

# CLARK COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

**Parks & Community Services Administration Building  
2601 East Sunset Road, Park Police Conference Room  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89120  
June 14, 2005  
6:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:           DALEY, BARBARA (BD)  
                                      HORN, KENNETH (KH)  
                                      KRISKO, SUSAN (SK)  
                                      OLSEN, DENNIS (DO)

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:28 p.m.

**2. Approval of agenda**

A motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded.

**3. Approval of May 10, 2005 Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded.

**4. Feeding of Stray/Feral Cats**

ROBERT MURRAY – problem is still there. We don't see quite as many but we smell them. We are trying to live trap and transport them to the shelter. We did hear of a group who wants to come in trap, spay/neuter them and release them back into the area they are caught. I guarantee you that is not going to work. They can't just be turned loose. The urine smell is the problem.

KEN SONDEJ – Heaven Can Wait does trap and release and Friends of Feral Felines. Also try Friends for Animals from Pahrump. They might be able to help you. Regarding New York's low euthanasia rate, he does have records but they appear to be doctored. They use temperament testing. If the dog doesn't pass temperament testing, it doesn't count as being picked up. It is thrown on the side and euthanized. There is no record of a pick up or anything. That is how they get away with it. In Massachusetts with the temperament testing they use, 90 percent of the animals fail straight up and are deemed non-adoptable so they are probably fictitious numbers but they got \$5,000,000 from Maddie's Fund because they doctored up the numbers.

KH – we have a problem with feral cats in our neighborhood. We worked with the Humane Society to trap, spay/neuter and release back in the area. There were only 10; they wouldn't be reproducing so we figured it wouldn't be a problem for us to take care of them. The smell went away because we provided a litter box. We cleaned up after them. That worked fine until we had a neighbor move in from California who had kittens and let them run loose all the time. We have leash laws for cats but people don't believe cats should be kept inside so they allow them to roam. They are not chipped; they are not collared. There is no identification. The smell now comes from the cats across the street that come over and fight. They find each other, go into our yard and we run them off or the colony runs them off. The problem is getting people to control their own cats. They are allowing them to run loose. They breed because the laws aren't being upheld. We are spending so much time on dogs that nobody addresses the cat problem. We have a huge cat and bunny problem in this

town. Most cats and bunnies will run from people. Dogs will attack people. I understand the concern with dogs but we do have a cat problem. If you don't want them in your area there are organizations that will trap, spay or neuter and release in another area. If Animal Control picks them up, the cats will just be put down because they are not adoptable.

ROBERT MURRAY – this is more than just a cat urine issue. It is a health issue. It affects property values. If I wanted to sell my house tomorrow and someone came over and got in my backyard, they will not buy it. If there is a law on the books, who do we talk to to get it enforced? I have talked to Commissioner Woodbury's office and to be honest, I have had more response from a brick wall. I pay taxes in Clark County. I wish right now it was in Henderson cause the City Manager over there tried to help. We have a problem. We have made it known. I want to see some action. I don't want lip service. If there is a law in place, I want it enforced. If there is no law, get the law on the books. Is there a leash law right now on the books for cats? Who do we talk to to get it enforced? JB – It is really not an enforcement issue. If you catch the cats, we will take them to the shelter. It is that simple. When you say enforcement, you are talking about finding the person responsible for letting the cats run loose and criminally prosecute them. That will be tough because nobody owns the cats. They are feral. It is going to be an on-going issue where somebody is going to have run a trap, or 2 or 10 to get rid of them. It is like having an infestation of mice. You have a problem. You will have to deal with it. If someone is actually feeding them, I will have somebody out there and will have that stopped. ROBERT MURRAY – They are feeding them every morning between the hours of 5 and 6:30 by Jay's Market, next to Star Nursery. You can see the cans of cat food. JB – I will have somebody there between 5 and 7 and we will see who shows up.

BRUCE HALSTEAD – Pahrump rescue has 175 kittens that are not adoptable. They bring them down here to Pet Smart to try to adopt them out. People see these nice sweet little furry things, pay for the shots, and take them home. The cat is not adjusting right; it takes off and becomes an alley cat. It is not solving the problem. I can see microchipping these animals once they are adopted out. Then if they are caught, do 3 strikes. First time, small fine; second time, a higher fine, third time, animal is taken and found a new home or put down.

MYRA GLASSMAN – We have several groups from out of the area that come in every weekend to do animal adoptions. The Pahrump group is one; Best Friends from Utah comes down every weekend and sometimes during the week. I don't know what we can do about this. Our own animals should have priority on getting homes here.

JOANNE KOMYATTE – What's wrong with putting the cats up in Mt. Charleston? There is a lot of acreage out there. Let Mother Nature take care of them or do away with them. DO – that would be extremely dangerous for people. Cats are a natural reservoir for bubonic plague and bubonic plague is up in Mt. Charleston. If you increase the population of cats up there, bubonic plague can become a big problem.

ROBERT MURRAY – I wasn't aware of the bubonic plague problem. When you have these cats running around with feline leukemia, they scratch a child, it becomes a health issue. Yet, the Health Department won't even talk to me about cats.

DO – Your point is well taken. Animals are inherently connected to people. When we have animal problems there can be health problems for people. Unfortunately, society doesn't pay attention until something bad happens. By that time, it is a big deal. Had they taken a few steps earlier, they wouldn't have had that problem. That is one of the things the Committee has tried to do, with the help of Animal Control. A few meetings ago an officer came in and talked about the exotic animals. That is definitely a human health concern. It can be a terrorist concern. Because it is not a problem yet, it doesn't make the agenda. We haven't seen the catastrophes yet. Your point about the cats in

your neighborhood is well taken. There are health concerns, cat scratch fever, toxoplasmosis, all these other diseases that can go on. If the public were to approach it in that manner, they may be able to get attention. Cats have a social hierarchy, like a lion pride, and require certain things to stay in an area, food and shelter. If those things are taken away, they will move on. People don't understand that trapping a cat and moving it someplace else, will get the cat killed by another group of cats because he has entered a hierarchy that is not his own. That is one of the problems with taking cats or any animal and relocating them to another area. Movement like that has to be initiated by that group if it is going to be permanent. Otherwise it is just substituting one problem for another. Trapping them and taking them to the shelter is a permanent solution. Feral cats are not adoptable and will be euthanized. Work on decreasing the desirable environment for the cats. Make sure nobody is feeding them. Make sure there are no little bunnies out there for them to hunt. They are predators out at night looking for something to eat and if there are animals out there they can eat, they will.

KAREN LAYNE – The policy of taking animals and having them put down is not working. It gets rid of that cat but given that we have an overpopulation of feral cats; we should have fewer cats, not more. Work with those people who are feeding the cats, help them to understand some of the issues. Get in there and get the animals spayed or neutered. They start off with one cat usually. You want to get that feeder to understand there are organizations out there to help them, to work with them. Telling the feeders not to feed anymore is not going to work. DO – it is against the law for them do that. It needs to be enforced. JB – The citizen's home is being defaced by them feeding behind his home. He approached the feeder. Tell us what the feeder told you. ROBERT MURRAY – I was very nice and asked her to stop feeding the cats. I got the royal one finger salute. She walked off.

BOBBY KLOCKER – How many animals are we talking about? Are any of them spayed or neutered? ROBERT MURRAY – about 30, someone counted 55 one day. BOBBY – All feeders are not like that. We try to solve the problem.

JUDITH RUIZ – when we talk about feeders, what we want to do is determine how many cats are in any area. People won't stop feeding. We need to trap, spay or neuter, so they won't reproduce.

DAVID MARCH – based on our last meeting I did some statistics on urine and feces production of cats. There is an accepted norm on urine output for cats – about 25 milliliters per kilogram per day. So a cat colony of feral cats averaging 8 lbs, as I understand feral cats in town average, you get about 385 gallons of urine a year from 20 cats. It is no wonder people are having problems around their property. Regarding feces, they average about ¼ lb. per day. So with 20 cats, you are looking at 1,825 lbs. of feces a year every year. There is no statistical data that says any cat colony reduces through attrition.

JB – the next dynamic in the coming years is going to be the wild animal issue. Coyotes are going to become our pigeon problem of this decade. We have made green belts. We have small mammals outside our homes that come to feed and coyotes love to get cats. Cats can't run from here to the parking lot without getting out of breath. They are easy prey for coyotes. At Painted Desert they had a coyote infestation and the cats were devastated. The next thing we are going to have is coyotes living in your neighborhood. We have to take a look at the balance and where these animals are going to be.

KAREN LAYNE – at a conference in Chicago sponsored by the American Veterinary Assn., a study presented by Julie from the University of Florida. They looked at a colony at the university they were able to control over a 5-year period. There was a considerable decrease in the cat colony over that period. I have actually seen decreases in some of the mobile home parks as we spay and neuter. It takes a long time. It is not done in a year or two but you do see decreases.

DO – no one is contesting the value of spay/neuter programs. Concern is cats in areas where they don't need to be. The better the food supply, the more they will reproduce. These cats will not starve. If we reduce the domestic food supply by not feeding them, which is a law that is on the books, their reproductive rate will drop. They will move on to where there is food. It may be an area where the coyotes can get them, but that is the natural cycle.

SK – It is abundantly clear that county management in control right now has deemed animals not a priority and will not give Animal Control another person to get any of the laws we have worked on passed. You need to start talking to your friends and family. Make sure they are registered to vote and they contact their County Commissioner and tell them “I am a voter and you are not doing anything and that is going to affect my vote.”

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

JB - The County Critters, your outreach program on Channel 4, won best government talk show for California and Nevada. It showcases what animal control does as well as educational programs for the public. This month we are talking about the move to the Lied Animal Shelter in addition to water proofing your dog, teaching your dog to swim in case it falls in the pool. I am also open to ideas. On one of our first shows, we had Heaven Can Wait on talking about their sterilization program, prison program. If people have ideas, we can certainly put it on. If someone wanted to do a program on feral cats, I am willing to put it on. Just give me a call, 455-8178.

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

JOANNE KOMYATTE – We are concerned about a neighbor's dog that is locked up in a garage on a 6 ft. leash, 24/7. She lives in her feces. We have had Animal Control numerous times from 2002 through the present. It is very heart breaking. I have approached the owners and asked if they would like to give the dog to a good home. I was asked to write down my name and number for her husband to get back to me. He never called. The dog slips and slides in her own urine, her toenails are long, the whites of her eyes are all red. Animal Control said everything was fine. Dog is living within minimum code. The dog has no escape to get out. Animal Control said as long she has shelter and water the dog is fine. We want them to do something about it. Maybe they are trying to make it mean and use it as a fighter. SK – we have an anti-tethering law that would make that illegal, however, the County Commission will not vote on it. So call your representative and tell them you would like that to be passed. We have over 2,000 signatures. JOANNE – if you have that many signatures and they won't pass it, what's it going to take to get it passed? SK – people calling their County Commissioners and saying they won't vote for them if it doesn't pass.

KAREN LAYNE – As everyone knows we are running into problems with mobile home parks. We are getting so many closed down. We participated as an organization dealing with people in the park. One of the real issues we are seeing is that when people move, they are given very little time, they usually have to move into a temporary shelter where they can't take their animals. I have participated in 3 mobile home closings, being there at the last minute where we boarded animals, did everything we can. We can't do that any more. It has been a problem for us as well as a real burden. What is animal control doing? Are there any policies and procedures? These people leave and they leave their animals there. There is usually nobody in the park and nobody who can get into the park. The problem is usually with cats not so much dogs. Are there any procedures to deal with people going into the parks once they are closed down to try to see if there are any animals left? We can't continue to do this because of the number of parks that are closing.

JB – we usually do it on the front end. Depending on when the park is going to close, we will haul

the animals away if they don't want to take them. We just went in before a demolition of a property and set up traps. We are always willing to see what we can do on those.

JUDITH RUIZ – surprised you go in and do trapping ahead of time. Most of the time the people want to take the animals with them. My understanding is that all the animals brought in were put to death. All of these problems we discussed as far as the cat problem would all be mitigated if we had a spay/neuter ordinance.

TRACY PAZ – My question is if the temperature exceeds a certain amount, would Animal Control take the dog then. JB – what is the address? TRACY – 5578 Ballinger. JB – we will take a look at that.

JUDITH RUIZ - Construction at Lied was to be completed the end of March per the County's contract. I saw Channel 2 and Diane Orgill said they hope to have it finished by the end of the year. It is already 2 months overdue. Today, one of our volunteers was talking to someone whose dog had been kept in receiving for 8 days. This person had been there every day. It wasn't until yesterday that the dog was taken out of receiving and placed in lost and found. That needs to be looked into. Animals should not be kept in receiving for 8 days. JB – give me your information and have the lady contact me. My officers haven't seen anything in receiving for 8 days. There is no room in receiving. Have her contact me. SK – what is the status on construction? JB – it is under construction. They were not completed on time and a decision was made that we weren't going to stay with Dewey. They are far better off where they are now. At least I know it is 72 degrees in the kennels. We checked the temperatures the first day we were at Lied. At Dewey it was 93 degrees in the kennels so the decision was warranted. It is probably going to be a mess. The animal control portion will be done in a couple months. Completion of the whole facility will probably not even be at the end of the year. They are still planning on a veterinary center but their obligation was to do the expansion for the animal control end and that is behind. There were cisterns. The entire city water treatment plant was buried under the ground they were building on. They had to take all the material out of the ground. Up until that point, when we moved in June 1, it had not cost Clark County tax payers one dime for the expansion. It has all been on their dime so the decision was it was cost effective. By the time this is said and done, right off the bat, we are saving over \$100,000 a year as opposed to Dewey. That is money well spent. In 6 years the cost will reduce to \$800,000 which is about \$700,000 less than what we would be paying Dewey at that point. That's why the decisions were made. I think they are probably one of the best ones for animals. If people have concerns regarding 8 days in receiving, they should contact us. We can look into those sort of those things. One of the supervisory team is over there every day looking at how the animals are housed, how they flow through, how the paperwork is done and making suggestions. It took us about 12 or 13 years to get Dewey half-way straight and I don't wait to wait 12 years to get this straight. I am hoping it will take 18 months. It will probably take that long for us to get down and work their procedures, work with the humane groups.

COMMISSIONER TOM COLLINS (TC) – Proposing things on enforcement that will understand that people have animals, where animals come from, and why we have pigeons and dogs and cats. The message is if you want to control wild horses, or wild dogs or wild pigeons, you have to come up with a way to do it, which includes money out of your own pockets or the public's pockets.

SK – 3 ordinances that the Committee has spent a lot of time on are sitting. They have never gone before the BCC, the Exotic, Tethering and Spay/Neuter. When can we expect that something will happen so the people of Clark County can let all their commissioners know that they want those passed?

TC – The Exotic Animal has been around for a few years. Is that the same one? Yes. Anti tethering

– is that where you don't want them tied up where they can't reach water and food and shade or you don't want them tied up at all. SK – don't want dogs tied up 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TOM COLLINS' opinion is Clark County Parks should not be providing dog runs for folks if they have a yard. Neighbors should put up with dogs going up or down their sidewalks or going to open spaces and running their dogs out in wherever. I do appreciate that we have some dog parks that allow dog shows and things like that. We can't provide health care in our community. I think it is a higher priority to take care of our human beings than dogs and wild horses and cats and pigeons. I don't have a pigeon problem cause I know how to cure it. SK – That might be your opinion but as our County Commissioner, I am wondering when it will be open to the public to let you know, as well as the rest of the commissioners, that that is not shared by the rest of the population. TC- I understand that cause I am building a dog run in my district as part of the park expansion. I am just saying it is not my highest priority. I'd rather they add some soccer fields for kids and recreation, you know trees and picnic tables for adults to have some peaceful time. I don't know why your issues are not coming up other than staff has not been able to persuade at least 4 County Commissioners to support them.

JB – it is a prioritization issue. It was something that was put on the overall priorities brought to the Board in January. I think you were correct that the health and human service issue was more important than animal issues. TOM COLLINS – there again, however you want to do with animals in our community, realizing their place. I don't want to be like Santa Monica and call them people. I respect mine. I have dogs, horses, turkeys, chickens, goats, cattle, sheep and probably a few ground squirrels. I enjoy feeding them. Don't trap and kill them. They are cute to watch. I grew up in the desert out here and understand their place. If you want to pass something, you have to sway 4 votes on the County Commission, whether it be tethering, exotic animals or spay/neuter. If you want to control animals in the community, you have to get people to pay for it. Folks have to pay for the services they want to have in the community. If you are all supporting those kinds of taxes or fees, you will get those kinds of services. Public safety for more cops only passed 51% to 49%. So this community puts their pocketbook ahead of their community. TOM COLLINS' opinion.

TC – I want to know how many people own a horse, or a cow, or sheep, or a goat. I want to support you doing the things. Joe and I have been on opposite sides of the same side for years. I want to see him do things right to protect animals. That's his job. For example, last commission meeting I was the one that wanted to revoke the animal or remove it from the property until the right provisions were installed. The rest of them all catered to the guy and I couldn't understand it. I know the family better than anybody. Anyway just my opinion. Thanks for letting me take a couple minutes of your time.

**7. Set date, time and agenda of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2005 at 6:30.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.