



May 15, 2009

The Honorable Don Knabe, Chairman,
and Members of the Board of Supervisors
Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chairman Knabe and Members of the Board,

By way of introduction, our agency was one of the plaintiffs in the December 2007 lawsuit against Los Angeles County and its Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) for illegal and inhumane treatment of animals at its six facilities. You are aware that a Stipulated Order was entered in settlement on this case on October 20, 2008.

Since the Order went into effect, we have investigated numerous complaints about continued illegal and inhumane treatment of animals. One of the complaints involved a two-year-old poodle mix. Despite showing symptoms of illness, she was never treated and found dead in her kennel on March 1, 2009, over two weeks after she was impounded. These facts are remarkably similar to those of the dog posthumously named "Zephyr" for which the Board of Supervisors held hearings in February, 2008. In that case, a ten-month-old puppy named Zephyr died while in the custody of DACC. A subsequent necropsy revealed the cause of death to be pneumonia, with marked emaciation ("starvation"). Administration of the antibiotics does not appear in the original Shelter Management Software records. Staff did not respond to her failure to eat. The dog died in her filthy kennel, without intervention by DACC staff, and without treatment or release from her suffering. The only difference between the prior case that occurred before the lawsuit was filed and the case of the above poodle-mix is that DACC does not have a rescuer to blame for their own failure, as the Department tried to do in the former case.

Another complaint involved five Persian cats. None of the cats were vaccinated, nor were they provided veterinary care on impound. Because of filthy conditions, one of the cats contracted Panleukopenia and died a week later, another died thereafter, and an additional cat died after adoption. The cats were finally given an examination and treatment, but not until a week after they were impounded.

A further complaint involved a litter of highly adoptable Pug puppies killed by DACC despite DACC's awareness that there was a rescue group willing and able to save them,

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a clear violation of state law. These do not appear to be isolated incidents. Complaints also include a stray dog not scanned for microchip on intake in violation of state law, only to be scanned when adopted and forced to be held an additional ten days, putting further pressure on available kennel space. We have a complaint involving a cat classified as "male" with "gastro" issues only to be found to be a female who was pregnant after she gave birth to a litter of kittens in the shelter. We have other cases of animals receiving no veterinary care, adequate food, or clean water; of dogs fighting in the shelter and left with torn ears and gouged eyes; of killing animals who were not irremediably suffering before the statutory holding period; and of keeping animals in filthy conditions.

We have subsequently demanded that DACC abate those conditions pursuant to the Stipulated Order. Because of DACC's unsatisfactory responses, we have also sought mediation with DACC of some of those complaints. Unfortunately, there is ample evidence that conditions continue to fall short of legal minimums, the requirements of the Order, and the mandates of compassion and decency.

Despite our efforts to work with DACC, we are left with no choice but to conclude that DACC is not making substantial progress and/or good faith attempts to hold its staff accountable to either state law or the Stipulated Order.

We are, therefore, demanding that the Board of Supervisors take immediate steps to ensure that DACC ceases violating the law. Otherwise, you will leave us no choice but to ask the Court to hold the defendants in contempt of the Stipulated Order.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nathan J. Winograd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nathan J. Winograd