

# CLARK COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

**Parks & Community Services Administration Building  
2601 East Sunset Road, Administration Conference Room  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89120  
December 13, 2005  
6:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:        DALEY, BARBARA  
                                     HORN, KENNETH  
                                     KRISKO, SUSAN  
                                     OLSEN, DENNIS  
                                     POOLER, TOM

### **1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **2. Approval of agenda**

A motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded.

### **3. Presentation to Committee Members**

DAVE MARCH (DM)) thanked the committee members for their service. Gave them a long sleeve denim shirt with Animal Advisory Committee and the County seal engraved on the front.

### **4. Approval of October 11, 2005 Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded with addition of TP thanking fanciers club for their guidebook.

### **5. Update on Lied**

DM - We continue to monitor the performance of our contractor. The majority of our recommendations have been implemented. The most notable areas are those of overpopulation and the program to tag out cages in which diseased animals were found so additional animals would not be placed in them. Until released by the veterinarian, those cages are not occupied. They are even tagging out those where there is suspicion of disease until they have confirmation. Then they remove the animals and tag it out for no animals. We had a number of cages that should have only one animal in them. As of our last inspection they had only one animal in those smaller cages. Additionally much of the construction is winding down. We are very pleased with the progress thus far.

MYRA GLASSMAN - Last month she expressed concerns about whether animals were being checked medically as several animals were being returned sick. She wants to know if any progress has been made. DM – the difficulty is the incubation period of the diseases. Primarily we focused on tag out and limit exposure. An animal could go home and not show signs of disease. As far as requiring additional vet checks for non-evident disease, we are really not in a position to require that in the contract.

DIANE ORGILL – We now have permission from the State Veterinary Board to have those animals

returned to us. In the past, we could not treat an owned animal; it had to go to a vet. In many cases, the bills were outrageous. Now they have 10 days to bring it back to us. We will treat it for \$10, \$15 or \$20 depending on the amount of medication needed and the size of the animal. There is no way we can stop animals from leaving and coming back with diseases with the number of animals coming in that have never been vaccinated. We don't know what their exposure was when they were on the streets or once they hit the shelter. We are offering them the opportunity to come back to us to get treated at a much cheaper price. I think it is going better. SK – can you tell us from your perspective how everything is going. DIANE ORGILL - In construction there are no deadlines and nobody tells the truth. We are just waiting. The expansion of the building we are in now was supposed to be turned over to us on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November. We have a new crematory being installed and another one being delivered soon. The next step will be the barn. From there we go on to the final step but we still have to come up with a lot of money before we get the medical center going. They are working every day, we are getting closer and closer and we appreciate the patience that everybody has had.

## 6. **Ordinance Addition to Govern the Return of Animals to Owners**

SK – It deals specifically with the cruelty chapter. Right now the owner or the person that is cited can go in and take any animal that is impounded right back out. This should not happen unless at the discretion of Animal Control. The second part of this deals with animals where the owner is cited and does not show up for court. I would probably change the last two lines – “no inquiry is made by the owner or person cited for cruelty by the time a judicial finding is made or the person fails to appear for any court date.” This would deal with anybody who gets cited, never shows up or goes into bench warrant status.

SK – A lot of times you will have a parent cited and it is their child setting the animal on fire. The parent says I am the owner and I want it to come back home. Of course, that is where the kid lives. DO – so if the person cited has access. SK - This is saying the Animal Control Officer has the ability to say yes or no. There will be times after discussion with Animal Control they feel it is in the best interest for the animal to be released back. DO- How often does this type of situation arise? DM – every time we impound an animal for cruelty, the owner can follow the truck to the shelter and immediately put the animal back in the same cruel condition. Without a court order we can't prevent the animal from being returned to the owner. It doesn't happen frequently, but we have had it happen with large numbers of goats. They come in and take them back and we have to deal with the hassle all over again. This is something that is overdue. Ultimately, you don't know where that animal is going to end up and it could be someone else who comes in to claim the animal. If we could hold the animal until the judge makes a determination that give us more flexibility on our side of the house to not give it back. SK – I want to make sure there is an out for that animal so the only option is not that it sits at the shelter. DM - I think we say we hold it until the judge makes a determination or if in our opinion we go ahead and return it. That give us both flexibility and the rigidity to make sure it doesn't go back or if it is something else, we can then make the determination to release it.

TP – It should be clear some of these animals will not be adoptable. DM - 574 NRS indicates we would have to keep it until judge makes a determination. SK – 574 only deals with authorization to make arrest. As long as you cite under Chapter 32, this would govern. DM – with the NRS we are limited to a 2-week lien and sometimes these animals spend months in the shelter. When you are talking about feeding and medical care and we are stuck to that narrow window of time, we can incur hundreds of dollars that can't be charged back to the owner. We have kept horses for months on cruelty, gotten their feet trimmed and turn them back for the cost of two weeks board. SK - I would suggest that that section be amended and proposed at the same time. Should an hour limit of 72 hours be placed on it if no one inquires? SK – yes. DO and TP like changes

KAREN LANE – would like you to know the current process of taking an animal. DM – the cruelty

section of Title 10 is quite broad. Depends specifically what we are discussing in a case. If we have clear evidence the animal is in need of medical care that isn't being provided, we will take the animal and get it medical care. If the animal is currently being abused, is thin to the point that it clearly needs medical attention. The most common problem with horses is these animals are being under treated and are under weight. It becomes difficult to seize the animal because it doesn't look good. We have a very good procedure in dealing with horses. They are given a time frame based on the grade of the horse using the Henneke scale to either obtain a medical diagnosis and treatment and depending on its score how soon they have to have that completed and move on from there. We will also help to place horses with rescue groups. Abandonment is cruelty. We post the house for 24 hours, return to verify whether the owner has been there, take the animal if there is no evidence that the owner has been there. Issues of no water, generally we try to correct the situation, make contact with the owner before we seize the animal.

JUDITH RUIZ – Can you direct some of your comments to cats and dogs. KAREN LANE – a lot of calls we get are for animals being left out in cold or heat, no water, not feeding on a daily basis, no shelter. It is clear the animal is left in situations whether there is little or no effort to provide for it. We tell them to call Animal Control and to leave their name or Animal Control will not respond. People are reluctant. Lots of times, it is their neighbor. DM – We take anonymous complaints on cruelty cases. If we go out repeatedly and there is no violation, we may get to the point where we say no anonymous complaints. That is where we have found the complaints to be unfounded. The dogs live in the house, they have a pool, they have whatever and it appears to be a situation where one neighbor is harassing another. Regarding the cold, they do have to have shelter for the animal. Perhaps at some point that would be something the Committee would need to review – the definition of minimum shelter. Again, it is minimum standards. It is difficult. We go out and assess those minimum standards for the animal. They don't have to have food in front of the animal all the time. Not feeding the animal is probably the most difficult to establish. They may have fed it this morning or are going to feed it 5 minutes after I am there. You have to look at the body weight. Is the animal in good weight? If not, why. That is when we get the veterinarian involved; ask when the veterinarian last saw the animal. Does it have a medical condition that would account for it? Is it being treated? When they call you, encourage them to call us. It is difficult when people are unwilling to be a part of the process. With witnesses, I can get a request for prosecution and prosecute people for violations of Title 10 or even the NRS. When people are not willing to be part of the process, we have to witness the violation in order to go forward with prosecution.

KEN SONDEJ – we have a couple calls over the summer for dogs that were left 3 or 4 days with no food or water. How far will you go regarding prosecution of the owner? DM – it becomes difficult when they are not there any more. We have very limited capability to trace people. We recently developed the DMV as a resource provided they have updated their driver's license. It is quite difficult in abandonment situations to really go after people. It is very common. To the point that it would be so time consuming to try and prosecute them. If the animals weren't suffering extremely, it may not be advantageous. KEN – what would you need for further prosecution? what type of information, database, etc. DM – usually people have skipped and then you have to do a skip trace. It gets even more difficult in abandonment because we post for 24 hours and we still can't go into the structure to take the animals out if they are locked inside. We have to get a search warrant to go inside. That is very time consuming. We try to work closely with the owners or the management of the apartments for them to allow us access to bring the animals out without having to get a search warrant. Generally on abandonment, we hear about it almost immediately. Usually it isn't long-term abandonment. It does happen sometimes. We don't usually pursue criminal charges on abandonment.

DEAN PICKERD – when you impound a dog, do you charge to get the dog back out. DM – yes. DEAN – do you also charge for the number of days. DM – yes, they pay board as well. The impound money is turned around and given to them in the form of a sterilization voucher and a microchip voucher. Hopefully encouraging them to sterilize and microchip. They don't even have to be used on those

animals. They can be used on another animal.

KAREN LAYNE suggests one of the biggest problems we see right now is abandonment and it is the same people. I have been in mobile home parks where I can follow the same person and they usually skip, going from one mobile home park to another. They are always leaving animals behind. I can think of 4 or 5 different families right now. I can tell you every mobile home they have been and how many animals they have left behind. While it may seem to be a minor problem, my suggestion would be that it is probably the same group of people. They collect animals and they toss them, they collect animals and they toss them. DM – Even if we prosecute them, there is nothing to prevent them from getting another animal. The code does not allow for that. SK – a judge can order that they not have any more animals. DM – the difficulty is getting those judgments from the judge. If you have all this data on these individuals and are willing to testify, we will be happy to talk to you about doing requests for prosecution and getting those people into court.

BD – what amount of time constitutes abandonment? DM – We go out and post a 24-hour notice before we take the animal. If you go out of town and your neighbor notices, he may call us but never have seen the person who is coming in feeding and watering your pets and making sure they are cared for. It happens all the time. We post the property. Return to see if our notice is still on the door, make sure the animal is okay. If it appears no one has been there in 24 hours, we will impound the animals. The caretaker who hadn't been there in 24 hours frequently contacts us and they reclaim the animals and everything is fine.

KH – Explanation as to why some people do not want to give their name and address - As an example we called Animal Control for an injured bird. They came out, picked it up and took it. Two years later my wife applied for a childcare license. Metro came out. We have a fanciers permit for 5 dogs but we had an animal control call. We explained what happened and everything was fine. It didn't seem to be documented; we just had an animal control call. If you call them to your house for a neighbor, it is documented they came to your house and apparently there is nothing else in the reporting that it is about a neighbor or something like that. So people are concerned because it looks like the report is against them. DM – is this in unincorporated county? This is the first time I have ever heard of a group coming out with that information. TP – there was a time when Animal Control used the police department as dispatchers after certain hours at night, on weekends and holidays. KH – Metro came out to do the application on the childcare license and saw there was an animal control call to the house. DM – if it was an after hours call, that is probably where it came from. We don't provide that information automatically and as far as I know, they don't have access to our database. Metro has access to their own database and their own information. If they did the dispatch, they wouldn't have the disposition or any of the information that goes with it. It is a public record but it is important for people to a part of the resolution. I don't believe it was our information but Metro's and there is no way for us to address that. We are now on the Metro paging system and they page us directly.

SK – make an action item next time. Motion approved and seconded.

## **7. Animal License Plate Sterilization Program**

Our finance department has instituted a new program that has created a little bit of difficulty in pulling up information. We are pretty sure we currently have \$14,400 in our sterilization license plate funds and I have some applications if any group wants to apply for those funds. We would bring back the completed applications to the Committee to make recommendations. It would then go before the BCC for them to sign off on the groups the Committee recommends.

BOBBIE KLOCKER – how does this affect different counties, for instance Nye County? DM – each

county should have their own funds available. You should check with your county comptroller's office. They would receive a check from the State Treasurer for the funds received on those license plates for Nye County.

KAREN LAYNE – you are saying here “how many vouchers are your requesting.” Can you clarify this? Are you going to give us a voucher as opposed to the actual funds? How are we going to use the vouchers? DM – you give the voucher to your veterinarian who is doing the sterilizations. He will return them to us and we will reimburse him for those fees. KAREN – we are not going to be able to get those fees. We will have to subsidize based on what we are getting. I hope all my vets will accept these vouchers but we will have to add money to that. Right now our vets charge us on a monthly basis. We have now added a second step in there. DO – as far as accounting. That is a personal preference for every vet is involved. Some vets may not even turn them in. KAREN – it is hard for us to keep vets. We give them more volume than probably most vets want. We try to make this as easy as possible for them. I would like to see some reimbursement to the groups directly. DM - It was brought up the groups would have to subsidize. I think the cart is before the horse in this. The county is subsidizing. If you are going to sterilize a female cat, instead of paying \$45, the county will pay \$30 and the group will pay \$15. We are actually subsidizing you and on the back end, you should be able to do more sterilizations. We are not having trouble with the participating vets returning their vouchers. We have a list of vets that we develop every year. The vets fill up quickly and we routinely give extensions so they can get the sterilizations done. We are not giving out vouchers to groups but it doesn't deter the return. SK – is there a reason why this program has to be vouchers. DM – we have to account for the money and we have a system. We would incur additional staff costs to develop another tracking system and method and additionally, the groups would be subject to being audited by the county for their use of the funds. This system cuts all that out. It was the system discussed here with this Committee's participation and approval. TP – this was what the Committee recommended. SK – the groups could send the vouchers in with the bills from the vets.

JOAN BURTNETT – this was my bill in legislature in 2001. Your idea of the vouchers going straight to the groups is much better than we originally talked about.

## **8. Information-sharing by Committee Members**

BD – last meeting there was discussion on scanners for the microchips. Ken mentioned legislation regarding the Microchips. KEN SONDEJ – right now there is a court order out of San Diego that bans Banfield and their corporation (Angel ID) from implanting or selling any of the 134 megahertz chips until Banfield turns around and changes all their advertising, gives full warning that these chips are not read by U.S. scanners. They have to do this by public advertising. We have another one in Washington that is trying to pass the 134-megahertz chip on to everyone. The dollars and cents are roughly \$800 billion at stake. The foreign company is pushing for it in Washington. BD – what is a good resource to keep on top of this? KEN – if you have e-mail and use Windows 2003, he can send monthly reports.

## **9. Comments by the General Public**

KAREN LAYNE – we are implementing our Spay 1 program in the next couple of months. Kitten season is going to be on us again in the middle of January. We told all of our supporters we want them to spay at least one animal between now and the middle of January. We are telling people if they can't afford us, they can call us and we will make sure it gets done.

## **10. Set date, time and agenda of next meeting**

Next meeting will be scheduled after the BCC selects the Committee members.

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.