

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS*

**KERN COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

Kern County Administrative Building
1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301
3rd Floor, Multipurpose Room

March 21st, 2018 – 6:00p.m.

A. ROLL CALL: The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.
Commissioners Present: Mr. Blackburn – Vice Chairperson/Commissioner
Ms. Taggart – Commissioner
Ms. Geary – Commissioner
Ms. Madigan - Commissioner

Commissioners Excused:
Ms. Anderson –Chairperson/Commissioner
Ms. Perez – Commissioner (*non-voting member*)

Staff Present:
Nick Cullen – Director, Kern County Animal Services
Jerri S. Bradley – Deputy County Counsel
Blake Smith – Business Manager, Kern County Animal Services
Jeff George - Volunteer Coordinator, Kern County Animal Services
Amber Chrissakis – Volunteer OSS, Kern County Animal Services

[When names appear in parenthesis, the motion initiating action on the agenda item was made by the first Commissioner named and seconded by the second Commissioner named.]

B. APPROVAL OF SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS:

1. February 21st, 2018 Regular Meeting.

Motion to Receive and File (*Geary/Taggart*) – All in favor

C. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. CORRESPONDENCE FILED WITH THE COMMISSION - Receive and File

NONE

D. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons to address the Commission on any matter not on this agenda but under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Commissioners may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed. They may ask a question for clarification; make a referral to staff for factual information or request staff to report back to the Commission at a later meeting. Also, the Commission may act to direct the staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda. Please state your name and address for the record before making your presentation. **SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES.**

Heard from heard from Sue Bennett reported on the voucher statistics from Kern Humane.

Heard from Stacey Steffe who shared her concerns that Chairperson Anderson volunteering for the Commission may be a conflict of interest based on Chairperson Anderson's outside affiliations. She also shares her concerns regarding the status of the terms of the other current Commissioners.

Heard from Wally BeVile who asked the members of the Commission if they were current on their ethics training. Each member of the Commission responded and Jerri informed everyone that information is available with the Clerk of the Board.

Heard from Michelle Vallejos who wanted to follow up with what Ms. Steffe stated and say that there is an expectation of the Commissioners to not have bias. She believes that with Chairperson Anderson's outside affiliations there is bias involved with her position as a Commissioner. Commissioner Madigan responds by asking Jerri to confirm that this issue needs to be addressed with the appropriate member of the Board of Supervisors. Unidentified members of the public speak, asking Commissioner Madigan if she was aware of Chairperson Anderson's affiliation with the AKC to which Commissioner Madigan responds she was aware. When asked her opinion she indicated that her opinion was not relevant. Jerri Bradley speaks, giving factual information regarding the expectations of the Commissioners. Same unidentified member of the public speaks asking how the conflict of interest has been allowed for 11 years. Jerri responds that nothing that has been stated this evening has given her reason to believe there is conflict of interest. Stacey Steffe clarifies that her concern is that Chairperson Anderson, given her strong stance on the mandatory spay/neuter issue, cannot be open or unbiased when discussing mandatory spay/neuter. Ms. Steffe also states she doesn't understand how members of the Commission can sit and make decisions when their terms are 3-5 years expired. Jerri responds that on it's face there is no ethical conflict of interest. Jerri also

explains that the correct place to handle these issues is to take it to the Board of Supervisors and further explains how terms of this Commission works. She also explains that the Clerk of the Board has all the requirements for all existing boards in the county.

Heard from Joan Peyton who states that the Commission and the people who are consistently involved in these meetings have tried to make sure all interests of the community are represented. She states that Chairperson Anderson is the least biased person she knows and she has never done or said anything that made her believe anything other than that Chairperson Anderson keeps the community's best interest as a priority. She felt like Chairperson wasn't there and that she walked into a witch hunt.

E. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS OR REPORTS:

1. DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT – Receive and file

Heard from Director Cullen who reminded everyone that everyone in the room wants the same thing and has the same purpose; that is, everyone wants to effect positive change. He briefly goes over the statistics of the Director's report. He also reported on the results of World Spay Day. He informs everyone that he and other staff members will be participating in the Victim's March and invites everyone to come out on April 10th at 5:30pm. Commissioner Blackburn asked about the "other" animals euthanized in February. Director Cullen explains they seized 67 fighting birds from a fighting ring. Commissioner Blackburn briefly discusses the statistics on the Director's report. Lynn asks Director Cullen if the emergency trailer is going to be out at dog show grounds to which Director Cullen replies that it is he just has to get the details worked out. An unidentified member of the public asks Director Cullen why the cost of adopting a "last resort" dog is the same as all other dogs. He responds that the adoption fee is more than reasonable and in extenuating circumstances they do waive adoption fees. There is brief discussion on adoption prices. An unidentified member of the public thanks Director Cullen for allowing Veterans to adopt animals for free and for the support with trying to help catch Buddy the dog at Hart Park.

2. VOLUNTEER UPDATE - Receive and File

Heard from Jeff George who reports on the statistics on the Volunteer Report. Commissioner Blackburn asks if it is possible for someone to come in for one day and walk the dogs. Jeff responds that there are a few reasons that is not possible although there are procedures for one-day volunteers in other situations.

3. SPAY/NEUTER FUNDS UPDATE - Receive and File

Heard from Blake Smith who reports on the data on the Spay/Neuter report. He states there is an error in this report and offers to send a correct version to anyone who would like it. He also reports that Marley's Mutts has decided to cease their spay/neuter program and discusses how it will affect the department's budget. Commissioner

Blackburn asks Blake how many of the spay/neuter surgeries are done on site in the surgery suite. Blake approximates 85% Dr. Wilson does in the surgery suite. There is brief discussion about the department utilizing Critter Without Litters for TNR cats.

Motion to Receive and File (*Madigan/Taggart*) – All in favor

F. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS OR REPORTS:

On their own initiative, Commissioners may make an announcement or a report on their own activities. They may ask a question for clarification, make a referral to staff, or take action to have staff place a matter of business on a future agenda (Government Code Section 54954.2(a)).

Heard from Commissioner Blackburn who spoke briefly about a recent trip he had to Petco.

G. OLD BUSINESS:

1. STAFF REFERRALS

NONE

2. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SUB-COMMITTEE

Commissioner Geary reports that CCADT will be at the Mega Adoption with their trailer. The greater Tehachapi Valley division of CCADT was a recipient of Chairs to Charity.

3. LIFESTOCK CONTAINMENT COMMITTEE

Commissioner Geary has nothing to report.

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. REPORT FROM LISA RICHARDSON REGARDING VISIT TO AUSTIN, TX

Lisa was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Motion to continue Lisa Richardson on next month's agenda. - (*Madigan Taggart*) – All in favor

2. MANDATORY SPAY/NEUTER

Heard from Director Cullen who started off the discussion by asking everyone to respect the person speaking at the microphone and to save their comments for their turn to speak. He spoke about the history of the department and animal welfare in the county. He talks about the department creating a easily accessible spay/neuter program and the results they have seen since that program creation. He states that everyone agrees that spay/neuter is the solution to the overpopulation, the method by which it is achieved is either mandatory or voluntary and that is where the disagreements lie.

Heard from Commissioner Blackburn who spoke about how he got involved in animal welfare in Kern County.

Heard from Judy Coffman who gave facts about places in which mandatory spay/neuter did not work because their shelter intake numbers went up and licensing compliance went down. She also spoke about the adverse affects spay/neuter has on dogs, especially the juvenile animals.

Heard from Liz Keogh added to what Director Cullen said about the history of animal welfare in Kern County. She also expresses her belief that those speaking need to be willing to commit to this cause for the long haul.

Heard from Sue Bennett from Kern Humane talks about how she got involved in animal welfare and how Kern Humane has supported a voluntary, low cost spay/neuter program. She believes the low cost spay/neuter program is working and isn't against mandatory spay/neuter however she states that if mandatory spay/neuter is going to be the way to go, people will have to find a way to fund it that is not through the Board of Supervisors.

Heard from Stacey Enns who talks about organizations who have been successful with mandatory spay/neuter in conjunction with low cost spay/neuter. She states that some organizations have been successful with mandating spay/neuter with certain breeds. She speaks about organizations that have difficulty enforcing ordinances and are not able to go door to door but believes that if an animal ends up at a shelter it should be spayed/neutered. She believes that pressure should be put on the public to spay/neuter their animals. She believes in breed preservation.

Heard from Sundee Martineau talks about the perspective of the rescues in the county. She talks about all the hard work they do and the money they spend out of their pockets or money they raise to save animals that never see the shelter.

Heard from Stacey Steffe who believes that the breeders who breed legally and appropriately are not the issue that "backyard breeders" are the problem. She also states that if mandatory spay/neuter isn't going to work across the board that looking at breed specific ordinances would be the way to go.

Heard from Michelle Vallejos who gives statistics from Riverside County, Long Beach, Santa Cruz stating that mandatory spay/neuter has worked in their organizations. She shows pictures of 78 dogs that have been picked up off the street since January by 10 different people. None of those 78 dogs were spayed/neutered. She states she doesn't want to effect the breeders.

There was a pause in the recording to allow for a 5 minute break in the meeting. Meeting reconvened at 7:33pm.

Heard from Wally BeVile who spoke about breed specific mandatory spay/neuter. He states pit bulls and Chihuahuas are the two most overpopulated breeds. He believes that breed specific ordinances would help the current situation.

Heard from Danny Spanks who states he doesn't know whether he is for or against mandatory spay/neuter. He states this is not about the responsible pet owners or breeders but about the irresponsible pet owners. He thinks that dogs that come into the shelter are going to be returned to their owners they should be altered rather than being returned unaltered as they have been in the past. There is brief discussion about the circumstances in which the shelter is mandated to alter an animal and when they have the option to alter an animal after impound.

Heard from Susan Richardson who states that rescues don't get enough recognition. She believes there needs to be more pressure put on the Board of Supervisors to find creative solutions or more funding to fix this problem.

Heard from Sundee Martineau who asks the age of the animals when they are fixed at the shelter to which several people reply that it is 8 weeks, or 2 months.

Heard from Commissioner Madigan who said after some research she isn't convinced one way or the other. She talked briefly about how she became involved in animal welfare. She explains that the Commissioners are they because they want to help find solutions. She spoke about the last time this issue had been considered and what work had been done. She hands out copies of the draft of the MSN ordinance, news report and staff assessments from 2008. She indicates that MSN is a difficult and polarizing endeavor, but is willing to assist as appropriate though it may not be an efficient use of community volunteer resources in the long run.

Heard from Commissioner Geary is also on the fence about mandatory spay/neuter but states she is more open to breed specific mandatory spay/neuter. She also states that people need to be in this for the long haul because change doesn't happen over night. She believes what is being done with low cost spay/neuter options is working but it's just going to take time.

Heard from Commissioner Taggart who makes the point that working together is going to get more results rather than working against each other. She also states whatever the solution agreed upon it is going to take time.

Motion to Receive and File documents submitted by Michelle Vallejos from Riverside, Long Beach and Santa Cruz. - *(GearyTaggart)* – All in favor

Heard from Commissioner Blackburn who says he is also on the fence about mandatory spay/neuter. He is proud of the way everyone handled themselves during this discussion. He believes there is a solution and that discussing it will lead to those solutions but it will take time.

I. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn *(Geary/Taggart)* – All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

The next Animal Services Commission meeting is scheduled for:

April 18th, 2018
6:00 p.m.

Attest:



Gary Blackburn
Vice Chairman

**A full recording of the proceedings can be heard at http://www.co.kern.ca.us/acd/AAC_AS.aspx*