

CLARK COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

**Clark County Government Center
500 South Grand Central Parkway, Pueblo Room
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101
August 27, 2001
6:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: HENDERSON, DAVID
 HOFF, KARIN
 MARCH, DEBRA
 NOSEK, BARBARA
 RIVKIN, SAMUEL

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. Approval of agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded, with a notice that no discussion from public would be taken on item 4 of the agenda.

3. Approval of July 23, 2001 Minutes

Motion to approve the Minutes was made and seconded.

4. Discussion of animal sheltering report (Discussion)

DR. BERNICK brought two maps produced using impound data samples taken by students, which he believes raises more questions. The question raised from the maps is the difference between intuitive knowledge and empirical knowledge. There are significant impounds in several areas and one explanation is that some officers while working in the Northeast are picking up a lot more dogs that particular day. Another explanation could be that most don't come from the Northeast. Since each Animal Control Officer works a region, we are getting a general picture of what happens throughout the County. We may be missing the fact that when an officer works in a particular region, he is picking up a lot more animals each day than other officers in other regions. After looking at impounds by officers, some do more than others. It may not be that a particular officer was in the region, but that some are very good at finding strays and impounding them. He wants to look at all impounds in areas and do further research to give a better picture of impounds. However, when looking at the map, there are many more impounds on the east side than on west side. Older neighborhoods have more impounds.

DR. BERNICK had preliminary phone survey results from the sample of the communities of Henderson, North Las Vegas, Las Vegas and one case from Boulder City. Some people surveyed were originally from cities and are now in the County. The Committee did not want to

review partial results. DR. BERNICK expects the survey work to be completed within the next two weeks. DR. BERNICK wanted the COMMITTEE to look at partial results so they can determine how they want the information. By looking at the partial results, he showed some of the ways the data can be displayed. He also asked the COMMITTEE what questions they have and how they would like the data presented. KARIN HOFF requested the final data be sent to the COMMITTEE prior to the next meeting but DR. BERNICK was not sure he could provide the data in that time frame. He requested feedback in order to analyze the data and present it in a format that makes sense to the COMMITTEE. He gave out a copy of the survey being used and asked what questions the COMMITTEE wants answered.

The data can be compared by communities or by pet ownership. Some people went to the shelter and didn't have a pet. They can look at the communities by zip codes, whether they have a pet, and knowledge of the shelters as important considerations. One important factor was pet ownership and how far they would travel if a pet was owned. They found pet owners were willing to travel pretty far to go to a shelter so distance is a marginal consideration. Would there be a difference for people who don't own pets? If you want to promote pet adoptions, will the distance make a difference? Reasons and funding for new shelter by owners or non owners and where they are located are another factor. He asked them to look at the questionnaires and see if there is anything of particular interest and to call him to let him know what answers they want. They can go by his office to look at the maps. They will finish the survey and follow up on the issue of the map.

5. Review of sterilization policy for adopted animals

DR. HENDERSON is in favor of no release on certificate regardless of age. The City of Henderson does not release adopted animals on certificate. In addition, the City of Las Vegas doesn't release animals on certificate but has foster homes until they are old enough to be sterilized before placement in a permanent home. DR. HENDERSON would like the County to meet that standard. KARIN HOFF agrees with Dr. Henderson that we should not allow animals out on certificates as they are not being returned for sterilization. There is more than 60 percent non-compliance. It costs the County in staff time and Dewey time to do the paperwork. DR. HENDERSON's main concern is that he does not want a pet adopted out into general population without sterilization.

DR. MYRA GLASSMAN agrees with Dr. Henderson that we should get rid of vouchers but we need to find a way to accommodate humane societies or private veterinarians. Telling them you cannot adopt an animal unless we first spay or neuter it could antagonize the profession and she would like everyone to work together.

JUDITH RUIZ does not believe any animal should be released without being sterilized. She is chagrined that so many animals have been allowed out without spay or neutering. More animals reproducing causes more expense. No animal should leave the shelter unspayed or unneutered and she does not believe other veterinarians require special considerations.

DR. HENDERSON pointed out that if you are a practicing veterinarian, you don't need to go to a shelter to get an animal so there is no reason for an exception.

AMBER SNETHEN represents Friends of Felines. They are out in the trenches every day. It is a major problem if we are letting animals out on vouchers. It causes more and more problems and they have seen more and more animals. It is appalling to let them out on certificate. She would rather see them put down than reproduce.

CHRISTINA ROTTER is in favor of saving the life of animals.

JUDY ERICKSON, Spay our Strays, a new group in town, thought sterilization was the main purpose of shelters. They are out every night dealing with litters of kittens from pets and strays. It creates extra work for them to deal with litter after litter and supports Dr. Henderson's proposal.

STACI STREET is appalled by the vouchers. She is out there with everyone else, doing all she can to save them and not one goes out of her possession unless it has been spayed or neutered so they do not reproduce. The problem gets worse every year and she disagrees with animals being released on certificate.

JIM LUSK thinks everyone in the field is doing a great job but they don't have to deal with the family who comes back after an animal died. The Dewey Center have the human face to deal with. Upper respiratory can take out an animal in 24 hours. It can devastate a little kid, if after bringing home the animal, it dies. They handle 25,000 animals a year and the magnitude of the problem is greater than the problem in the City of Henderson. Surgery degrades the immune system which is why animals were released on vouchers.

DR. HENDERSON would rather see animals euthanized than go out on vouchers. JIM LUSK states that AFI has \$93 to take care of animals and a foster animal program to care for animals until they are ready for adoption. The AFI budget is 50 percent higher than Dewey. What level of service do you want to pay for? If the County wants to pay another \$600,000 a year to keep the animals until healthy, the Dewey Center will do it. JIM LUSK asked if changing the code would apply to the NSCPA. The answer is no, existing state law applies.

DR. FREER believes everything leaving the shelter should be sterilized. The Dewey Center found out animals did not come back for surgery and has no problem with eliminating certificates. This is a line we are taking and we need to come together as a unified group. In the longer term, we are saving more lives. There are foster home systems out there. Who clarifies who is a good foster home and who keeps track of it? Are they part of the County shelter or a separate entity? Certain foster programs have credibility and others may not. He has had some veterinarians come in to adopt animals and although it is not a huge problem, it would be a nice professional courtesy.

MIKE CHUMRAU would like clarification about no unsterilized animal leaving the shelter. He wants to know if there are any exceptions. The COMMITTEE stated they do not want exceptions. There is no more control over foster people than over people taking animals out on certificates. The problem is that regardless of what statute or regulation you decide on, you must be able to enforce it. Animal Control Officers cannot go back to the people to ensure

compliance. The hard line seems to be the only other choice but he would like to think there is a better answer, such as bigger shelters or more money from County and cities so the animals don't get sick so they can be spayed and neutered. We don't want overpopulation. He has been a veterinarian for 22 years and at the shelter (Lied Animal Foundation) 4 months. He believes the ability to make exceptions to make that decision can save some animals.

DR. HENDERSON believes fostering to try to save lives is okay but you have to be very careful with where you are putting animal and what kind of controls there would be. Right now, at least 600 out of 1,000 are still out there able to increase the pet population. The voucher system is not working. A foster system may be something that can be put into the code but no animal should be adopted without being sterilized. The humane organizations he works with ensure animals are spayed or neutered. If it is adopted from the shelter, it must be spayed or neutered. People who are willing to foster are a lot more dependable as far as bringing them back for spay and neuter but the agency overseeing the program must be selective.

MIKE CHUMRAU, AFI, stated they have a full time person paid to do run the foster program. He has practiced veterinary medicine for 22 years and believes that many foster homes want animals as a free adoption and do not come back at all. They are trying to foster to save lives of animals in the shelter but the foster program has to be run properly.

JUDITH RUIZ noted they are a foster program and all animals are well accounted for and they supply food and medical care for all of them. It is a very tough decision but saving the life of a shelter animal it not as important as not letting animals get out to reproduce. Their goal is to control pet overpopulation.

DR. HENDERSON asked Dr. Freer about fostering . DR. FREER stated they operate under HSUS guidelines and the Humane Society of the United States do not believe in fostering. They think it is a another adoption program which ends up being a pressure system on foster parents.

A motion was made and seconded to direct staff to develop language to amend title 10 to prohibit adoption of any unsterilized animal. .

6. Information-sharing by Committee Members (Discussion)

None

7. Comments by the General Public (Discussion)

DR. MYRA GLASSMAN thinks accommodating veterinarians by allowing them to foster an animal until it can be spayed or neutered would make everybody happy.

STACI STREET believes we are addressing the symptom and not the cause which is not spaying or neutering animals in this community. We need to reach out to people who cannot afford to spay or neuter their animals. We need to do low cost spay and neuters.

MIKE CHUMRAU asked about a 10, 12 or 14 year old animal that is not spayed or neutered. He would not consider it appropriate to put one of those animals under anesthesia without a blood test. If an older animal is adopted, the veterinarian needs to talk to the people before the animal is adopted. At AFI, they try to find someone who is willing to pay the expense to take the animal to an outside veterinarian to have tests. Shelter medicine is not the standard of care, but neither is spaying or neutering an 8 week old. It is not the same as outside medicine. DR. FREER says the state board does not distinguish between the two.

JUDITH RUIZ stated that AFI is not spaying and neutering any animal over 5 years. She regularly get calls from people who try to make appointments at Dewey and were told 2 or 3 months in future.

CHRISTINA ROTTER had reports that Dewey is trying to keep animals a little longer but Animal Control writes them up and makes them put animals down and she would like Joe Boteilho to comment on this. JOE BOTEILHO advised there are overcrowding problems and when there are numerous animals in cages, Animal Control enforces this issue so the animals have sufficient space in the cages. The Professional Animal Handlers standards set forth in Title 10 is the standard applied to ensure all the animals have the minimum space required by law.

8. Set date, time and agenda of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for September 10, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. at which time UNLV will present the results of the survey to the Committee (the meeting on September 10, 2001 will be only to obtain the results of the work completed by UNLV, no public comment taken on the item). The regular meeting was scheduled for the 24th of September at 6:30 p.m, at which time organizations and public may provide input on the sheltering options.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.