

ARLETA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL: COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

November 15, 2022

RE: **Council File 22-0943**

Dear Councilmembers:

We write to you to inform that the Arleta Neighborhood Council supports the motion from Councilmember Koretz to report on the needs and research opportunities to allow for the 7 city shelters to operate at full capacity with expanded hours. We also fully support and demand the establishment of an independent oversight committee of Animal Services operations.

We would like to amend the motion to include the following points of concern for the welfare of the animals and proposed solutions:

1. In the absence of adequate staffing please **reinstate volunteers at impacted Animal Services' animal shelters (and wherever they are needed) now** as it is inhumane to leave animals drinking from water bowls with algae buildup (among other problems) which takes days and not hours to take place.
2. Animal services suffers from a severe lack of creative outreach and allowance of community involvement. We should be an example to the world of how an animal shelter can provide 100% care for the animals it serves. We demand better outreach and adoption efforts, new thoughts, partnerships, and creative strategies.
3. Bureaucracy and inhumane in-house policies have led to the abuse and death of the animals they were entrusted to protect. Dogs have been found dead in kennels they have had to share with other dogs as they were attacked during the night. This is a brutal and painful death and they lay suffering for hours before staff have found them dead in the morning. Dogs, including small dogs, have been hosed down with high-powered hoses for no purpose other than cleaning the kennel and they got in the way. They have been strangled to death on choke collars. A kitten a few seasons ago was forgotten overnight in the vehicle and died from heat stroke. These occurrences of hideous cruelty are common in the shelter and to date not a single animal control officer—shelter staff member, or councilmember has faced criminal charges. We urge an independent oversight committee, led by the people, to review and refer cases to the city for prosecution.
4. Animal Control regularly deems adoptable animals as “rescue only” or slated for destruction due to lack of knowledge of animal behavior. These officers are NOT rehabilitative trainers and have no legitimate qualifications to determine such evaluations. Often, Animal Control uses this excuse to free up space while maintaining a “no-kill” front for the public. We demand that a dog slated for destruction be publicly announced on a website one week prior to the execution date with video evidence of the behavior and an appeals page for the public to intervene.
5. Animal Services outrageous policies include a limit of medical care at their facility, allowing for approximately \$200 or so per animal before determining that animal is too expensive to save and then sends it for destruction. These are sentient animals that deserve better. Often, they are someone’s pet who has gotten lost and hurt but who can be saved with proper medical care. We demand that Animal Services provide 24-hour emergency care for the animals that enter their shelters with a veterinarian on-site at all times including restoration of 24-hour intake and no limit to their medical care.

APPROVED

November 15, 2022

10 Yea 0 No 2 Absent 0 Abstain

6. The animal trust fund to which members of the public can donate for the care of animals contains shadow stipulations that allows the funds to be used for unrelated uses. We require this practice to cease and for the use of all funds to be made transparent to the public.
7. We understand that the shelter staff experiences emotional stress related to the care of animals and responding to the needs of the public—which can cause compassion fatigue. To allow for them to be better caretakers of the animals—we request more counseling services be proactively made available to the shelter staff.

In the testimonial period at a special meeting of the Personnel, Audits, and Animal Welfare Committee that took place on July 19, 2022, countless callers/volunteers have been bringing light to the issue at the animal shelters for years and one caller indicated that Committee Chair Koretz was informed of the issue back in the year 2020 and still the City of Los Angeles continued to fail at hiring more staff and/or providing more resources for Animal Services in the care of animals at the city's animal shelters.¹ Even an Animal Control Officer commented that staffing in Animal Services is in a dire situation and that more resources are needed for licensing, spay/neuter services, and animal related services.

Should DAS staff be unavailable then they should be given notice of why they were hired, otherwise, they need to vacate those positions to allow for other applicants who actually do want to work with animals and make the positive change to fill those positions.

Furthermore, we demand that Animal Services keep their locations clean and well-maintained since Animal Services' shelter locations are currently not clean or well-maintained as shown in the image containing an abandoned leash and trash everywhere with no ability to drop off animals.



Image: Parking lot entrance to our Los Angeles City East Valley Animal Shelter located at 14409 Vanowen St, Van Nuys, CA 91405 **Source:** Arleta Neighborhood Council **Date:** Sunday, October 8th, 2022, 12:00 AM.

The Arleta Neighborhood Council supports council motion 22-0943 to properly fund and provide more resources at all City of Los Angeles animal shelters.

¹ <https://lacity.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateId=105676>