



THE CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats

Pasadena Mandatory Spay Neuter Ordinance - Success!

October 7, 2013

by Joan Miller, CFA Legislative Information Liaison

Reason saved the day in Pasadena resulting in a positive outcome for everyone last night. Following lengthy testimony, Mayor Bill Bogaard decided not to call for a vote on the ordinance and instead expressed the council's consensus to give initiatives recently started or being developed by the Humane Society an opportunity to show results and then review and discuss the situation further in 6 months

The City Council listened intently to our testimony and obviously several had carefully read all the letters submitted. Mayor Bogaard mentioned and quoted from a few, including letters from the The California Federation of Dog Clubs and from Jan Dykema. The ordinance instigator, Council Member Steve Madison, actually was swayed by the end of the evening and suggested they withdraw the ordinance saying it had become apparent it would not achieve the primary goal he had hoped for.

Madison's original concern resulted from a case of a young boy mauled by a "pit-bull" dog. He wanted the Public Safety Committee to approve a dangerous dog ordinance for pit-bulls. When the committee discovered this kind of breed specific legislation (BSL) was against State law, the proposal to mandate that all dogs be altered by 4 months came about, with exemptions for show dogs and service dogs. They felt that spaying and neutering would prevent dangerous dogs from roaming the streets and also would cut down on the large numbers of pit-bull type dogs and Chihuahuas in the shelter. Then "and cats" was added because 70% of the animals killed in the Humane Society are cat/kittens and the ordinance became more directed toward reducing shelter intakes and euthanasia.

This proposal passed in the Public Safety Committee and language was copied from the Los Angeles County MSN ordinance, requiring altering of dogs before 4 months with exemptions for working dogs and show dogs. the Pasadena proposal included cats but left out any exemptions for cats except for health or age reasons. I believe it would have passed in the Council last night had it not been for the letters received and testimony, all of which raised the awareness of a responsive Council. AKC, CFA, CARPOC, CFODC and many dog fanciers submitted letters - they made a big impression.

I thank cat fanciers, Sarah Bixler and Peter Keys, for their testimony, in addition to mine, on cat issues. Many thanks to dog fanciers Florence, Anne, Lois and two or three others plus a Veterinary Assistant. They covered the dog issues from health matters including history of other communities with MSN laws leading to dog owners avoidance of veterinary care/rabies vaccination and problems with early age altering of puppies to dog bite and aggression data. It was stated that before humans raised "pit-bulls" to be aggressive there were other breeds irresponsibly bred that became dangerous. These people do not comply with MSN laws.

We presented facts showing that voluntary spay/neuter of owned cats is a huge success with a high percentage of owned cats already altered (88% to 94% in some parts of California). It is the unowned and "loosely owned" cat populations that remain intact (this percentage is less than 3% altered). Owners who have intact cats say their kittens are too young or they cannot afford the cost. There is a trend for cats to be kept indoors leading to a higher rate of s/n.. Fewer cats have a litter before spay now in jurisdictions that offer free or low cost spay/neuter. I spoke of innovative ways in which shelters are handling "community cats". It would be more productive to encourage people feeding doorstep cats to take the next step to spay/neuter these cats by offering assistance not punishment.

The Humane Society Vice President, Elizabeth Campo, was questioned about the shelter programs. She discussed their new door-to-door canvassing to increase dog licensing and provide educational material about shelter services and advantages for licensed dogs. They also are in the process of building a clinic for high volume/low cost spay/neuter. Humane Society President, Steve Mc Nall, talked about their efforts to alter the feral/community cats. Though they support MSN, especially for first time impounds with fines, they also expressed concerns about adding mandated s/n to their licensing canvassing as this may harm a currently well received program.

Following the hearing we talked with Ms. Campo and Mr. Mc Nall and found them to be professional and aligned with our mutual interest to help Pasadena's animals. They both plan to be at the National Council on Pet Population All Day Cat Research Program in conjunction with the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (SAWA) conference November 9-12, 2013 in Tempe, AZ. George Eigenhauser and I, as CFA representatives, will also be at this conference and we look forward to a continued dialog.

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