



CITY HALL • 1500 MARKON CHURCH LANE PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

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May 10, 2005

**Oakland City Council
and City Administrator**
Oakland, Ca.

**Re: Oakland Animal Shelter Citizen Concerns and
Recommendations for Council Approval**

Dear Colleagues and City Administrator:

Since holding the animal shelter town hall meeting on February 17, 2005, I have continued to receive input from hundreds of Oakland residents about their concerns and ideas to improve the care and treatment of animals in the Oakland Animal Shelter. I am extremely impressed by the compassion Oakland residents have demonstrated over this matter. I have taken the top ten issues expressed to me and summarized them below. A complete list of the issues, concerns, and ideas raised is attached.

- 1) Provide low cost or no cost spay/neuter services, education and outreach to reduce Oakland's unwanted pet population.
- 2) Remove animal shelter operations from the Police Department.
- 3) Hire a shelter director and shelter staff that have a true passion for animals; shelter enforcement staff should be hired based on experience working with animals not ambitions to enter police services.
- 4) Adopt a "No Kill" policy.
- 5) Adequately fund and staff shelter operations; ensure that field operations are fully staffed; increase hours to include weekends; provide necessary materials and supplies.
- 6) Maximize relationships with rescue groups to reduce shelter euthanasia rates.

- 7) Expand volunteerism; maximize volunteer resources; develop volunteer programs for Oakland youth and seniors.
- 8) Review progressive shelter operations like San Francisco and Berkeley to develop a model for Oakland.
- 9) Provide extensive training to shelter staff in the areas of customer service and humane animal care and handling.
- 10) Develop education programs for responsible pet ownership.

I strongly believe that all of these priorities can be addressed and further developed by an innovative shelter director working collaboratively with the animal non-profit and volunteer community. Funding for shelter operations will continue to be a challenge for the City and I look forward to the new shelter director creating entrepreneurial programs that will generate revenues to fund some of the much needed services such as low cost spay/neuter and pet owner education. As a first step towards generating funds for enhanced shelter services, I am proposing that license fees generated over and above the dollar amount collected last fiscal year be placed directly into the shelter budget.

Finally, Oakland residents are very concerned about the animal shelter operating within the Police Department. I believe we have an obligation to address this concern by conducting a thorough analysis of the financial, safety and logistical impacts of moving the shelter operations out of the Police Department. This analysis will enable the City Council to make an informed decision that will best serve Oakland animal populations and residents. Until a decision can be made on the matter, I am urging the City Administrator and Chief of Police to immediately elevate the Animal Shelter Director position within the police organization so that it reports directly to the Chief of Police.

I look forward to the Council's support of these recommendations.

Sincerely,



IGNACIO DE LA FUENTE
President of the City Council

Oakland Resident Concerns and Ideas
about the Oakland Animal Shelter

- 1) Provide low cost or no cost spay/neuter services, education and outreach to reduce Oakland's unwanted pet population.
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- 3) Hire a shelter director and shelter staff that have a true passion for animals; shelter enforcement staff should be hired based on experience working with animals not ambitions to enter police services.
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- 7) Expand volunteerism; maximize volunteer resources; develop volunteer programs for Oakland youth and seniors.
- 8) Review progressive shelter operations like San Francisco and Berkeley to develop a model for Oakland.
- 9) Provide extensive training to shelter staff in the areas of customer service and humane animal care and handling.
- 10) Develop education programs for responsible pet ownership.
- 11) Privatize the animal shelter; let an outside organization like SPCA take over.
- 12) Create a citizen oversight committee to monitor shelter operations.
- 13) Require mandatory micro-chipping of cats and dogs when licenses are issued to facilitate identification.
- 14) Make better use of the shelter website by immediately posting pictures of lost animals brought in to the shelter.
- 15) More outreach is needed to promote shelter in the community; use the media by developing promotions such as dog or cat of the week.
- 16) Provide education and information to reduce overpopulation of feral cats.

- 17) Extend the holding period established before euthanizing animals.
- 18) Raise money through fundraiser or ballot initiatives; establish a fundraising committee.
- 19) Extend shelter operation hours to weekends.
- 20) Open more off leash dog parks; establish a dog day once a week so dogs can be walked on leash around Lake Merritt.
- 21) More education on the importance of pet socialization is needed; socialize animals that are in the shelter.
- 22) Limit the number of animals per household.
- 23) Hold a shelter "Open House" after changes and improvements have been established.