



## King County

### Metropolitan King County Council

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[www.metrokc.gov/council](http://www.metrokc.gov/council)

March 24, 2008

Dear Concerned Citizens:

Thank you for your letter of March 20, 2008. The King County Council is committed to improving the humane care of animals in the custody of King County Animal Care and Control (KCACC).

Our goal is to find homes for all healthy or treatable animals. Our values for a successful animal care program include:

- Robust partnerships with volunteers, fosters, rescue groups and stakeholders,
- Comprehensive adoption and pet retention programs,
- Aggressive community outreach, marketing and public relations,
- Access to medical care, preventative vaccinations, socialization and behavioral modification programs,
- Provision of low-cost, high volume spay/neuter services,
- Compassionate shelter leadership and management, and
- Active participation in a feral cat trap/neuter/release and return program.

With these values in mind, we retained Mr. Nathan Winograd to provide an expert consultant review of current shelter operations and, like you, we were very distressed to hear his direct observations of current conditions. The findings in his final written report, which is being released today, are in many respects consistent with those made by your own KCACC Citizens Advisory Committee and with other reports we have received.

We have asked to meet as soon as possible with the County Executive so that we can move forward with the many urgent reforms that have been identified in these reports.

You asked that the Council appoint a receiver to supervise animal care at our shelters. We have been advised that this proposal would raise legal concerns under the separation of powers established by the King County Charter, since the operation of the county's shelters is an executive branch function. Section 220.50 of the charter requires that the Council and individual members "shall not interfere in the administration and shall not issue orders to any officer, agent or employee, of any other branch of the county government." A receiver appointed by the Council to supervise shelter care necessarily would be issuing orders to executive branch employees.

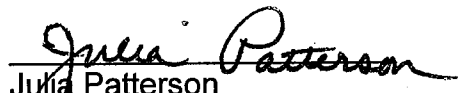
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However, this does not preclude the Council from considering the option we have publicly discussed of discontinuing the provision of animal sheltering services so as to allow for more humane care of animals in King County.


You also asked for an immediate investigation by qualified law enforcement of the conditions at KCACC. This is not something that the Council, as the legislative branch of the County, has the authority to command. We have been advised that the appropriate step is for those who believe they have information relevant to such an inquiry to contact the local law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction, which in this case would be the police departments of Kent or Bellevue. As a legislative body, our focus must be on solving the management and leadership issues identified in these reports.

We look forward to your active participation at our Council Town Hall meeting at the Highline Performing Arts Center in Burien on April 14, where we will hear important input from citizens and staff and examine our options for the urgent decisions we must soon make to ensure the humane care of animals in County custody.

Sincerely,

  
Julia Patterson  
Chair, King County Council  
District 5

  
Dow Constantine  
King County Councilmember  
District 8

  
Jane Hague  
King County Councilmember  
District 6

cc: King County Councilmember Bob Ferguson  
King County Councilmember Larry Gossett  
King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert  
King County Councilmember Larry Phillips  
King County Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer  
King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn  
King County Executive Ron Sims