

DRAFT

## CITY OF LOS ANGELES

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**TARZANA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2018 ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING  
AND SPECIAL MEETING**

January 12, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Tarzana Child Care Center

5700 Beckford Ave., Tarzana, CA 91356,

Chairman - Jeffrey Mausner

Committee Members

Mary Aratounian, Amitis Ariano, Eva Brusa, Lynn Davis, Janet Mausner, Heidi Okuhara,  
Deanna Dylan Scott, Renee Shamloo, Debbie Shreve Trejo, and Jennifer Varela

The public is requested to fill out a “**Speaker Card**” to address the Board on any item of the agenda prior to the Board taking action on an item. Comments from the public on Agenda items will be heard only when the respective item is being considered. Comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the Agenda that is within the Board’s subject matter jurisdiction will be heard during the Public Comment period. Public comment is limited to 2 minutes per speaker, unless waived by the presiding officer of the Board.

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Minutes of the Tarzana Neighborhood Council (TNC) Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) meeting, January 12, 2018, at the Tarzana Child Care Center, 5700 Beckford Ave., Tarzana, CA 91356.

1. Call to Order and Welcoming Remarks. The meeting was called to order at 7:07 P.M. by Chair Jeffrey Mausner. Attending were the following committee members: Mary Aratounian, Amitis Ariano, Eva Brusa, Lynn Davis, Janet Mausner, Heidi Okuhara, Debbie Shreve Trejo, and Jeffrey Mausner. Also attending were Andrew Pennington, Director of Land Use and Planning in City Councilman Blumenfield’s Office; David Garfinkle, Chairman of the TNC Land Use Committee; Jan Brown from the Panorama City Neighborhood Council; Veterinarian Dr. Armaiti May; Ady Gil and Fabienne Origer from Rockin’ Rescue; Karen Hamza from AngelHanz Rescue; Eileen and Brad Smulson from Operation Blankets of Love; and members of the public including rescue workers and animal

activists.

2. Minutes from the September 11, 2017 meeting were approved, unanimously, 7-0-0. Moved by Eva, seconded by Mary.

3. The proposed Pet Shop Ordinance (Pet Adoption Center Ordinance), allowing Animal Rescues to operate in commercial zones without having to obtain a zoning variance, was considered. Andrew Pennington, Director of Land Use and Planning in Councilman Blumenfield's Office, spoke about the proposed ordinance. Andrew was instrumental in saving Rockin' Rescue and has been a leader in introducing this new ordinance in the City Council.

Andrew Pennington: This is going to be a long process, we appreciate your feedback. Discussed the difference between the Zoning Administrator (ZA) Adjustment process and a Conditional Use Permit; Zoning Administrator process is somewhat less burdensome. Explained that under the current draft of the new ordinance, some rescues would be able to operate in commercial zones by right; others would have to obtain a Conditional Use Permit or ZA Adjustment. The purpose of this ordinance is to make adoptable animals more visible, more accessible, so that more animals will be adopted. But the ordinance also has to take into account the legitimate concerns of the neighboring business owners.

David Garfinkle, Chair of the TNC Land Use Committee and President of the Tarzana Property Owners Association (TPOA), spoke about the proposed ordinance. There is concern about having animal rescues located close to restaurants and other food facilities in C-2 zones. Discussion took place regarding a distance requirement between an animal rescue and restaurant. Discussion also took place regarding very large rescue facilities, proximity to mixed use facilities, and proximity to residential areas. David stated that the less onerous Zoning Administrator (ZA) Adjustment was preferable to a Conditional Use Permit, in situations where the rescue did not qualify by right.

Ady Gil, who runs Rockin' Rescue, spoke about the size of the rescue, proximity to food facilities, and other restrictions that were being considered. He said that any such restrictions should have a factual basis.

Jeffrey Mausner: I support the proposed Ordinance, as long as it is amended in certain ways to make it less restrictive. I think that we should have many animal rescues and should make it as easy as possible for legitimate rescues to operate in Commercial Zones, where they will have visibility and animals will be adopted. But health and safety concerns do have to be taken into account.

Jeffrey Mausner: Some animal organizations are opposing this ordinance because they claim that the ordinance will allow more animal hoarders. I think this opposition is based on a complete misunderstanding of the proposed ordinance. The ordinance will simply allow legitimate rescues to operate in commercial zones, rather than only in industrial zones. It does not legalize hoarding. In fact, it

is less likely that a hoarder would operate in a commercial zone than in an industrial or residential zone, because what they are doing is much more easily seen in a commercial zone. A hoarder wants to be away from public scrutiny, not where many people are going to see the animals in a commercial zone. A legitimate rescue wants to be in a commercial zone, where the animals will be seen and adopted.

Debbie Shreve Trejo spoke in favor of the resolution.

Distance of 100 to 200 feet from a restaurant was discussed and thought to be reasonable by many.

Using a Zoning Administrator (ZA) Adjustment, rather than a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), in those cases where the rescue does not qualify by right was discussed. The ZA Adjustment procedure is somewhat less onerous for the rescue organization. Everyone agreed that a ZA Adjustment was preferable.

Discussion and possible motion: **Resolved: The Tarzana Neighborhood Council Animal Welfare Committee (TNC AWC) requests that the TNC Board pass a resolution of support for a Pet Shop Ordinance which allows rescues to operate in commercial zones, CPC-2017-4075-CA, with certain provisions, communicate its support of this to Councilmembers Blumenfield and Koretz, file a Community Impact Statement in support of this Ordinance, and communicate its support to other interested parties. The Animal Welfare Committee believes that this Ordinance should be as liberal as possible in allowing Animal Rescues to operate in commercial zones by right, consistent with public safety and welfare, and that the procedure for approval where a Rescue cannot operate by right should be as inexpensive and speedy as possible, such as by a Zoning Administrator (ZA) Adjustment rather than a Conditional Use Permit. The AWC thanks Councilmember Blumenfield and Andrew Pennington for their leadership on this matter.**

Moved by Jeff, seconded by Eva and Mary. The motion, as amended above, was approved unanimously, 8-0-0. A straw poll of non-committee members was also taken; of those voting, 11 were in favor, none opposed, and one abstention. The AWC thanked Andrew Pennington for his work on this proposed ordinance.

4. At 8:07 PM, the regular meeting was temporarily adjourned to convene the special meeting, to consider the new matter regarding the Jefferson Park Animal Shelter. The CAO (City Administrative Officer) recommended in favor of leasing the Jefferson Park Shelter, the abandoned South LA City Shelter, to Best Friends, to run it in a similar manner to the Mission Hills Shelter, which was what was originally proposed as item 4 on the agenda. So instead of that agenda item, there is a new resolution supporting this before the City Council, set forth on the special meeting agenda. Jeff moved to temporarily adjourn the regular meeting, and

convene a special meeting, to consider this matter. Seconded by Mary and unanimously approved (8-0-0), at 8:07 PM.

**Discussion and possible motion: City Council File 15-1041-S4. Resolved: The Tarzana Neighborhood Council Animal Welfare Committee (TNC AWC) requests that the TNC Board pass a resolution to file a Community Impact Statement (CIS) supporting Council File 15-1041-S4, to lease the Jefferson Park Animal Shelter facility to the Best Friends Animal Society (Best Friends), upon the terms set forth in Inter-Departmental Correspondence from CAO Staff to the Municipal Facilities Committee dated December 21, 2017. Pursuant to that Correspondence, among other things, Best Friends and its co-located partners will provide animal rescue, low cost veterinary care, kitten nursery, working cat program, overflow shelter for dogs, education and training for community residents, and other services from that facility. This will help to save the lives of cats, dogs, and other animals in the City and achieve the goal of the City Council and Mayor of making Los Angeles No-Kill. The Animal Welfare Committee Chair is authorized to communicate the TNC's support to City Council and other interested parties.**

Jeffrey Mausner: The AWC is very familiar with this item, since we have been working on it for over a year. The City opened a new South Shelter in 2012, and the old shelter was closed down. It has been sitting abandoned since 2012. It's probably a \$15-20 million building or more; it can house around 200 dogs and 200 cats. When we found out about it from Paul Darrigo, we met with City Council President Herb Wesson to tell him about this, and to propose that it be run by a rescue organization. Council President Wesson liked the idea, and an RFP (Request for Proposal) was issued for a Rescue Organization to run the Shelter. The City even spent more than \$1 million to fix it up, because it hadn't been used for 5 or 6 years. But then no rescue organization that had the resources to run it was willing to do so.

We spent a lot of time looking for rescue organizations to run it, and finally, Best Friends agreed to run the shelter, just as it is running the Mission Hills Shelter. This will literally save the lives of hundreds of cats and dogs in South L.A. and throughout the City. As you know, this wouldn't be happening without us, the AWC, TNC, VANC (Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils), and animal activist, Paul Darrigo. Thank you to Best Friends for agreeing to run the shelter.

Mary Aratounian: Thank you to you Jeff, you were really persuasive on this. You worked so hard on this.

Vote regarding resolution on Jefferson Park Shelter: Moved by Jeff, seconded by Lynn, Debbie, Eva. Was approved unanimously, 8-0-0. A straw poll of non-committee members was also taken; of those voting, 14 were in favor, none opposed, and no abstentions.

Move to Adjourn Special Meeting and to Resume the Regular Meeting. Jeff moved, Debbie seconded at 8:19 PM. Approved unanimously, 8-0-0.

5. Jeffrey Mausner: Next is a resolution to provide a Neighborhood Purpose Grant (NPR) for Operation Blankets of Love (OBOL). Eileen Smulson and Brad Smulson, the Founders and Executive Director of OBOL, and all-around great people, will speak about the work OBOL is doing, and how they intend to use the grant money. If any of you have seen OBOL, you know what great work they do for the Shelters and when there is an emergency. This grant is for its educational activities.

Discussion and possible motion regarding **submission of a request to the Budget Committee of an NPG (grant) to Operation Blankets of Love in the amount of \$500.** The grant is intended for educational booklets to distribute in Tarzana Schools and to Tarzana youth groups, regarding how to be kind and respectful to animals and to be a responsible pet owner.

Moved by Amitar, seconded by Debbie.

Eileen Smulson: Spoke and showed a video of when OBOL was featured in a television program. Spoke about their dog Ginger. Eileen decided to form OBOL when she went to the West Valley Shelter and saw the dogs there were cold; formed OBOL to collect blankets and bedding for dogs in all of the Shelters. It has since expanded to other animal support in all of the City Shelters and other Shelters. They also help the homeless who have pets. OBOL has been expanding into humane education in the schools. They have a 44 page book to distribute in the schools about humane and safe treatment of animals. This grant will be for these books in Tarzana schools and youth groups. Eileen has already taught more than 10,000 students. The students then do projects to help the animals. The books will also be in Spanish and Chinese. The books cost \$1.50 to 1.60 per book to print. OBOL also teaches autistic and deaf children.

OBOL has 60 drop-off locations for donations of blankets, bedding, and other items for animals; OBOL helps approximately 1,000 homeless animals per month.

The resolution for a NPG Grant for OBOL passed unanimously, 8-0-0.

6. Discussion and possible motion regarding **submission of a request to the Budget Committee to switch the money appropriated for the purchase of a “Bone Pool,” a wading pool for dogs, to Kongs, for the use of the Volunteers at the West Valley Shelter, for an amount not to exceed \$325.00.**

Jeffrey Mausner: A Bone Pool for the West Valley Shelter was obtained from another source, so it is no longer necessary to purchase one. Kongs are the only toy items dogs are allowed to have in their kennels. Tennis balls or other toys can be ripped apart by the dogs and get stuck in the drains, clogging them. Kongs are made of a material that is very difficult for dogs to pull apart, so Kongs can be given to the dogs by Volunteers.

Moved by Heidi, seconded by Lynn (both West Valley Shelter Volunteers). Passed unanimously, 8-0-0.

7. Item number 7 deals with vegan food for the dogs at the City Animal Shelters. This is not a vote on the merits of that. This is a vote to support the Board of Animal Services Commission decision to do a study regarding the feasibility of it. The decision on this is made by the Board of Animal Services Commissioners, not the City Council. When it does come down to the merits, we could just either support or oppose it, or take no position at all. The proposed resolution is:

**Discussion and possible motion: Resolved: The Tarzana Neighborhood Council Animal Welfare Committee (TNC AWC) requests that the TNC Board pass a resolution supporting the Los Angeles Board of Animal Services Commissioners' recommendation that the Department of Animal Services report back with a feasibility analysis presenting the benefits and risks of providing an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) approved, plant-based diet for Shelter Dogs.**

Moved by Jeff, seconded by Mary.

Commissioner Roger Wolfson: This [feasibility analysis] will not cost the City anything. Los Angeles Animal Services will compile the information on this and submit it to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners for a determination. The City is not commissioning a study; we are just seeing what studies already exist and evaluating those.

It is the mission of Los Angeles Animal Services to care for all animals. We take in chickens, turkeys, and ducks, as well as dogs and cats. But then we are feeding other chickens, turkeys, ducks to the dogs in the shelter. Dogs are omnivores, so they can thrive on non-meat-based foods. So we should look at the possibility of the City Shelters using plant-based foods for the dogs. I reached out to the plant-based food manufacturers, and they agreed to match the price that the City Shelters currently pay for meat-based dog food. The Los Angeles City Shelters have 33,000 dogs per year, and they are fed 336,000 pounds of meat-based foods. These animals' lives could be saved if dogs were fed plant-based diets. And studies show that dogs are healthier on plant-based diets.

Dr. Armaiti May, a practicing veterinarian in Los Angeles, spoke in favor of the resolution. Dr. May donates a great deal of time to providing free vet care, including to the homeless in Los Angeles.

Dr. May: Spoke regarding common misconceptions that people have about plant-based diets. Cancer in dogs is increasing because of the ingredients and contaminants in meat-based food; toxic chemicals are highly concentrated in animal tissue due to bio-accumulation. Dogs are omnivores, and plant-based foods are healthier for them because of the toxic chemicals in meat-based foods, including even organic meat-based foods. Dr. May played video testimonials regarding plant-based diets for dogs.

Commissioner Wolfson (in response to questions): Under the proposal, puppies and any other dogs could receive meat-based diets if recommended by the Shelter vets.

There is a proposal to provide adopters samples of plant-based dog foods to take home with them, to encourage them to keep their dogs on a plant-based diet. But even if adopters switch back to meat-based diets, Animal Services has done its part in cutting down the number of animals killed for food while the dogs are in the Shelters.

Karen Hamza: Spoke in favor of feeding the dogs in the Shelters vegan food. The dogs will be healthier. Dogs prefer the taste of Vegan Natural Balance.

Dr. May (in response to questions): When dogs are adopted, they will most likely change diets anyway, even if they are on a meat-based diet at the Shelter. The new guardian will likely switch to another brand of dog food. So if they change from plant-based at the Shelter to meat-based after adoption, the effect of that change is similar.

Several people spoke about how their dogs became healthier when they switched to a plant-based diet. Vegan food costs about the same as meat-based food.

Discussion took place regarding educating people about plant-based diets for dogs.

Lisa Karlin, Sally Zito, Christina Ku, Faramarz Nabavi, and Sam Zollman spoke in favor of plant-based diet for dogs.

Vote in favor of supporting the feasibility study: Passed unanimously, 8-0-0.

A straw poll of non-committee members was also taken; of those voting, 9 were in favor, none opposed, and no abstentions, in favor of supporting the feasibility study.

8. Mary Aratounian and Amitis Ariano gave an update regarding AB 1199, the Police-Canine Encounters Protection Act. Our new Committee Member, Amitis Ariano, has been working with SCIL (Social Compassion in Legislation) and can tell us about that.

Mary Aratounian: Mary communicated with Assemblyman Nazarian's staff, who stated that at this time they will not be pushing forward with this bill. Mary will meet with them in the future regarding this.

Amitis Ariano: She worked with SCIL and Lisa Karlin on this. Every 98 minutes a dog is shot by law enforcement in the U.S. But there are no dogs that kill police officers. Police need proper training for this. But unfortunately, this bill died in the Appropriations Committee. Amitis talked about several very sad cases in which innocent dogs were shot, because the police officers did not have sufficient training to know how to deal with a dog. Police officers risk their lives for us, and they should receive the training to make sure they are safe in situations involving dogs.

9. Comments by the Chair and discussion regarding:

a. Status of the Jefferson Park Animal Shelter. As previously discussed, it is going forward.

b. No-Kill L.A. is officially here, as of December 31.

Jeff gave a report to the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils last night. Copies of the written report were handed out. In short, we have achieved No-Kill for dogs at the City Shelters. The live-save rate for dogs was 93.14% in November. Over 90% is considered No-Kill. That's the good news. Bad news regarding cats. We have not achieved No-Kill for cats. The live save rate for cats in November was 83.85%. This is in large part because of the TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) injunction. The City Shelters cannot help to save the lives of more cats because of the TNR injunction. A very high priority is getting the TNR injunction lifted, so the City can resume its assistance in Trap, Neuter, Return.

10. Public Comments – Comments from the public on non-agenda items within the Committee's subject matter jurisdiction.

11. Committee member comments on subject matter within the Committee's jurisdiction.

12. Future agenda items and other calendar events.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

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