley surgeries cost \$193,710, but reimbursed \$112,755 including 10% discount, with difference of about \$81,000; Van Nuys is about 2,800 sq ft @ \$28 per sq ft per year; Harbor surgeries cost \$173,000, AFE voucher does not nearly cover the cost of surgery – no free rent; regarding \$500,000 allocation, if highest AFE voucher: female over 150 lb dog at \$118 and \$68 for female cat provided for surgery at required rate and days in contract, total would be \$250,000 for the contract period

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at each location, with trend in coupons – another \$100,000; under current voucher system, will not reach \$500,000 unless increase value of AFE and more \$70 and \$125 vouchers are provided to public; contract has been over-budgeted; Harbor is on a 1-year renewal and Van Nuys is coming up; new RFP is coming up for services beginning mid-2016 – last time took 6 months to put in place and didn't get paid; requested coordination with GSD to have facility issues fixed: broken door handles, non-working outlets and lights, surgical lights not working, broken hinges on kennels; vouchers are inaccurate – pre-sterile vouchers invalidated – animals adopted out while in surgery; would like to see mobile vaccine clinic contract – in the works for 22 months – rabies vaccines are required and this would provide low-cost rabies vaccine; will service all 6 shelters; would like all ACOs and staff to know of low-cost wellness services – works with Intervention Program; conducts outreach to inform on vouchers.

**Commissioner Zaft** requested status report on mobile vaccine clinic contract. **Commissioner Gross** asked about interaction with staff. **SNP LA** responded that they work with staff, but there are some strained relations. **Commissioner Gross** asked about outreach efforts. **SNP LA** responded they use social media, outreach teams on the street, outreach when mobile vaccine clinic is on the street directing people next door for voucher. **Commissioner Gross** asked about any problems with billing. **SNP LA** responded that there used to be problems, but not anymore. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that amount may need to be adjusted, but glad to see contractual numbers requirement is being met. **SNP LA** would like Board to consider adjusting value of AFE. **Commissioner Yañez** asked what is AFE. **SNP LA** responded Authority for Expenditure - it is the voucher given to them for shelter animals (\$60, \$68 and \$110 and \$118) that is different from voucher amount. **Commissioner Yañez** asked whether the Board should look at changing the amounts and how long has it been since last change. **GM Barnette** responded that department is looking at all prices; haven't changed in 15 years. **Commissioner Yañez** requested report back on changing amounts. **GM Barnette** added that contracts will include a quarterly review to renegotiate value of contract if funds are not being used. **Commissioner Zaft** added that contractors should be notified to get input on value.

**Value Vet** indicated not prepared with all statistics - just notified of meeting last night at 5:00 p.m. **GM Barnette** responded that they can come back when ASPCA provides report. **Commissioner Zaft** stated they will be scheduled at a later meeting with ASPCA in January or February.

#### Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that euthanasia services are important services – people let animals die because they can't afford services. **Aimee Gilbreath:** Expressed support for SNP LA – 3 million dollar budget, provided \$100,000 grant from Found Animals; concerned with misinformation about contractual requirements. (**Commissioner Gross** responded that they must provide oversight for public funds for spay neuter services. **Commissioner Zaft** responded that the concern is with the 4 million dollars that have not been allocated; projects have been approved and are waiting to be implemented such as the targeted zip code mobile clinic. **Commissioner Yañez** added the 15 Canvassers should be empowered to take the vouchers door-to-door.) **Dee Thomas:** Stated that low-income people don't have the information or know that there are resources to help care for their animals; people running things in South L.A. are violent.



**Commissioner Zaft** asked that the other agencies be contacted to attend a future Board meeting to provide a report.

**B. Staff Request to Reject All Bids Received in Response to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Electronic Animal Identification System**

**Commissioner Zaft** provided a brief background of the RFP and the selection of Found Animals that subsequently offered to donate the microchips, which has been approved by the Board and City Council; stated that the vote is to close out the RFP.

**Commissioner Gross** made a motion to reject all bids received in response to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for an electronic animal identification system. **Commissioner Zaft** seconded and the motion passed 2 – 0 – 2 (two abstentions).

**C. WoofStat Report for October 2015**

**GM Barnette** noted progress with cats that is largely due to free adoptions for cats over 4 months through ASPCA grant, and assistance provided by NKLA partners with neonatal kittens; YTD live release rate for cats is up 14%; dogs are at 84% and cats at 57%; licensing is up 20% YTD compared to last year; ACE program is driving up compliance with licensing and spay neuter; shelter vets have exceeded their numbers; intake of strays is highest at East Valley, but seems higher at South L.A. because of density; euthanasia is down thanks to playgroups and New Hope Partners pulling animals with medical issues and those on the red list.

**Commissioner Brent** asked about discrepancy in high licensing at beginning of fiscal year, but almost flat for the month. **GM Barnette** responded that we need to study several years to determine what caused the jump. **Commissioner Zaft** noted that every shelter has improved the live save release rate, euthanasia number are decreasing, cat fosters are up 35% for YTD, redemption of \$30 vouchers is up 100%, drop in impounds for dogs, adoptions are flat, New Hope placement is down 17% over last year, altered dog license up 25%, over 1300 citations issues YTD, noted detail of surgeries by vendors. **GM Barnette** responded that Arlene is working hard with orientations and shelter working to get animals into foster care; ACE report will be added.

**Public Comment**

**Dee Thomas:** Stated that there is a need for more affordable housing and help for tenants to keep animals; more punishment for people abusing animals; need for education of people adopting animals.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Gross** made a motion to adjourn and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. Motion passed 4 - 0.

Meeting ended at 12:30 p.m.