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EDWARD A. BOKS
General Manager

Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners

Edward A. Boks, General Manager

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: April 14, 2008

PREPARED BY: Linda Barth

REPORT DATE: April 1, 2008

TITLE: Assistant General
Manager

SUBJECT: Solicitation of Qualified Dog and Cat Registries and Associations for
Approval of Exemption from Spay or Neuter Requirements

BOARD ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Board:

1. Approve the proposed solicitation of dog and cat registries and associations which would seek to qualify for approval of the Board as a step in the process of exempting certain dogs and cats from the spay or neuter requirements of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 53.15.2, subject to approval of the City Attorney as to form;
 2. Approve the minimum dog and cat registry or association requirements and application process as described in the body of the report; and,
 3. Direct staff to notify interested parties and generally advertise the solicitation of qualified registries and associations, subsequent to review and approval of the City Attorney.
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SUMMARY:

Landmark legislation designed to reduce pet overpopulation was approved by the Los Angeles City Council and signed by the Mayor in February 2008. The requirement that all dogs and cats in the City of Los Angeles be spayed or neutered after four months of age, unless certain specific exemptions apply or a breeder's permit is issued, became effective on April 8, 2008. Enforcement of the ordinance, which amended LAMC 53.15.2 (generally labeled the "Breeder's Ordinance"), is deferred until October 1, 2008,

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to give Angelinos time to comply and the Department time to institute required administrative steps. These include preparation of revised Breeder's Permit applications and processes, development of a method to process cat applications for those owners whose cats qualify for exemption, and supporting efforts of the City-wide Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee that is to be convened soon.

In specifying some of the exemption categories for both dogs and cats, the new ordinance delegates to the Board the authority to recognize the dog and cat registries and associations that provide certification for two of the six exemption categories:

The dog (or cat) is a breed approved by and is registered with a registry or association recognized by the Department through its Commission, whose program and practices are consistent with the humane treatment of animals, and the dog is actively used to show or compete and has competed in at least one legitimate show or sporting competition hosted by, or under the approval of the recognized registry or association within the last two years, or is being trained or groomed to show or compete and is too young to have yet competed.

The dog (or in some limited cases cat) has earned, or if under three years old, is actively being trained and in the process of earning, an agility, carting, herding, protection, rally, hunting, working, or other title from a registry or association approved by the Department through its Commission.

The Department would require that persons applying for one of these two exemptions from the spay/neuter requirements provide an original letter or certificate from the approved registry or association.

In order to provide information to the Board about the various registries and associations that desire to be approved, or recognized, to issue such certification to dog or cat owners, staff recommends a solicitation process by which these registries and associations apply for recognition. The application process will include affirmation that certain minimum requirements can be met, the provision of key information about the registry or association, and an explanation of the procedure that a dog or cat owner would follow and criteria to meet for the registry or association to issue a certification. Those organizations which meet the minimum requirements below and appear to have valid backgrounds would be submitted to the Board with evaluation comments, for the Board's consideration. This process will produce an initial list of recognized registries and associations, but the application process will remain open on a continuous basis.

The minimum requirements for a registry or association to be recognized for the purpose of spay/neuter exemption certifications are:

- Established for three or more years.

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- Maintains and enforces a code of ethics for breeding that includes:
 - Knowledge of the breed standard, the basic principles of genetics, and the pedigrees of prospective stud and matron;
 - Restricting the breeding of animals that are not physically or temperamentally sound or have defects and life-threatening health problems that commonly threaten the breed;
 - Requiring that animals are thoroughly examined by a veterinarian before breeding to determine that they are healthy, mature, and suitable for this purpose;
 - Denying, suspending, or revoking membership of any breeder in violation of its code of ethics or who is proven to have been convicted of a crime against an animal.
- Under no circumstances allows, endorses, or engages in any activity that is determined to be intentionally harmful or detrimental to the health and/or safety of animals or humans.
- Participates in, sponsors, or organizes bona fide competitions or shows that make awards based on merit.
- Proposes a method for assessing and certifying dogs or cats in conformance with LAMC that can be verified.
- Will hold the City of Los Angeles harmless from any liability relative to certifications or failure to certify a dog or cat as exempt.

Depending on the number of registry and association applicants received periodically, and upon dog and cat owner requests, additions to the Recognized List may be brought for the Board's consideration quarterly or more frequently. Likewise, if new information comes to staff regarding a previously approved registry or association that has breached any of the requirements for recognition, and the registry or association is unable to correct the breach within 30 days after written notice by staff, that registry or association will be suspended pending reconsideration of the status at a subsequent Board meeting.

Other than if suspended or terminated as mentioned above, recognized registries or associations will remain in good standing for three years, at which time they may re-apply for recognition. Registries or associations not recognized at this first round of review will be allowed to re-apply at their discretion.

Subsequent to action by the Board and review of the City Attorney, staff will send solicitation of interest letters to known cat and dog registries and associations, and at minimum advertise the application process on the Internet and with the larger associations. This process, with its on-going character, is the most fair and impartial

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method of identifying and recognizing these registries and associations, who will have a key role in successful implementation of spay/neuter as a meaningful tool in the fight against pet overpopulation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to engaging in this process or establishing an application procedure for registries and associations except minor administrative costs in reviewing applications and performing some background verification. No application fee has been established for this activity. Fees for intact licenses that use the certifications provided by recognized registries and associations partially offset the minor administrative cost.

Approved:

Edward A. Boks, General Manager

BOARD ACTION:

_____ Passed	Disapproved _____
_____ Passed with noted modifications	Continued _____
_____ Tabled	New Date _____