

CLARK COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Clark County Government Center
500 South Grand Central Parkway, Pueblo Room
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101
September 10, 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 6:33 p.m.

2. **Approval of agenda**

A motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded.

3. **Approval of August 27, 2001 Minutes**

Motion to approve the Minutes was made and seconded with adding Ano@ on page 2 under Dr. Henderson's remarks.

4. **Discussion of animal sheltering report**

DR. BERNICK reported the survey was completed by the students and samples were provided to the COMMITTEE in addition to a report of *Citizens' Perceptions of Animal Sheltering in Clark County* which contained the data compiled during the survey process. Topics covered in the survey were: *pet ownership, knowledge of shelters, shelter visitation, animal issues awareness and practices, support for a new shelter, and funding a new shelter*. Five hundred fifty-five (555) households were sampled during the survey with a margin of error plus or minus 4 percent and a confidence level of 95 percent. Fifty-four percent of the citizens surveyed owned a pet with the national average being 59 percent. Dogs accounted for 31 percent and cats 20 percent of the pets owned. Almost 7 out of 10 households owned a pet within the past 5 years. Thirty-one percent of Clark County's population have visited an animal shelter in the past 5 years.

Fifty-two percent of the people (154 people surveyed) that went to a shelter adopted an animal, with 61 percent visiting a shelter for a possible adoption. Seventeen percent of the people went to a shelter to look for a lost animal. The shelters were reportedly convenient for 73 percent of the households.

People do not distinguish between county and city. Seventy percent of the people living in a city went to a city shelter. Thirty-four percent visited more than one shelter, 36 percent of the people went to the Dewey shelter. Fifty-nine percent do not think there is enough shelter space. One of every 5 households feeds stray cats. (This may be an underestimate).

Forty percent of the people talked to said they would travel any distance for their pet while 27 percent were willing to travel 11 to 20 miles. JOE BOTEILHO noted that according to the survey responses approximately one-third of the people will not travel to the shelter because the distance is too far. This leaves 6,000 animals subject to euthanasia because their owners will not go the distance to retrieve their pet.

There was support for a new shelter for health and safety standards (90 percent thought it was reasonable) and 88 percent favored a new shelter to reduce euthanasia. Euthanasia engenders the most emotion from the people and the respondents felt strongly about reducing the euthanasia rates.

Of the people surveyed that currently own pets, 44 percent would support a tax increase for a new shelter and 56 percent of the pet owners are opposed to a tax increase. People would support licenses if the money would go to new shelter. Almost everywhere else in the country, the money from licensing goes into the general fund. SAM RIVKIN does not believe licensing would produce sufficient funds to build a tough shed as the compliance rate was so low previously.

Sixty-five percent are opposed to a property tax and 74 percent would agree to an increase in sheltering fees. Pet licenses were favored by 85 percent of the people if the funds went directly to the shelter, 94 percent favored donations and 36 percent said use existing funds. The general population in the County are not aware how much money is spent by the County at Dewey. Some people mentioned bonds or some other type of fund-raising.

Forty four percent of people who own a pet right now support a property tax. That is 44 percent of 54 percent. If there was a special election and the only issue was the shelter, you may be able to get the pet owners energized and out to vote so it would not be out of the realm of possibilities to have a tax increase fund a new shelter.

THERESA VIAU presented the comments received from the public on the Dewey Animal shelter, Animal Control office, and Lied Animal Foundation/Las Vegas shelter. Some of the comments were positive and there were more comments made about the Dewey Animal shelter. Of 174 people that went to an animal shelter, 89 people made comments.

Regarding the map, the data was re-coded using the 1,500 cases researched by the students, and based upon where the Animal Control Officer was assigned for that time, about 60 percent of the Animal Control Officers are in the north. North of Boulder Highway and Charleston, East of I15 is north for the County, comprised of Regions 4, 5 and 6. If survey respondents were plotted out by low incomes, they might not be as able to get to the shelter which is why they would not travel more than 10 miles. The Boulder Highway is a major area for impounded animals.

When you look at other counties and their Animal Control Officers, they do not do as good a job as Clark County. There are no best practices by animal control organizations and shelters. There may be some by humane societies but not by animal control..

Animal control for most states is a public health issue not a pet owner issue because of rabies. In regards to sheltering, the conclusions about the work being in the north are correct. BARBARA asked if there are best practices, what are the practices used, how many are run by governments. DR. BERNICK stated the students studied statutes and regulations of counties with populations over 400,000 and contacted animal shelters. Maricopa County in Phoenix is most likely to be like Clark County. They have partnered with non-profits and have a lot of information on their website that would be useful. There are also some websites in Texas that may be useful. He will get the information to the Committee by Saturday, September 24, 2001.

5. Information-sharing by Committee Members

November 4 through 10 is National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week.

6. Comments by the General Public

DR. MYRA GLASSMAN thinks people feeding stray cats underlies the importance of educational efforts about trapping and spaying or neutering. If 1 out of 5 people is feeding a stray cat, the cats need to be sterilized. There was a great deal of discussion about where the concentration of calls is and where the shelter should be built. However, there is a shift in the population center that is occurring with lots of development in the Southwest parts of the valley. We need to think ahead when we are talking about building shelters for the next 10, 15 or 25 years. We need to think about where population is going. With 60 percent not traveling to get their pets, we need to look at age distribution as well as income distribution of people who said they couldn't travel that far. Some seniors some don't drive or don't feel comfortable driving long distances. We want to encourage seniors to have pets so we need to look at what segment of the population feels they cannot go that far. There may be some specific reasons why people have a problem and it is not just economics. Licensing is not a good idea since compliance was only 10 or 20 percent and she is pessimistic about increasing compliance. Animal Control is already doing good job of tracking rabies so licensing should be shelved.

CHRISTINA ROTTER commented that 60 percent of the animals impounded may come from the north but is that where the people come from to get their animals. In terms of shelters, instead of thinking of one centralized location, we should follow the system used for libraries, building one library any time there is a new area. Just as they build a new library, a new shelter can be added and interconnected with others to share information and work together. In the long run, you don't have to plan 20 years ahead because every time the population increases, you follow the example of the library system.

SAM RIVKIN and BARBARA NOSEK noted libraries are supported by bond issues and there is no comparison between a library and a shelter.

7. Set date, time and agenda of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for September 24, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. A letter is going out to humane groups advising of the meeting on September 24 asking for written input if they cannot be available for the meeting.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.