CLARK COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES
Paradise Community Center
4775 McLeod Drive, Town Board Conference Room
Las Vegas, Nevada 89121
September 15, 2011
6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:  BRAZIL, MELANIE L, DVM (MB)
                    CONNELL, MICHAEL (MC)
                    LAYNE, KAREN (KL)
                    PENNEY, JANNICE (JP)
                    WEHRKAMP, CANDYCE (CW)

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.  Approval of July 21, 2011 Minutes

   A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded.

4.  Public Comment

   JANA WRIGHT (JW) was AC able to obtain an answer regarding the confidentiality of SB 223.  DAVE
   MARCH (DM) – we have not yet received a response from the DA’s office.

   GINA GREISEN (GG) – SB 233 goes into effect October 1.  There may be omissions to the changes in Title
   10. We may need to go back over some of the recommendations as some things were left out.  KL can you
   provide a list?  GG has the AAC recommendations.  Some language about auctioning animals for a non-
   profit recommended by the AAC was not adopted. MC - we never approved moving it forward or put it
   through as part of Title 10.  GG will provide copies she has.

5.  Ordinance To Ban Selling Of Cats And Dogs At Pet Stores

   ANDREA GUITERREZ (AG), the new coordinator for the Best Friends Animal Society, proposes a ban on
   retail sale of dogs and cats in CC.  Urge you to join 15 other cities, including Albuquerque, West Hollywood,
   South Lake Tahoe and most recently Glendale, CA that have made the change to no longer allow pet stores
   to sell dogs and cats.  The intent of this ban is to eliminate puppy mills, increase adoptions and reduce
   taxpayer burden.  Puppy mills are an enormous problem in this country and their standards do not ensure a
   humane life for these animals.  Two to four million puppies are bred in these facilities every year while the
   same number of dogs and cats are euthanized in US shelters, 30,000 of those here locally.  It makes little
   sense to continue the importing and selling of dogs when so many are being killed for lack of space.  While
   pet stores make profit from the practice of buying puppies at a low price from out of state brokers and then
   selling them at a high price, it is the local taxpaying public who pays for animal control to house and
   euthanize unwanted animals in the community.  Public education has been effective but until local
   communities take the initiative to limit the supply of animals being imported from these commercial
   facilities, there can be no hope of preventing so many unnecessary deaths.  The intent of this ban is not to shut
   down pet stores.  Pet stores could be part of the solution rather than the problem simply by stopping pet sales
   altogether and focusing on other profitable components such as grooming, training, daycare or pet supplies
or by changing to a business model that offers products, services and space for shelters and other animal rescue organizations to adopt out animals from their stores. Best Friends has partnered with several pet stores that have transitioned from selling puppy mill dogs to offering rescued pets for adoption. We have found this humane model to be both viable and embraced by the communities in which the stores are located thus a ban would not preclude pet stores from staying in business and would alleviate a significant burden on taxpayers, shelters and rescue groups by increasing pet adoptions. We encourage CC to continue to lead the way in animal protection laws and support this proposal that is a compassionate, progressive and fiscally responsible initiative that addresses the pet overpopulation crises in our community. AG handed out packets to AAC Committee. KL doesn’t see a specific proposal. AG – at this point we are trying to see if this is something you would be open to. We would be able to offer language and assistance in preparing it. KL so you are looking to see if there is any interest on the part of CC to move this particular ordinance forward? Are you a resident of the valley? AG has been a resident for a year, moved from Dallas, TX and has family that has been here for 17 years. Her sister is a Metro Detective and father is an administrator at CC schools so I am quite familiar with the area. I spent most of my last year as a volunteer at Lied Animal Foundation, NSCPA and Best Friends so I have been able to get a good idea of what the issues are. One of the articles I submitted from Albuquerque is the one doing this the longest and they have been able to show increased adoptions and lower euthanasia. KL while glancing at the info from Albuquerque what they did is not just ban the retail sale of dogs and cats but they also went an extra mile in terms of s/n so it looks to me that there were two prongs to their approach, one banning sale of dogs and cats and the other one was to s/n more of the animals that were being put up for adoption. You have given us a lot of newspaper articles, are there any evaluations that have been done on these programs and are they always a two-prong approach? AG has not yet done the analysis to figure it out. All the surrounding areas of the valley had just enacted the same s/n laws and we feel that was a baby step. We believe it will come from a lot of different sides. KL is looking for academics, for example if a university has done work in this area. When we did s/n in the valley, Best Friends came out against the ordinances. AG we are not against s/n ordinances. The problem we have is poor people who don’t have access, transportation or money to follow that law. We feel as if you are disenfranchising that group. We are in favor of it when you have access and transportation. KL – did Best Friends see a problem here with the way our s/n ordinances were implemented? CC has done an excellent job in going out of their way to do that. How about animals sold on line right now? We get a lot of complaints from people who are buying their animals online and having them shipped in. I don’t know if the breeders are having an issue and seeing a lot of animals coming into the valley and am wondering the impact if we were to stop the sale of dogs and cats at pet stores. I assume we will not be able to do anything about online sales of animals. AG is aware of that issue and is not sure how that is being addressed. KL – Have you talked to any pet shops here and indicated to them that if they were willing to change their model, you would be willing to bring animals down here to adopt out? AG was told the prior district coordinator approached some of the pet stores to see if they would be open to it. There has not been a good response. People are trying to make a living. The owners are not in a position to do the due diligence. Sometimes they are ignorant of the fact that the people claiming to be good breeders are actually puppy mills. The aim at the ban is to get at the puppy mills.

CW believes we have to take baby steps. There is a lot of information out there and some people do not believe s/n is important to focus on. The next step needs to be to stop the pet stores from selling. This is important. I have walked in to some of them and they say here hold this puppy and if you give me a puppy, it becomes an emotional purchase. It requires a multi-prong approach over time. Puppy mills need to be given systematic feedback that we are not going to stand with them. I think CC needs to go for it.

MC – all areas including Europe, Japan and Australia have gone to no puppies being sold in stores. A number of the store owners have already stated they are much happier, no more heavy maintenance, all the work involved, mandatory shots but it does work. Hershey, PA is getting ready to pass a ban on pet store puppies. It does work in the cities that have implemented it; euthanasia rate is down, rescue is down, less medical calls because 90% of the animals coming out of pet stores are coming out of bad gene pools so there is a lot of illness. This is a good way to go. They will see a loss of revenue for a little while. We are not stopping their right to earn a living. Pet products are a multibillion-dollar business. Thinks we should push
forward on this.

CW wants to add that it is a multimillion-dollar cost to Clark County. Believes there are other ways of doing business and it is our responsibility to make sure this county turns the situation around using multiple approaches.

KL likes a lot of information. It is not clear that the pet shops are doing all of this. It looks as if there are multiple approaches. We know s/n is working as we are seeing a decline in the number of cats being impounded. AG - the Sanctuary is in Utah but we do not bring animals down for adoption. In extenuating circumstances, we will take animals to the sanctuary. When we do adoption events, we deal with local and independent rescuers. KL - so you are assuming rescue organizations or the Animal Foundation are going to go into these pet shops with their animals. AG - what we would like is rather than selling the animals is for them to contact the rescue groups, the Lied Animal Shelter, NSPCA, any of the 501C3 rescue groups and have them come in and get those animals adopted. If they don’t want to have animals, we will help them convert to grooming, pet supplies, food, training, things of that nature. KL from our standpoint, PetCos and PetSmarts actually do adoptions. I am not personally supporting this but am willing to look at it. I am not convinced we are going to get more adoptions. MC our ultimate goal is to end abuse of the animals, put them in loving homes for life and pet store puppies are not going to make it. I want it ended as quickly as possible.

MYRA GLASSMAN (MG) would love to see the puppy mills gone as I have dealt with some of the output from there. Outlawing pet stores from selling puppies or kittens won’t make them go away. We have constitutional issues. In CC, you have to do an economic impact statement. If they had wanted to be in the grooming or other businesses, they would be. The puppy mills have websites. They are not just selling to pet stores; they sell on the Internet and because they sell to consumers, they are getting better prices for these lousy puppies and kittens. I don’t see how you will stop the trafficking. If you want to get rid of the puppy mills, go after them directly. We have puppy mills in Pahrump and probably some right here in CC. Instead of talking about adopting rescued animals at these stores, let’s talk about selling animals at those stores. The rescue groups are charging a lot of money for these adoptions. That is why they are not being adopted. Rescue groups are pricing themselves out of the market.

ASHYA DEFESTA (AD) has been a lifetime member of the Humane Society and believes it is illegal to tell people they can’t sell something. Are you talking about dogs and cats? What are they going to do with the snakes, the birds and the rest of them? MC – CC can pass ordinances with domestic animals, cats and dogs. CC does not have the authority to interfere with exotic animals and/or non-indigenous reptiles. The snakes and other exotics fall under the federal government or state wildlife so we have no control over that. KL - We have a proposal with no written ordinance at this time so this is conceptual.

KEITH WILLIAMS would like to see some wording and basic information, how many pet stores are in the county; how many animals are we dealing with. Would like to hear about any program put into effect by Best Friends to alleviate the problem of poor people without transportation or monies to s/n their animals. What programs have they put into effect in the valley to help with low cost s/n and transportation?

CHRISTAL KIMHAN as a rescue group, piglets are just as much of a problem in pet stores as dogs and cats. The whole thing with pet shops is a point of sale oh ah cute, $500 charge card and it is yours. You have the same problem with the pig. We put in place an 8lb. pet shop requirement for pigs for sale. Have you seen an 8 lb. piglet? They are this big, cute and are like the puppies. You get the pet shop employee saying it is a teacup pig so we end up with them selling whatever they can. I came from a pet shop environment. I owned a pet shop many years ago. I can vouch for the lies, whatever you need to do to sell an animal you are going to do. That is where you make a lot of your money so yes I am in favor of stopping puppy mills. I am not opposed to selling animals. If you can sell a full-grown Chihuahua, great, it will have a home. It is the point of sale mentality, the cute little puppy, the cute little kitten, cute little piglet that is where I am in favor of banning sales of a pet shop that is going to end up in a shelter.
MC right now this is specially written for cats and dogs but if you wanted to add pot-bellied pigs and other domestic animals, it can be added. Tonight is to see if there is an interest in moving forward. KATHY MCCARTHY would be 100 percent behind banning selling of cats and dogs. As far as mandatory s/n law, I think it works. There are people I know that can afford to s/n their animal but had not done it until it became a law. There are a lot of programs out there to help the people who cannot afford transportation or s/n.

GG this would be supported. Would like DM’s point of view between concept and reality. We tried with the pet stores a few years ago to have them s/n before sale. If breeders get on line with animal welfare advocates at the state level, we could do this at the state and county level. We need to know who the opposition will be and what the business impact will be. DM would this be something better put to the SNRPC as we did with the vicious ordinance to get every jurisdiction online simultaneously. While we could shut down the pet stores in Clark County, we get calls all the time on Meadows Pets and Look Puppies, neither of which are my jurisdiction. We have probably the best pet shop ordinance on the books. I can get people refunds for bad pets and have for years but I cannot combat the backyard breeders. If it is only CC, you can still go to Henderson; to NLV or CLV and buy that puppy. Don’t know how much we would really be able to accomplish. If the SNRPC signed it, you would have every jurisdiction moving forward simultaneously. Will there be pushback? Certainly, you will have Pjack coming down here to talk about how you are putting them out of business. They opposed the pet shop ordinance years ago when we put it forward. We got it through but now we have to do the business impact statements, invite comment. How long would it take? We would have to have several meetings for public input on the business impact to mitigate their issues or explain why we couldn’t. It would definitely be into next year before we could actually get through the process.

GG asked MC if he was still was a member of NVPAW and whether or not they would support this. If we get the right people on the same side, it could work. As a Plan B, suggests we revisit the language about the s/n, requiring animals sold from the pet stores to be s/n. MC – NVPAW has been informed of this. I am the lobbyist coordinator for Carson City so we would be putting something in a state ordinance and lobbying it.

JW encourages Board to give direction to Best Friends to move forward with an ordinance to bring back to the Board to consider. It can be amended for piglets but you need something before you to even discuss it. If this board approves it to move on to the BCC, I know my Commissioner would sponsor it and once the BCC gives direction to the DA, they have to respond in 30 days. A business impact study would be required. I think we have 5 or 6 pet stores in CC. My question DM is CC requires paperwork to sell a puppy or a kitten, can we look at their books to see how many dogs, puppies, cats and kittens were sold in a calendar or fiscal year? DM - that is not in the code. They have to provide paperwork for the animals they have for sale to give to the people who are buying them but they are not required to provide us with details on past sales. The animals on the floor they have to show me paperwork, where it came from, the dam, the sire, when it was born, the shots, the vet that authorized those shots, everything but not on past sales unless I get involved in an investigation. KL asked about going the SNRPC route as opposed to regional. Some of the cities have a long way to go. JW would still suggest the board give direction for Best Friends to come back with an ordinance to review.

DAVID HENDERSON, DVM is no fan of pet stores. When we look at the impact on the euthanasia rates at the shelter, it looks like 6,300 of dogs being killed between August 1, 2010 and July 31, 2011 were Pits and Chihuahuas and that is rarely what is sold at pet stores. The biggest impact it will have is the support of the Industry of Misery (the puppy mills) and yes they do have horrible genetics. I have seen every defect you can imagine. They are not even AKC registered. Some of the registries coming out of pet stores are ridiculous, like the Intergalactic Kennel Club. The impact it will really have on what is being killed at local shelters is minimal. Oddly enough the thing that will and is impacting that is the mandatory s/n ordinances. The biggest offenders are the backyard illegal breeders and that is what we are impacting with the s/n ordinance.
LOU TOOMIN (LT) asked how many pet stores are in CC. DM - 5 OR 6. LT is sick and tired of government legislating what people can or cannot sell. Tired of government limiting what we as citizens and businesses can do. This is not the right thing. It can be a constitutional issue. Thought Dina Titus passed a puppy mill bill about 15 years ago. Is that still not enforced in this state? DM – we don’t enforce state law. LT – there was a specific bill that banned puppy mills in the state. DM – as far as I know we do not have any in CC, we enforce Title 10. There is a puppy mill out in Amargosa Valley. I don’t think they were shut them down with an NRS code. LT is saying there is a law on the books right now to ban puppy mills. We have to find a way to enforce it a little better than we are. KL there was just a bill SB 299 supported by local groups. For the first time it created a breeders license in every county. There are a lot of counties that don’t even have Animal Control so it did establish the ability for a county to have a breeders’ license for people breeding animals and it set up standards for those breeding. LT would think we would go to the state legislature and have them pass a bill to outlaw puppy mill sales.

MC motions that we have an ordinance put forth to this Committee to review. CW seconds the motion. KL asked for research to be included containing hard data.

6. Educational Outreach
   a. Receive a Subcommittee Report
   b. Animal Care & Responsibility Education

CW provided notes. They looked at education during school and after hours. Brooke and Kim have done a lot of work developing an after school program, Paws for Change, run by Brooke after school and Kim put together an instruction manual for teachers and looked at the CCSD standards. Other organizations are doing educational outreach, however, they did not come to our meeting. HCW has a veterinary student program, they have an internship, education from the website where you can print off materials to train, fundraise and increase awareness, the Fur Ball is coming up with LVVHS, there is a manual for a youth group and bylaws that can be picked up and used by the school. The various foundations and societies are doing a lot of things but could not get the attention of CCSD. At the end of the day, we decided we need to put together a 5 year plan that looks at the continued focus on s/n programs, youth education classes and programs, youth outreach and recruitment for special programs like the internships, education focused on communities that do not value the sterilization of their pets, making it mandatory for any foundation receiving CC funds to be involved in this. We talked about outreach to those communities, such as the Hispanic Community. There was a youth leadership conference scheduled for the 24th and the Mexican festival scheduled tomorrow. Legislation focused on CC cities with mandatory s/n ordinances and closing down pet stores in the County; adoptions and better use of resources at for example Senior Living Facilities to foster animals; the feral cat sterilization program. The 5-year plan will include specific goals for each section of the plan and every 6 months require each foundation to provide a report to the BCC on their accomplishments vs. goals. We believe a conference every 6 months would be required for these organizations to put together the report to go to the BCC. That would bring those organizations together around common goals to reduce the number of animals that end up in the various sanctuaries. Other ideas were better use of County Critters on Channel 4. JW was going to handle that. JW sent e-mail at the direction of Commissioner G to Erik Pappa that the next County Critters show should focus on educational outreach and suggested he contact Kim Yates and Brooke Oguera as guests. Erik told me they had plenty of time slots to produce the show but not the money. I told him I would take his answer to the Commissioner.

CW also wanted to develop a volunteer orientation training, something that can be used by all the organizations; another suggestion was outreach to teachers so they can volunteer at animal rescues to get interest in Paws for Change which is Brooke’s after school club and the Angels for Animals education which they could bring into their classroom and for Commissioner G to send a letter to the director of the CC Libraries to open the door for Best Friends to do their Read to Animals program. The most important aspect of this is getting the foundation and other interested 501C3 organizations together to create a 5 year plan with goals and requirements to report back to the BCC every 6 months how they are moving forward to meet
their goals, how they have improved the situation as it relates to the number of animals in our shelters.

KL – you appear to be suggesting that we as the AAC need to establish a similar 5-year plan to HCW’s that would say to the BCC this is what the animal community is going to do to move forward to deal with the animal overpopulation problem. We are going to reduce the animal population problem in CC and we can do it by defining those areas and this is what we can do on a yearly basis. We will get rescue groups involved to say what part of this they will be involved in. Adoptions increases could be a part of that. In terms of s/n, MB showed it is not just about what the local groups are doing, it is what private practices are doing to make a difference as well. Maybe that needs to be part of the 5-year plan because when we all work together we can do a lot more s/n. We present that plan to the BCC and say this is what we need to do and we will be working on these pieces of it to reduce overpopulation. KL – is this basically what you are proposing? CW that is even bigger than I proposed but I agree with you. The 5-year plan that HCW has together is what I would recommend that we start with the various humane organizations to put together a total CC plan but we didn’t think about the private sector. The important thing that came out of the discussions is there needs to be goals, there needs to be reporting on those goals and there needs to be buy in from the BCC that these goals are reasonable and we need to be saying we are moving forward and things are getting better. We are open to the makeup of the group. Recommends there be a place we can meet in a room for 2 or 3 days and then present those ideas to this group and if this group agrees with the plan, go forward to the BCC.

MG – have you thought about approaching the private schools? They may be more amenable to education about animal care and welfare. CW – Brooke does teach at a private school and they are more open to the program. We could also do it a public school but you have to get the attention of the teachers. For after school, we are not that concerned about CCSD. It was during school hours we couldn’t get their attention. MG – in developing this 5 year plan it would be great to have academic input built in to evaluate what is working and what is not working and specify how it will be evaluated and how often.

KW strongly supports concept of getting together with other organizations to develop a 5-year plan with clearly defined goals and benchmarks. Since this will be reported to the County, hopefully they will provide resources to make all this happen.

GG in CCSD, safety and prevention may be a way to perform education and outreach, dog bite prevention for the school district to understand how important the issue is as we know an animal is more aggressive when it is not s/n. Once you have a plan, maybe two of the committee members can go to a meeting and bring it their attention. Let’s not wait. Let’s take it right into their house, bring it up and get it on their agenda. We would definitely get attention if we show up at a meeting and speak at public comment. I appreciate the cooperative efforts we have with the national groups but I think it is important we support the local groups as they are the ones with their boots on the ground, in the trenches, doing the work, trapping. Don’t think you will get anywhere without buy in and support from the local groups. A lot of charter schools are requiring a lot of volunteer work so maybe we can get some of those young kids to come in and put that plan together for you.

HAROLD VOSKO – you look at everything here and how it started, look at what we are doing now and keep score. If CC wants to solve the pet overpopulation, they need to start keeping score and maybe that should start here. Everything should have a goal. When I started this 11 years ago, I knew what my goal was. The climate is right; we all work really well together. The numbers are starting to do down and I think the pendulum is going to start to swing. We are already in our plan for 2 years. It is an action plan; a strategic plan. Anybody here can come up with ideas and say we should do this or that. What is great about this is it is being done. CC would be very proud to have that because it is being done. It is results oriented.

CW motions subcommittee idea of putting together 5 year plan and getting together all groups that are interested involved in that for a 2 to 3 day meeting that I will host at the World Market Center to come away with a county wide 5 year plan with goals to present to the BCC. MC seconds the motion; motion carries.
7. Information-sharing by Committee Members

KL – there was a request about sending information out on Title 10 as there was a group last time that came that was unaware of the changes made in Title 10. I sent out a very general e-mail to everyone saying if you want a copy, please contact me. If your organization did not get that e-mail, please give me your address information and I will make sure it gets to DM’s office to get those out. We got a lot of dog groups, not a lot of cat groups and no pig groups. That would be something we probably need to do. LVVHS will be recognizing Dr. Henderson at our Fur Ball on September 30. I have information outside and all of you are welcome to attend. Henderson is revising Title 7. A meeting will be held next Tuesday night at 6. If you are from Henderson, you may want to make any groups aware of that. They are not as far ranging as what we did last year with Title 10. A lot of them are in response to the pet shop problems they are having. The CC Committee to Manage Wildlife will be meeting next Tuesday in the Pueblo Room, one issue about making the bear hunt permanent and the other issue is trapping in congested areas. We are trying to get some of those steel toe traps better regulated so that we can protect our animals in terms of inhumane traps in CC. SB 226 was passed at the State Legislature and this is the beginning of the discussion.

8. Comments by the General Public

GG suggests that SNRPC put together a task force of the different jurisdictions and bust people who are selling animals to send a message you never know who might be the one calling on that Craig’s List ad. It may be an animal control officer and the law will be enforced. DM receives the Craig’s List ads and he forwards them to dispatch. They call every single one of them as time permits on our undercover cell phone. If it is in the City, we send it to the City; if it is in Henderson, we send it to them. We go out on ours and issue citations. GG would like to see a broadcast on the news so that the backyard breeders know that if you are going to do that, you will be taking a chance and as we approach Christmas season where a lot of people are breeding their animals to sell puppies and kittens for Christmas, a public service announcement with all the different jurisdictions to get some time on the local stations. I know you are doing it, you know you are doing it but I would like the public to know you are doing it and the backyard breeders that haven’t been caught to know that you are doing it. DM would discourage that. We have a big enough problem with those that are “I will meet you at the Walmart at the corner of….” If we can find out where you live, we are coming to your house but if you want to meet at Walmart, it is more difficult for us to do enforcement. If we let the violators know you never know who will be coming to your house, they will all be at Walmart.

9. Set date, time and agenda of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2011 at 6:30 pm.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.