



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

January 19, 2011

The Honorable Bill Rosendahl
Councilman, 11th District Los Angeles City Council
West Los Angeles District Office
1645 Corinth Avenue, Room 201
West Los Angeles, California 90025

RE: Opposition to 5 Dog 5 Cat Ordinance CF 10-0982

Dear Councilman Rosendahl:

On January 13, 2011 the Board of Governor of the Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) voted unanimously to oppose the proposed Ordinance CF 10-0982, which would allow the number of dogs and cats in a household to be increased from three to five of each for a total of 10.

This ordinance was reviewed thoroughly by the PPCC Land Use Committee, and PPCC heard from numerous presenters that included: John Gregory, CD 11, Joaquin Macias, CD 11, Brenda Barnette, General Manager, Animal Services, Dr. Kathy Litochleb DVM (letter attached), Phyllis Dougherty, animal activist and Board Members and visiting public.

We understand the purpose of this proposed ordinance is to collect more license fees and to provide homes for animals that would otherwise be euthanized. Although your intent is admirable we believe the method for solving the problem is misguided, and we overwhelmingly passed the following motion:

Whereas, the Pacific Palisades Community Council's (PPCC) Mission, as stated in the Bylaws, is to protect and improve the quality of life in the Pacific Palisades,

Whereas, the proposed ordinance to increase the number of allowable pets per household to five dogs and five cats for a total of ten may increase a public nuisance and impair the quality of life in the Pacific Palisades,

Whereas, the PPCC agrees with the opinion of veterinarians and other animal experts, that the proposed ordinance may also have the unintended consequence of endangering the welfare of people and household pets.

Therefore, the PPCC opposes the proposed ordinance CF 10-0982.

The attached letter from Dr. Litochleb outlines many of our concerns about the potential danger to people and animals. (She also makes some good suggestions on how to increase animal registrations.)

Another major objection was that the ordinance lacks requirements for these pets to be rescue animals or to be spayed or neutered. The ordinance also has no limits on the number of animals under four months old and thus would favor breeders, rather than reduce the number of pets and/or help the rescue population.

An additional concern was that the ordinance would allow kennels (more than three dogs and/or cats) to move from commercial areas into high density residential areas and potentially house 10 adult pets and an unlimited number of pups and kittens adjacent to private homes. With the City's poor record of enforcing any of its ordinances, problems from such operations could seriously impact the quality of life in these neighborhoods.

It was further pointed out that currently cats are not licensed and only about 10% to 30% of all dogs are licensed. Consequently, there is little confidence that the ordinance will indeed create more than a nominal increase in the income for Animal Services but may potentially increase the cost for inspections and enforcement.

For all of these reasons, the Pacific Palisades Community Council respectfully urges you to oppose the ordinance to increase the allowable number of dogs and/or cats per household from three to five for a total of ten.

Sincerely,

Janet Turner, Chair
310-573-0382

CC: via e-mail
Alan Bell, Planning Department
LA City Councilmembers
Norman Kulla
Joaquin Macias
John Gregory
Brenda Barnette

Attachment: Letter from Kathy Litochleb, DVM



PACIFIC PALISADES VETERINARY CENTER

853 VIA DE LA PAZ
PACIFIC PALISADES, CA. 90272
310-573-7707 FAX- 310-454-7122

Dear Pacific Palisades Community Council:

1/03/2011

Thank you for calling my veterinary clinic to gather an opinion from myself and my colleagues regarding the new law extending the number of pets per household to five cats and five dogs allowing ten pets per household.

We oppose the new law for the following reasons:

- Increase in barking/noise
- depriving neighbors of peace and quiet
- Increase in fecal excrement in public areas
- Increase in cat litter/feces flushed into the oceans
- Threat to bird population from outdoor cats hunting (big problem) Cats are obligate carnivores and so they must eat meat taxing the environment.
- Overcrowding of parks with dogs
- Inability of the owners to provide proper care and nutrition for their pets due to expense (i.e.: 10 animals would cost \$1200 a year in flea control alone)
- Increase in zoonotic disease from overcrowding
- Increasing the numbers of dogs allows for a pack mentality making the dogs more difficult to control
- Since no square footage of the residences was addressed it would be possible for someone living in a 1200 square foot condo to have ten animals in this environment, this is a recipe for disaster
- An increase in humans bit by dogs and bit and scratched by cats causes increasing visits to the ER
- Due to the nature of felines, some cats do not do well in small areas with dogs and other cats forcing them to live miserable lives

There is no guarantee that people would adopt dogs that need homes, they may purchase pets from breeders or pet stores negating the original intent of this law. City could generate millions by implementing the following:

1) Mandatory micro chipping of all pets, dogs and cats, through the shelters, vets, pet store and breeders. Involve all veterinarians in mandatory registration/micro chipping of all pets brought to the clinic. Nota Bene: Only 10 to 20% of my patients have Rabies tags ...this is an empirical estimate. This indicates that 80% of the dogs are not registered. If this is that actual number the City is losing a huge chunk of change from derelict owners, these funds could be used to provide care for shelter animals. Since the City is not collecting on all dogs now, increasing the number may not be helpful. This would create a situation in which we would have more dogs and not necessarily adequate funds. We need to keep the numbers the same and collect from derelict owners.

2) Increase registration to \$35 per pet per year, including all cats
This would increase in revenue by a factor of 3.5. Far above the extra 800K currently proposed Fifteen dollar increase is a paltry amount and could easily be sustained by owners. Cats outnumber dogs in number so by registering cats the increase of revenue could be higher than the 3.5.

3) Force pet shops to pay a hefty tax on each dog and cat. Pet shops typically buy puppies and kittens for about \$400 and mark them up to \$1200 to \$2000 at sale. I think a percent tax of the final sale price would be appropriate. This money could be used for the shelters.

4) Regulate breeders: Implement property inspections, premise licenses and breeding license with a qualifying exam to ensure accountability. Currently anyone can breed dogs and cats resulting in horrific situations were animals are poorly kept and abused. Breeders operate under the radar in their backyards and avoid taxes and accountability. Animal care and breeding require knowledge and hard work and should be treated as such

5) All pets/puppies brought into California would need to register. Imported pets would require a microchip and registration with the City and State. Out of state breeders would need to show proof of a business license and of tax payment to their state. This would stifle illicit backyard breeder of the horrific kind, and favor the serious breeders.

Animals and pets need the protection of people. We should do everything possible to ensure their wellbeing and educate owners to provide the best possible environment for their pets. The government is looked to by its people to make the best possible decision with goodness and honorable intent. This is certainly not the case with a law promoting overcrowding, zoonosis and dubious care of our pets.

Sincerely,
Catalina Litochleb DVM
Pacific Palisades Veterinary Center