



Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>

Re: Opposition to agenda item #16-1357. Include this email into public record and everything pertaining to this issue

1 message

Andrew Westall <andrew.westall@lacity.org>
To: "Eric (Roderico) Villanueva" <eric.villanueva@lacity.org>
Cc: Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>, Justin Wesson <justin.wesson@lacity.org>

Fri, Apr 21, 2017 at 11:17 AM

Thanks!

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 21, 2017, at 11:05 AM, Eric (Roderico) Villanueva <eric.villanueva@lacity.org> wrote:

Done.

Eric Villanueva
Office of the City Clerk
200 N. Spring St. Rm. 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012
[213-978-1075](tel:213-978-1075)



On Fri, Apr 21, 2017 at 10:57 AM, Andrew Westall <andrew.westall@lacity.org> wrote:

Please place this on the file.

Thanks!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Councilmember Wesson** <councilmember.wesson@lacity.org>
Date: Fri, Apr 21, 2017 at 9:38 AM
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to agenda item #16-1357. Include this email into public record and everything pertaining to this issue
To: Andrew Westall <andrew.westall@lacity.org>, Justin Wesson <justin.wesson@lacity.org>

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From: **CDot** <Carolyn@thedohertys.com>
Date: Thu, Apr 20, 2017 at 8:35 PM
Subject: Opposition to agenda item #16-1357. Include this email into public record and everything pertaining to this issue
To: councilmember.wesson@lacity.org

April 20, 2017

Carolyn Doherty
Studio Animal Services

28230 San Martinez Grande Cyn Road

Castaic, CA 91384

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare,

OPPOSITION to agenda item #16-1357: Please include this letter into public record, and it is to be included in any hearing, studies, and or reports pertaining to this issue.

I am an animal trainer for the film, television, and advertising industry. Over the past 25 years I have worked for multiple companies who supply these animals and have had the opportunity to raise, care for, train, and work not only dogs and cats but many of the species being designated “exotic” in this proposed ban. I STRONGLY OPPOSE this motion as it is currently written, as it will have a huge negative fiscal impact on hundreds of businesses and wage earners in LA County by eliminating our industry, while its “benefits” are solely to placate extremist anti-animal groups such as PETA and alleviate the political pressure they put on the Council to bring such motions.

If the goal of the ban is to put a stop to unregistered and unmonitored “traveling zoos and circuses,” a goal I would definitely support, then the wording needs to be much more precise. As currently written it says it excludes all “legitimate filming purposes, research facilities, and legitimate conservation-related programs or presentations.” However, it does not define what makes any of these exceptions “legitimate.”

I am highly concerned that this vague language was chosen intentionally to increase the likelihood of the motion being passed, with a larger agenda of amending it in the future to define “legitimate” in a way that excludes our entire local industry. PETA has made no secret of their ultimate goal of prohibiting animals being used for entertainment of any kind, and during previous public discussions of this matter some councilmembers openly stated they support eventual complete removal of live animals from the film industry, suggesting they can just be created with CGI.

This motion claims to be coming from a goal of stopping inhumane practices with these animals, going so far as to state they currently “suffer from loneliness, malnutrition and the overwhelming stress of lengthy confinements during transport” and that “handlers have been repeatedly shown to use inhumane training techniques.” This is rhetoric fed directly from extremist organizations, based on misleading and manipulated propaganda pieces such as Blackfish. No, those of us who are dedicating our lives to loving and caring for these animals are not using inhumane techniques and causing our animals overwhelming stress; we are devoting 7 days/week to care for them, living our lives covered in fur and feathers because we’re constantly interacting with them, using various forms of positive reinforcement to capture their natural behaviors on cue such that we can ask for those behaviors while a camera rolls and they’ll happily do them. An overwhelmed, stressed, malnourished animal will not walk about a film set, tolerate the chaos of a shoot, take direction from its trainers and successfully offer the same behavior for multiple takes. The idea that these animals are horribly unhappy is simply wrong and ignorant. We are monitored by a multitude of agencies who can back up the assertion that we provide clean, comfortable environments for our animals and train them with the utmost of humane, positive techniques.

Following this letter is a list I put together of what I think are the pros and cons to this motion. I urge you to re-word it in such a way as to protect all the good of our industry while rightfully protecting us from what is bad.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Doherty

Carolyn@TheDohertys.com

In regards to Agenda Item #16-1357, LA Ban on Exotic Animal Use

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Pros to this motion, as currently written:

1. It would prohibit the use of wild and exotic animals for profit by individuals and businesses with no demonstrable training or expertise.
2. It would prohibit the use of wild and exotic animals for profit by individuals and businesses which are not being monitored and inspected by any of the locally and federally established QC organizations.
3. It would prohibit use of wild and exotic animals for profit by individuals and businesses which are not registered and permitted by the city.

However this Motion, as currently written, is very detrimental to the people and city of Los Angeles:

1. It makes no mention of the significant negative fiscal impact to the city of Los Angeles by banning hundreds of legitimate, permitted, monitored and provably humane animal projects which happen in our city annually, within the entertainment industry as well as for education and conservation.
2. It makes no mention of the projected amount of revenue the city will lose when legitimate and humane animal film, television, and commercial industry work, the majority of which happens here in Los Angeles, moves to locations outside Los Angeles in places without a similar ban.
3. Similarly, attempting to “replace animals with CGI” will result in vastly higher production expenses, as well as the export of jobs to locations outside Los Angeles (commercial CGI work is primarily outsourced to India and Canada).
4. It is ill-defined in establishing what is considered a “wild or exotic” animal, and makes no basis for such categorization
5. It is ill-defined in establishing what is a “legitimate filming purpose” and “legitimate conservation-related program or presentation.”
6. It includes only the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) as a monitoring organization which would grant an organization exemption from this ban, while animal companies who participate in legitimate filming purposes and conservation-related programs and presentations are not monitored by AZA, but instead are stringently inspected and monitored by the US Department of Agriculture, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Fish and Wildlife Service.
7. It fails to consider the already significant oversight of additional monitoring organizations such as American Humane Association (AHA) and similar organizations concurrent to legitimate filming projects.
8. It gives no support for the provably false assertions that the use of exotic animals “has taught our children that it is perfectly acceptable to treat wild and exotic animals as objects or toys.” Attendance at a wildlife educational presentation by any one of the several legitimate conservation organizations here in LA will demonstrate that the primary goal is to teach respect for wildlife and the idea of conservation. Professionally handled exotic animals receive the highest possible care and attention, with facilities being continually inspected and certified.

9. It mentions the “misuse of wild and exotic animals,” states they often “suffer from loneliness, malnutrition and the overwhelming stress of lengthy confinements,” and assert “handlers have been repeatedly shown to use inhumane training techniques,” yet provides no references. This language is completely false (and incendiary) with regards to professional animal handlers. These atrocities, though horrific-sounding, do not represent the conditions nor practices of the legitimate, permitted, and highly-monitored animal organizations that exist in Los Angeles.

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Office of Council President Wesson

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Andrew Westall
Assistant Chief Deputy
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www.herbwesson.com

