

MINUTES
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
BOARD OF ANIMAL REGULATION

January 25, 1999

5:00 p.m.

The Board of Animal Regulation Commissioners convened in a community outreach meeting held at Lake View Terrace Recreation Center, 11075 Foothill Boulevard, Lake View Terrace, CA 91342

Commission Members Present: President Afriat and Commissioners Avila, Barrett, Hunter, and Jackson.

Staff Members Present: Linda Gordon, Jerry Greenwalt, Margo Kennedy, Dr. Dena Mangeamele, Lt. Tim Goffa, Robert Pena

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of November 16, 1998 were unanimously approved. (5 ayes: Commissioners Afriat, Avila, Barrett, Hunter and Jackson)

WELCOME BY COUNCILMAN WACHS

Commission President, Steve Afriat welcomed Councilman Wachs and expressed his appreciation towards the Councilman for his commitment towards the animals of Los Angeles.

Councilman Wachs expressed his appreciation to the Board for holding an outreach meeting for the constituents of his community. He took the opportunity to point out to the Commission, the unique quality of the community and the role horsekeeping plays. The equestrian lifestyle is an integral part of the lifestyle of the Northeast Valley. That lifestyle should be preserved and protected for generations to come.

The councilman informed the audience that the City's shelters are full to capacity with only a 9% redemption rate. This translates to about 70,000 animals being euthanized each year. This is shameful. There is a lot that can be done through education, spaying and neutering, and increased funding for the Department of Animal Regulation. He supports increased funding, staffing and a new shelter in the Northeast Valley. These are realizable and obtainable goals in next year's City budget. However, there are less expensive ways to help the problem including using modern technology to reunite lost pets with their owners. Toward that end, Councilman Wachs has made a formal proposal, which will be presented in a motion to the City Council tomorrow. He asked for the support of his constituents and the Department in placing photographs of all lost and stray animals on the Department's web page.

computer replacement equipment had been cut back. Additionally, some accounting support was cut back as well.

For the record, Dan Knapp stated that his staff is overworked and under stress, but one of the most quality staffs that he has ever worked with.

SENATE BILL 1785 UPDATE

Bob Pena apprised the commission and audience of the some of immediate changes that passage of SB 1785 will have on the Department. Among them:

1. Requirements for the shelters to have lists of animals that have been impounded
2. Referral lists for people to look for their lost pets
3. Lost and Found Boards for posters and fliers of lost pets
4. Animal Seizure due process

Provisions of the ordinance that will become effective July 1, 1999 will include:

1. Attempts will be made to adopt all adoptable animals.
2. Animals that are injured will be treated and placed for adoption
3. Animals that are injured and in great suffering will be humanely euthanized.
4. In all six shelters, Un-weaned kittens and puppies will be placed with trained individuals until they are old enough for adoption.
5. Stray dogs and cats will be held for six business days.
6. Department Protocols will be developed to determine whether or not a cat is feral or tame.

Dr. Dena Mangeamele updated the Commission on the Harbor Shelter Pilot Program. The Harbor shelter is being used as a test model. If the policies described by Bob Pena are successful, these measures will be implemented shelter wide. The pilot program has been in effect since the beginning of January.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 1785

The following individuals addressed the commission with concerns/comments regarding Senate Bill 1785:

Phyllis Daugherty (Animals Issues Movement) – Opposes 1785 because the law puts all of the responsibility of pet over population on the shelter and not on the owner.

Tia Torres (Pit Bull Rescue) – Department of Animal Regulation has been very cooperative with her organization in rescuing pit bulls. The Department of Animal Regulation should not have to bear the brunt of irresponsible dog ownership.

Andrea Gutman - Can rescue groups help the shelters by holding some of the animals?

AB 72 is very similar except it addresses dog bites. Currently, if a dog has bitten a human being on two separate occasions it is considered a misdemeanor. This legislation would add a possibility of felony to the charges.

Staff is recommending that the Commission support these proposed changes to the penal code.

Commission Barrett made a motion to approve SB 103 and AB 72. The motion was seconded. The commission was polled (5 Ayes).

Commissioner Barrett requested that staff keep the Commission abreast of any significant changes to these bills.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following individuals addressed the Commission during the public comments portion of the agenda:

Pat Kramer, Michelle Auzene, Jack Jarred, Joyce Pattenson, Patricia Davenport, Terry Kaiser, Miguel De La Mora, Kathy Delson, Gary Herwick, Tia Torres, Mary Phillips

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Dan Knapp thanked Councilman Wachs for his support of the Department. Mr. Knapp advised the audience as to how to report animal cruelty. If it is a violent crime committed against an animal, please notify the police. If it is a case of ongoing neglect, please contact the Department of Animal Regulation.

The microchip program has been deferred indefinitely. The department is using a scanning program in the meantime.

The web-page idea that Councilman Wachs introduced is very innovative. The Department is working on plans to have a lost and found web-page as well as an adoption web-page. Photographs of all animals housed the City's shelters will be downloaded onto the web-page.

The Municipal Code as it relates to animal issues is badly in need of updating.

In response to an audience member's comment regarding staff "burnout", Mr. Knapp said that "burnout" and stress is the number one disability. Euthanizing animals that could be adopted, seeing a public in crisis day after day, and expectations that staff will take all the blame for irresponsible pet owners; all take their toll on staff.

The Department will be working on a curriculum with local schools on empathy training.