

**CITY OF LODI
INFORMAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING
"SHIRTSLEEVE" SESSION
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2008**

An Informal Informational Meeting ("Shirtsleeve" Session) of the Lodi City Council was held Tuesday, March 18, 2008, commencing at 7:00 a.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Members – Hitchcock, Hansen, Johnson, Katzakian, and Mayor Mounce

Absent: Council Members – None

Also Present: City Manager King, City Attorney Schwabauer, and City Clerk Johl

B. TOPIC(S)

B-1 "Update on Animal Shelter Facility"

City Manager King provided a brief introduction of the subject matter of the animal shelter facility.

Interim Police Chief David Main and Special Services Manager Jeanie Biskup provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the animal shelter facility. Specific topics of discussion included a historical perspective, staffing and hours, 2007 animal services field calls, animal shelter housing, Hayden Bill of 1999, 2007 animal shelter statistics, 2007 shelter pulls and transfers, accomplishments, challenges, and possible solutions.

Discussion ensued between Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Mayor Mounce, Chief Main, Ms. Biskup, and Mr. King regarding the requirements set forth in the Hayden Bill, compliance efforts by the City, repercussions of not meeting the same, efforts to decrease euthanasia rates, State mandates and filing reimbursement claims regarding the same, the effect of an increased stay and care before an animal is euthanized including costs, and compliance by other communities.

Mayor Mounce suggested housing cats outside in additional cages.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated some communities are outwardly stating that they are meeting the Hayden Bill requirements including Marin.

Mayor Mounce requested information regarding the application of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for operations and spay and neuter programs at the animal shelter. She also asked for information regarding funding that may be available for the same through the budget.

In response to Council Member Hitchcock, Ms. Biskup stated statistics were kept in more detail after the Hayden Bill came into play, the 1999 to 2007 shelter statistics sheet was provided by Sue Pixler, and the kittens are lost primarily due to large respiratory conditions and outbreaks, which are related to spacing issues.

In response to Myrna Wetzel, Chief Main stated that the People Assisting the Lodi Shelter (PALS) provides foster care.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Biskup stated that people bring in large numbers of cats and dogs and, while some may be strays, others are owned by the individuals who bring them in.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Biskup stated the average cost for cat and dog spay or neuter is \$100 to \$150; although, the low cost voucher program average is approximately \$40 to \$45. She stated the \$7,000 voucher program is close to being depleted and approximately 300 animals were altered as a result.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated there is a minimal fine to redeem a pet who has gotten loose; although, spay and neuter costs may be reduced with the assistance of the voucher program.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Biskup stated the total amount collected from licenses last year was approximately \$14,000. She stated the fee is \$10 for altered and \$50 for unaltered.

In response to Mayor Mounce, Ms. Biskup and Chief Main concurred that the licensing function, which was taken over by the animal shelter in November, presents some challenges with staffing levels and the hours of operation. Mr. King stated both the Police Department and Finance Department were consulted prior to the change being made and it may be appropriate to reevaluate the function. He also suggested that community events, as is done in other communities, may be the appropriate venue to encourage spaying and neutering animals.

In response to Council Member Hitchcock, Ms. Biskup stated the fee is approximately 90% associated with dogs because cats are not usually retrieved. Ms. Biskup stated staff works diligently with owners as to flexible payment arrangements so that the pets may be picked up.

In response to Myrna Wetzel, Chief Main and Ms. Biskup stated the pet statistics for next year may show a rise in light of the home foreclosures.

Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen requested comparables with the City and general information about active spay and neuter programs in other communities.

Mayor Mounce suggested staff look into making some immediate changes and consider grating in the front of the shelter, new windows for the cat room, obtaining a full-time kennel aide, providing a cover on the back of the shelter for outside housing, CDBG funding application, obtaining more cat cages, and removing a wall to provide additional space inside the shelter. She also commended PALS for its ongoing efforts and dedication.

Sue Pixler spoke in support of making improvements associated with the animal shelter facility. She specifically discussed the origins and codification of the Hayden Bill, the lack of funding attached to the bill, requirements that do not carry costs, conditions at the shelter, staffing needs, euthanasia rates, economics, theory of reducing intake to reduce euthanasia, distinctions between statistics for cats and dogs, specific concerns with cats, staff training, requirements regarding logs, operating hours during normal business hours, redemption and adoption efforts, licensing, providing targeted subsidized programs for spay and neuter purposes, adequate staffing and training, and the need for a neutral third party audit of shelter operations and compliance efforts.

Linda Hansen spoke in support of making improvements associated with the animal shelter facility. She specifically discussed involvement by PALS, the need for funding improvements at the shelter, full-time clerical support to keep the shelter open during the hours of operation, concerns regarding inhumane conditions and overcrowding, redevelopment funding application, spaying and neutering programs, and assistance from non-profit organizations willing to work with the City regarding the same.

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Kelly Hicks, President of PALS, spoke in support of making improvements associated with the animal shelter facility. She discussed the association's willingness to work with the City to address concerns at the shelter, including but not limited to, overcrowding.

Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen asked Sue Pixler for a copy of her statement, which Ms. Pixler stated she would supply.

In response to Council Member Hitchcock, Ms. Biskup stated that, while staff attempts to be at the shelter for an entire eight-hour period every day, the shelter may be closed for up to an hour to an hour and a half each day while staff is on a call or cleaning. She stated the hours for adoptions are 11 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the shelter is also open on Saturdays.

C. COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

D. ADJOURNMENT

No action was taken by the City Council. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 a.m.

ATTEST:

Randi Johl
City Clerk