



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES

TUESDAY, March 12, 2019 at 9:00 AM

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

Audio MP-3 Recording is available at www.laanimalservices.com

Larry Gross, President
Olivia E. García, Vice President
Jose Sandoval
Alisa Finsten
Roger Wolfson

Meeting called to order at 9:16 a.m. Commissioners present were García, Gross, Finsten, Sandoval and Wolfson. Also present from Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) was General Manager (GM) Brenda Barnette, Assistant General Manager (AGM) Tammy Watson, AGM MeLissa Webber, Board Secretary, LaTonya Dean and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Laurie Rittenberg.

Commissioner Gross opened the meeting, introduced staff and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

1. Dangerous Animal Case: DA 184585 NC

Appellant(s): Albert Ta

North Central Animal Services Center: Lieutenant Angela Hooks

Complaining Witness: Sylvia Gonzalez

The Board discussed the merits of the appeal, the evidence provided to the Hearing Examiner, and the grounds supporting the General Manager's determination. The Board found that the evidence supports the decision of the General Manager's determination.

Commissioner Gross made a motion to uphold the decision of the General Manager. **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded and the motion was approved by a vote of 4-1.

Ayes: Finsten, García, Gross and Wolfson

Noes: Sandoval

Absent: None.

Public Comment:
None.

2. Dangerous Animal Case: DA 184587 WV

Appellant(s): Maria F. De La Rosa

West Valley Animal Services Center: Captain Lorna Esparza

Complaining Witness: Daniel Joyce

The Board discussed the merits of the appeal, the evidence provided to the Hearing Examiner, and the grounds supporting the General Manager's determination. The Board

found that the evidence supports the decision of the General Manager's determination.

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to uphold the decision of the General Manager. **Commissioner García** seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Ayes: Finsten, García, Gross, Sandoval and Wolfson

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

Public Comment:
None.

3. Dangerous Animal Case: DA 183479 EV

Appellant(s): Rachelle Wells
East Valley Animal Services Center: Lieutenant Jose Gonzalez
Complaining Witness: Jennifer Hourigan

The Board discussed the merits of the appeal, the evidence provided to the Hearing Examiner, and the grounds supporting the General Manager's determination.

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to uphold the decision of the General Manager with a modification to the Terms, Conditions and Restrictions to require K9 Good Citizen certification training within 60 days as a substitute to Item 10 which required fencing be installed at the property. **Commissioner Gross** seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Ayes: Finsten, García, Gross, Sandoval and Wolfson

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

Public Comment:
None.

4. Dangerous Animal Case: DA 181267 SLA

Appellant(s): Jonathon Robinson
South Los Angeles Animal Services Center: Lieutenant John Cessna
Complaining Witness: LAPD Officer Roach and LAPD Officer Evis

The Board discussed the merits of the appeal, the evidence provided to the Hearing Examiner, and the grounds supporting the General Manager's determination.

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to overturn the decision of the General Manager, return the dog to its owner with Terms, Conditions and Restrictions that require that the dog receive training and be on leash as per the restrictions. **Commissioner García** seconded and the motion was approved by a vote of 4-1.

Ayes: Finsten, García, Sandoval and Wolfson
Noes: Gross
Absent: None.

Public Comment:
None.

II. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeffrey Mausner, Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils (VANC), spoke about the killing and torturing of dogs in the South Korean dog meat trade. He also presented a resolution from VANC requesting that the City Council pass a motion opposing the trade and requesting Mayor Garcetti to raise the issue with officials.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL COMMENTS - (Discussion with Neighborhood Council representatives on Neighborhood Council Resolutions or Community Impact Statements filed with the City Clerk which relate to any agenda item listed or being considered on this agenda for the Board of Animal Services Commissioners)

Public Comment:

Jeffrey Mausner spoke in regards to Council File (CF) 17-1421 and 17-1421 S1 which are relative to strengthening the laws regarding use of illegal fireworks and increased police enforcement. He spoke about the effect that illegal fireworks have on dogs. He also discussed CF 18-0130; the Found Pets Policy. He stated that the Tarzana Neighborhood Council passed a resolution and submitted a Community Impact Statement in support of this policy. He further discussed some of the misunderstandings about the policy. Lastly, he discussed a Community Impact Statement which was submitted by the Tarzana Neighborhood Council on the Citywide Cat Program – TNR (Trap-Neuter-Release) Injunction. He stated that it was taking a long time to complete the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and that in the meantime, cats were dying. He urged everyone involved to expedite the EIR process.

3. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for Meeting of February 26, 2019.

Public Comment:
None.

Commissioner García moved to approve the minutes of February 26, 2019. **Commissioner Finsten** seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Ayes: Finsten, García, Gross, Sandoval and Wolfson
Noes: None.
Absent: None.

4. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

GM Barnette discussed the following:

- **AGM Watson**, reported that effective December 17, 2018, 311LA started taking some of the Department's (non-urgent) calls. 311LA takes about 3,000 calls for the Department per month and are working on expanding the types of calls they take for the Department. The Department is working with ITA (Information Technology Agency) to increase the bandwidth in our animal centers to accommodate the new equipment at the centers.
- On March 1st, the Department conducted an Employee Appreciation Day and allowed L.A. City employees to adopt a dog at no charge.
- Dogs Playing for Life returned to East Valley Animal Services Center for a refresher course for staff and volunteers.
- On February 26th, World Spay Day, the Department with the help of Lucy Pet Foundation held an event where adoptable animals were spayed and neutered on site. A KTLA morning newscaster was there and the Department followed it up in its own way by launching online spay and neuter vouchers which are downloadable from the Department's website.
- **GM Barnette** spoke about the Administrative Appeal Hearing process, specifically about situations involving the revocation of a dog license. **GM Barnette** clarified that when the dog owner is told that they can contact the General Manager about having that reversed, it is not reversing it for the subject dog. A discussion with the General Manager would be about a different dog from what they previously owned. Additionally, **GM Barnette** clarified that when a dog's license is revoked and the Department has custody of the dog, the Department cannot guarantee that the dog will not be euthanized.

Public Comment:

Jeffrey Mausner asked about what was going on with the TNR injunction and EIR. **GM Barnette** responded that Department staff attended regular meetings with City staff to review the amount of literature on TNR and the delay may be due to the large number of documents.

5. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Sandoval: Passed

Commissioner Finsten: Stated that after reading some of the hearing reports, she found some of the comments to be rather subjective, such as statements regarding

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dog owners' financial capacities. She would like the Department to examine the report process to ensure that the reports are not bias.

Commissioner García: Requested that next year the Department consider adding a week of free spay and neuter for dogs and cats.

Commissioner Wolfson: Wanted to commend the Commission for a lot of good agenda items that are coming up and specifically expressed his excitement for what the Department was doing with volunteers. He also noted that one thing that was outstanding was a request for a report back on changing shelter hours. **GM Barnette** reported that it was on an agenda for discussion at an upcoming JLMC (Joint Labor Management Committee) meeting in March.

Commissioner Gross: Requested a report back on SB 258 (Hertzberg) also known as the House People with Pets Bill which would empower homeless shelters to take in individuals experiencing homelessness who also have pets and would create \$5 million in state general fund grants for homeless shelters to offer shelter, care and veterinary services to the pets of people staying there. He also requested a report on ASB 366 (Bloom) which is aimed at allowing animal blood banks in California to utilize a donor blood collection system for dogs and cats. This would change the "closed colonies" system being used which repeatedly uses blood from the same animals.

Public Comment:
None.

6. Board Reports

- A. Authorize the Use of Animal Welfare Trust Funds to Host a Volunteer Appreciation Event.

Carolyn Almos, Director of Volunteer Programs briefed the Board on the scheduled activities related to the proposed volunteer appreciation event. She also reported that the number of active volunteers was 2,531 which was double the number from the past year. **GM Barnette** noted that this event was downscaled from previous plans at the request of some of the volunteers. **Commissioner Wolfson** thanked staff for providing vegan food options at the event and hoped the press would be at the event. In terms of the tools provided to volunteers, he suggested also supplying keys so that the volunteers could take the dogs out (for walks).

Public Comment:

Jeff Fleiss, Animal News, thanked the Department for throwing the event for the volunteers as it builds camaraderie among them and was impressed that vegan food would be served at the event.

Jeffrey Mausner thought the event was a good idea and not a waste of money. Stated that he had noticed that the number of volunteers had increased, but noted that more volunteers were still needed so that every walkable dog could get out to the play yard and every cat and rabbit could get some attention. He

also spoke about the recommendations for the budget white paper.

Commissioner Wolfson moved to authorize the use of up to \$30,000 in Animal Welfare Trust Funds for a volunteer appreciation event. **Commissioner García** seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

Ayes: García, Gross, Sandoval and Wolfson

Noes: None.

Absent: Finsten

B. Recommendation to Support Senate Bill No. 313 (Hueso) – Prohibition on the Use of Wild and Exotic Animals in Traveling Animal Acts.

GM Barnette reported that at the last Board meeting she mentioned she felt that this bill was a good next step after the bullhooks for protecting the large cats that are in traveling acts. She noted that there was some opposition to this bill, but after reading the comments, she believed that opponents were confused as they thought that this might somehow hamper humane education of wildlife. **Commissioner Wolfson** thanked Commissioner Gross for scheduling both this item and the next one on the same day. He stated that each one of the cases (administrative appeals) on the agenda demonstrated the level of respect, love, care and concern that the Department had for companion animals and he believed that the same level of compassion, love and care should be extended to all animals.

Public Comment:

Jeff Fleiss, Animal News, stated that he whole-heartedly supported the bill.

David Rutan stated that he was in support of the bill and that confinement of animals alone was enough to support it.

Commissioner Wolfson moved to recommend the support of Senate Bill No. 313, prohibiting the use of wild and exotic animals in traveling animal acts. **Commissioner García** seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Ayes: Finsten, García, Gross, Sandoval and Wolfson

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

C. Recommendation to Amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code to Prohibit Rodeo Events in the City of Los Angeles.

GM Barnette stated that the recommendation was to prohibit rodeo activities such as bull-riding, calf-riding and wild cow milking, all of which are abusive and dangerous to the animals and people who participate in the events. **Commissioner Wolfson**, before introducing Heather Hamza, encouraged the

public to bring the Board their ideas and promoted citizen democracy.

Public Comment:

Heather Hamza reported that circuses and rodeos are very much alike in that circuses take wild animals and make them tame, while rodeos take tame animals and make them wild. She stated that large, powerful animals were artificially induced by humans to be terrified to death and their bodies responded in manners which placed them at very high risk for grave injuries and even death. She then described some of the events that take place at rodeos and the injuries sustained by the animals. She also left copies of Rodeo Reporting Forms from the Department of Consumer Affairs. **Commissioner Wolfson** pointed out that Ms. Hamza was supported by a number people through a series of letters which were provided to the Commission.

Commissioner Sandoval asked if anyone knew how many events happen in the City of Los Angeles each year and **Commissioner García** asked if anyone knew where they took place. **Ms. Hamza** responded that she met with Councilmember Koretz a year ago about the subject and at the time there weren't any in the City of Los Angeles, only in the County of Los Angeles. However, when the PBR (Professional Bull Riding) event was scheduled at the Staples Center (Los Angeles) last month they knew it was time to act.

Phyllis Daugherty stated that this wasn't something that we hadn't already seen before. She stated that the Department officers didn't have any experience in real enforcement and noted that there wasn't a draft ordinance attached to the report. **Commissioner Wolfson** stated that there was a motion attached to the report and **GM Barnette** stated that once the motion is passed by City Council, they instruct the City Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance.

David Rutan stated that rodeos have unwilling participants and by having the rodeo here, we are condoning the violent sport. He encouraged the Commission to pass the motion.

Jerilynn Burks read an excerpt from Dr. Peggy Larson, a farmer, a rodeo bareback bronco rider and a large animal veterinarian which described some of the activities that take place at rodeos.

Jeffrey Mausner stated that he grew up in Colorado and had seen rodeos when he was a kid and felt that rodeos were cruelty to animals for entertainment. He also talked about the injuries to people who participate in rodeos as well and urged the Commission to pass the resolution recommending that City Council ban rodeos in Los Angeles.

Audrey Harvey, Last Chance for Animals, spoke about the protest that took place outside the PBA event at the Staples Center. She urged the Commission to support the motion to ban rodeos and rodeo type activities in the City of Los Angeles.

Amanda Lundberg read statements made by T.K. Hardy, a Texas veterinarian and sometimes steer-roper, regarding rodeo activities and spoke about the definition of humane activities toward animals.

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Jeff Fleiss talked about sadistic skills taught by the rodeo and stated that he had not seen another sport where they have an ambulance on hand for the sake of the animals. He wholeheartedly believed in this bill and supports the ban.

Commissioner Gross requested an amendment to add “including Animal Services” after “appropriate City staff” in the recommended motion.

Commissioner Wolfson moved to recommend an amendment to the Los Angeles Municipal Code to prohibit rodeo events in the City of Los Angeles with an amendment to the motion to require that Los Angeles Animal Services staff be included in making the changes. **Commissioner García** seconded and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

Ayes: García, Gross, Sandoval and Wolfson

Noes: None.

Absent: Finsten

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting ended at 11:26 a.m.