

CLARK COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

**Parks & Community Services Administration Building
2601 East Sunset Road, Administration Conference Room
Las Vegas, Nevada 89120
January 31, 2006
6:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: GLASSMAN, MYRA LEE (MG)
HUTT, FREDERICK (FH)
OLSEN, DENNIS (DO)
SONDEJ, KEN (KJ)
POOLER, TOM (TP)
YOUNG, BILLIE (BY)

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 December 13, 2005 Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded.

4. Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair

DO was nominated as Chair. Motion was approved and seconded. TP nominated as Vice Chair. Motion was approved and seconded.

5. Proposed Ordinance Amendment to Title 10.32

BY asked for some background. DAVE MARCH (DM) – There is a long-standing issue in our cruelty ordinance. We have not been able to prevent an owner from retrieving their animal once they had been cited for cruelty. They could immediately go to the shelter, reclaim the animal and put them back in the same cruel environment. This change allows us to hold the animal until a judge decides whether they get the animal back. DO – this is the draft with corrections made at last meeting. Motion for approval of ordinance was made and seconded.

6. Report on Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) direction regarding Dangerous/Vicious Animal Ordinance

DM – SNRPC is a group of representatives from the county and each of the cities that determine how each of the governmental bodies can work together on various issues. This ordinance started with a proposal by the City of North Las Vegas to adopt a breed specific vicious animal ordinance. Clark County has never supported breed specific bans primarily because new breeds would be added all the time. Instead, we believe the vicious/dangerous animal should be identified individually and that those animals should be controlled if people are going to keep them. The proposal was patterned after a

current City of Las Vegas ordinance. We increased liability insurance to \$100,000 plus a few other minor changes. Our progress was reported in at least 2 separate meetings of the SNRPC. I provided the final report last week where they approved and recommended this to go forward for approval in each of the cities and the county. MG – is it on the BCC agenda yet? DM – it must be reviewed by our District Attorney’s office first. FH – what does Animal Control consider a dangerous animal? DM – any animal that poses a threat or is an actual threat of substantial bodily harm to a human or an animal. The difference between a dangerous and a vicious would be an animal that actually inflicts substantial bodily harm. Based on the NRS definition that would be substantial impairment or loss of use of a bodily member such as a finger, a hand, not being able to walk for a long period of time. It is a fairly tight definition and would require a significant amount of injury. Additionally, if an animal is deemed dangerous and the animal continues to act out, it would at that point be deemed vicious and they would not be able to keep the animal any more. To appeal the finding, the residents of unincorporated Clark County would come before this Committee. The Committee would review the evidence and decide if the animal is or is not vicious. MG – under this proposal, do we have to wait until the animal hurts someone or their animal before anything can be done? DM – if the animal is acting to a degree that causes the individual confronted by the animal to believe they would be subject to substantial bodily harm, no. If you barely get in your house and the animal is trying to tear down your front door, we are not going to wait for the dog to actually tear somebody up. This is similar to what we do with our existing code. If the animal attempts to bite someone, we can deem the animal dangerous. We currently have no provisions for vicious in County Code. MG – will Animal Control require more manpower if this ordinance is passed? DM – we don’t believe so. We currently enforce dangerous animals. We currently use NRS 202.500 to deem an animal vicious and have only deemed 33 animals vicious since 1999, the inception of 202.500. MG – will this have a court determination? DM – if they appeal this Committee’s decision, they will have to go to court. MG - up to that point, Animal Control could declare it vicious and/or dangerous and impose the requirements on that? DM – correct. DO – is this the first step in creating bans on certain types of dogs like the city of Denver. DM – this was a move to prevent such a thing in the City of North Las Vegas. We do not support a breed ban nor do we believe it is effective. Outlawing a certain breed is not the way to control it. It would simply increase the move toward even larger breeds; 125lb. dogs instead of 60 lb. pit bulls. DO – will we see it again after review by the District Attorney’s office? DM – I am uncertain if it will come back to this Committee or if it will go straight to the BCC for a public hearing and vote. Normally, it does come before this Committee. However, this is fairly high profile. They already have approval and directions from the SNRPC which does include a County Commissioner so they are expecting to see it fairly soon.

FH – requests that this ordinance comes back to the Committee after District Attorney approval. KJ – Denver and 7 other Colorado communities are in court right now on constitutional violations of Section 4, 5 and the Bill of Rights. Denver may have to repeal their ordinance.

7. Information-sharing by Committee Members

DM – Thus far, we have given out 1,365 sterilization vouchers equaling \$36,520 for our annual program. We have already paid out \$5,900 to veterinarians. MG – pleased to see the Senior Advocates office has a big notice about the vouchers in their newsletters. DO – any more info on the license plate program? DM – we have sent out a number of applications but we have not received any of the applications back. MG – do you know if applications went to the Shelter where abused women go? DM – I don’t have a list. We are not approaching groups to recruit them. We believe over time more groups will want to participate.

KJ – I have resigned as Vice President of Adopt A Rescue Pet so I can be seen as a fair and objective person speaking for the rescue community. I am now director of Government Affairs and Legislative Advisor with Adopt a Rescue Pet. MG – in the past we had our legal expert. Who will advise us now?

DM – staff will do what we can. If there are any questions that need to be referred, we will contact the District Attorney’s office to get an opinion. We will always give our opinions on what may or may not work.

8. Comments by the General Public

BRUCE HALSTEAD – there is a lot of confusion on the dangerous/vicious animal. News media has been putting out scare tactics causing anxiety on this situation. There is a lot of confusion for the exact nature of the ordinance. The news media needs to be clearer when they present it to the public. DM – we did have a problem with at least one of the news outlets getting it wrong, despite repeatedly giving them the right information. Unfortunately since the information from North Las Vegas was already out there on breed specific legislation, there remained some reference to it. We continue to do our best. If they get it wrong, we contact the County’s Public Information Officer so they can contact the news people and let them know they got it wrong.

BY – my history is with wild horses. Have done numerous rescues, former president of the National Wild Horse Association 5 times, board member many years previous to that, worked with federal agencies advocating for wild horses. Have domestics; have gentled wild horses for adoption. Have had dogs all my life, Australian Shepherd and Great Dane, and has cats and exotic birds. Am an animal lover across the board.

FH works for Clark County as a Construction Management Inspector. Has 3 therapy dogs, 2 giant Schnauzers and a miniature Schnauzer that go to nursing homes, hospitals, schools, wherever. My wife and I have been involved with that for almost 9 years. If anybody has any pets that would like to become members of our group, great. Like dogs and all sorts of pets. Looking forward to being a long time member.

MG – A psychiatrist and have an interest in the human animal bond. An animal lover. Have 3 dogs and am representing interest of general public.

9. Set date, time and agenda of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. Agenda item for April – comparison of County Animal Control Officers vs. population in comparable metropolitan areas.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.