

MINUTES
City of Los Angeles
BOARD OF ANIMAL REGULATION

March 22, 1999, 5:00 p.m.

The Board of Animal Regulation Commissioners convened in regular session on Monday, March 22, 1999, at the Eighth Council District Constituent Service Center, 8475 South Vermont Avenue.

Call to Order/Roll

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

A Commissioner has not been designated to fill the position vacated by Commissioner Hunter.

Staff Members Present: Dan C. Knapp, Linda Gordon, Dr. Dena Mangiamele, Bob Peña, Dave Diliberto, Helen Brakemeier, Tim Goffa, Jack Nylund, Jackie David, Renée Quimby, Carmella Ortiz, and Laurel Broyles

President Afriat called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m. He acknowledged Commissioner Jackson, who is a resident of Council District Eight and thanked Council District Eight, ITA, and Department staff for coordinating the meeting. Carmella Ortiz, new Executive Assistant to the Commission, was introduced. Availability of speaker cards was announced and Interpreter/Translator Maria Elena Gaitan was introduced. Those requiring Spanish interpretation were instructed by President Afriat and Ms. Gaitan that this service was provided at this meeting.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Commissioner Barrett and second of Commissioner Jackson, the Minutes of the Meeting of March 1, 1999, were approved without objection (4 Ayes).

Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas

President Afriat introduced Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas who addressed the audience and discussed the stray and roaming dog and pet overpopulation public health and safety crises facing the City. He stated that a significant budget increase will be needed to fund the services required of the Department of Animal Services. The Councilmember stated he will be focusing on legislation to provide needed protection to the citizens of Los Angeles. Councilmember Ridley-Thomas stated that last Friday, City Council unanimously approved his motion to support AB72, the Hertzberg Bill, which targets irresponsible dog owners by increasing the penalty for illegally training dogs to fight or attack. Further, the Councilmember is proposing a motion for City Council to look into the feasibility of imposing a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance, which will require all dogs over the age of six months to be spayed or neutered.

Before turning over the meeting to the Commission, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas acknowledged the staff and volunteers of the South Los Angeles Shelter. He presented a certificate of appreciation on the behalf of the City of Los Angeles for the compassionate care of animals and steadfast dedication to ensure the successful operation of the South Los Angeles Shelter. District Manager, Lieutenant Helen Brakemeier, accepted for the staff and volunteers of the South Los Angeles Shelter.

Old Business

- A. Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Update. Mr. Knapp presented a report on the requested budget and discussed the demographics of the South Los Angeles District. He discussed maximum versus actual staffing and the request to increase shelter staff, animal impounds, animal ownership, service call requests, euthanasia rates, improved technology, and the construction of the new South Los Angeles Shelter, scheduled to be completed in April 2000. President Afriat thanked Mr. Knapp for his report and opened the floor for questions from the Commission.

Mr. Knapp responded to Commissioner Barrett regarding the budget process, loose dogs, licensing, spaying and neutering, and vaccinating; President Afriat regarding the most critical budget issues; and Commissioner Jackson on how the community can support the Department's budget request and defining ownership of animals.

Commissioner Barrett informed the audience of the City Council's Public Safety Committee hearings of Monday, March 29 to discuss Special Enforcement Units and, tentatively, April 19 to discuss spay/neuter, licensing, and other Department issues.

New Business

- A. Report on the State of the South Los Angeles District. Lieutenant Helen Brakemeier, District Manager of the South Los Angeles Shelter, addressed the Board. She discussed staffing, calls for service, increases in animals being turned in to the Shelter, the temporary South Los Angeles Shelter and challenges with the facility, the telephone system, and expressed staff's excitement for the new Shelter. Lieutenant Brakemeier thanked Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas for the Certificate of Appreciation for the staff and volunteers of the South Los Angeles Shelter. President Afriat noted that a rendering of the new facility is available for view and that South Los Angeles Volunteers Jim and Beverly Kotary are in attendance with an information table.
- B. Update on the Call Management System. Senior Systems Analyst Jack Nylund addressed the Commission and discussed the upgrade to the toll free number into the Call Management System, addition of internal numbers to respond to City Council, Mayoral, and other agency requests for service, increase of lines to the toll free number, restructuring of the Call Management System menu, increased shelter access, and upgrade to the Administrative office telephones. He explained that technical problems still exist, but sufficient staffing to handle the calls is a major problem. President Afriat thanked Mr. Nylund for his report. There were no questions from the Commission.

- C. Special Enforcement Unit Update. Lieutenant Tim Goffa, head of the Special Enforcement Unit and East Valley District Manager, addressed the Commission. He reported on deployment and challenges faced in servicing the South Los Angeles District. Lieutenant Goffa provided impound, citation, warrant, and loose dog investigation statistics, media ride-alongs, and discussed some specific problems on the USC campus. In response to President Afriat's request, Lieutenant Goffa discussed safety tactics in dealing with dangerous dogs. Mr. Knapp, Commissioner Barrett, and President Afriat made additional comments on this subject. Handouts were provided to the audience on dealing with dangerous dogs. President Afriat thanked Lieutenant Goffa for his report.
- D. Update on Training Classes on Special Breeds. Lieutenant Bob Peña addressed the Board and stated that classes are planned, in conjunction with the pit bull support group, Villa Lobos Rescue. These classes will discuss the breed history, temperament, the importance of spaying or neutering, training, socialization, pit bull ownership responsibilities and how people can participate in different volunteer programs. In response to Commissioner Barrett's question, Lieutenant Peña stated that a press conference will be held on Wednesday or Thursday of this week to announce the classes and reservations will be taken for the classes. President Afriat thanked Lieutenant Peña for his report.

Phyllis Daugherty works with the Animal Issues Movement and Villa Lobos Rescue. She addressed the Commission on this agenda item and discussed her experience in pit bull rescue and the escalation of the breed. She added comments for dealing with a menacing pit bull. President Afriat thanked Ms. Daugherty for her comments.

- E. Update on the Department Microchip Program and Request for Indefinite Postponement. Mr. Knapp addressed the Board and requested indefinite postponement of the Microchip Program due to the implementation of SB 1785. The contract with AVID will remain viable and staff will update progress in six months. President Afriat moved that the microchip implementation be postponed for six months and then return it to Commission for further review. Commissioner Barrett seconded for purposes of discussion. Commissioner Barrett expressed her concerns over the legal and financial ramifications of postponing to which Mr. Knapp replied that AVID is agreeable to keep the contract viable and should be renewed in May, some supplies will be returned until the program started. In response to President Afriat's question, Mr. Knapp replied that postponing the program should not place the Department at a disadvantage in negotiating a new contract. President Afriat called for a vote. (Commissioners Barrett, Avila, Jackson, and President Afriat—4 Ayes)

Public Comments

The following speakers addressed the Commission:

Martha Cabrera asked via translator what the complaint process is. She specifically wanted to know why she is required to provide her name, telephone number, and address when making a complaint.

Robert Durley, member and leader of Adopt-a-Block, and member of the Senior Advocacy Board for the Police Commission in this area, complained of a man living in a van who maintains two dogs that bark throughout the night, are not licensed, or vaccinated. He requested that the problem be addressed and a quicker remedy be determined for dealing with barking dog cases.

Sky Solari addressed the Board regarding pit bulls. She shared some of the challenges she has faced as a pit bull owner and requested that the animals be banned from public ownership and illegal breeding. Ms. Solari encouraged the Board and Department to help the abandoned animals on the streets and those in the shelters.

Fernando Negrette, accompanied by a guest, requested more information for distribution to the public and expressed his concern over continuing education to the community. He requested support from and offered his support to the Department on these issues.

Beverly Kotary addressed the Board and stated the information provided at tonight's meeting is provided in both English and Spanish. This information is provided by the Kotarys at most low-cost vaccination clinics. She discussed the lost and found center, pet care coloring books, spay and neuter coupons, and discussed the need for spay/neuter mobile clinics. Ms. Kotary acknowledged Candice Mondrell, one of the newest volunteers at South Los Angeles, who has been instrumental in placing ads in the *L.A. Weekly*, *L.A. Independent*, and the *Larchmont Chronicle*.

Jim Kotary addressed the Board and discussed the information table provided at tonight's meeting. He discussed ID tags, low-cost vaccination clinics, spay/neuter coupons, senior citizen spay/neuter program, and the volunteer hotline at South Los Angeles.

Willie Solomon, a member of the Eighth District Empowerment Congress, discussed illegal breeders and barking dogs in the southeast district. Mr. Solomon was advised to provide the information on the illegal breeders to Lieutenant Brakemeier.

President Afriat commented on the Eighth District Empowerment Congress.

Hellen Douglas addressed the Board and commended the South Los Angeles District employees and expressed her approval of increased funds to the Department. She acknowledged the loose and stray dog problem, but wanted to bring to the attention of the Board and Department the stray cat population that is increasing in South Los Angeles.

Rudy J. Tenorio de Cordovia, a resident of Pico-Union Heights, addressed the Board and discussed the dog problem in Council District 1. He commented that confidentiality should be honored and customers of Animal Services should be ensured that their name and telephone number are confidential. He stated that the Department of Animal Services should follow the Department of Building and Safety infrastructure and become revenue generating by enforcing licensing laws.

Teri Austin of the Amanda Foundation addressed the Board and discussed a form letter developed by their organization in support of the Department, USC students requesting pets from their organization, and a microchip success. She requested a letter from the Department to USC to discourage pet ownership by students.

Ann Jackson, 91st and 92nd Street Block Captain, addressed the Board to discuss barking and loose dogs in her neighborhood.

Mr. Afriat closed the public comment section of the meeting.

General Manager's Report

Mr. Knapp discussed the Southern California Animal Control Directors' Association training held on March 19 with attendance of approximately 150 members from all over the state. He stated the Department is quickly becoming the leader in SB 1785 implementation. He announced that a new volunteer coordinator has been hired and will begin in mid-April. He announced that the Department has been raising funds for a spay/neuter van and approximately \$13,000 toward the purchase of the van, which should cost approximately \$150,000 and will include an exam area and surgery suite.

At Mr. Knapp's request, Lieutenant Brakemeier explained how customers can file complaints and when they are required to disclose their name.

Mr. Knapp introduced Jackie David, the Department's new Public Information Director, and encouraged those interested in assisting the Department to contact her after the meeting.

Mr. Knapp addressed the barking dog issue and stated that a modified ordinance has been approved by Commission that will streamline the barking dog process. President Afriat added that the ordinance was forwarded to City Council with the recommendation to include all animal noises.

Mr. Knapp stated that any other concerns can be discussed with Lieutenant Brakemeier or one of the other Animal Control Officers in attendance after the meeting.

Items not on the Agenda

President Afriat directed Mr. Knapp to regain control of the press contact protocol. President Afriat affirmed that the directive that states that the General Manager or the Public Information Officer are the official spokespersons for the Department is the Directive being referenced.

President Afriat requested that copies of the speaker cards be provided to Councilmember Ridley-Thomas' staff for follow-up to their constituents.

President Afriat requested the Commission's permission to cancel the April 19 meeting. He stated that a meeting is scheduled in two weeks on April 5, which includes appeals at 8:00 a.m. and the regular agenda at 9:00 a.m. The April 19 meeting was canceled without objection.

President Afriat thanked Councilmember Ridley-Thomas' staff for creating the meeting opportunity tonight.

Upon motion by Vice President Avila and second of Commissioners Barrett and Jackson, the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

4/5/99
ATTEST

Steve Afriat
PRESIDENT

Samuel L. Broyles
COMMISSION SECRETARY