



Animal Care Commission

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ACTION CALENDAR

June 4, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Animal Care Commission
Submitted by: Alan Shriro, Chairperson, Animal Care Commission
Subject: Fund the Spay/Neuter Your Pet Program from the General Fund in the Sum of \$50,000 Per Year

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution directing the City Manager to continue to fund the Spay/Neuter Your Pet program (SNYP) from the General Fund in the amount of \$50,000 per year.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Budget \$50,000 per year from the General Fund for the SNYP program.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Animal Care Shelter (BACS) currently receives \$30,000 per year from the City's General Fund to provide low-cost or free spay/neuter surgery for the pets of low income Berkeley residents. In actuality, this program costs around \$50,000 to run; the approximately \$20,000 difference is made up with funds from the BACS donations account. The Animal Care Commission strongly urges City Council to fund the entire SNYP program out of the General Fund in the amount of \$50,000 per year.

At its April 17, 2013 meeting, the Animal Care Commission took the following action:

M/S/C (Wagley/Raymond): Requesting that the City Council of Berkeley directs the City Manager to continue to fund the Spay Neuter Your Pet Program out of the general fund in the amount of \$50,000 per year.

Vote: Ayes - Avellar, Gutierrez, Raymond, Shriro, Wagley; Noes - None; Abstain - None; Absent - Dahlbacka, Elbasani, Sequoia.

BACKGROUND

A nonprofit group was formed in 2000 to raise funds for a low-cost or free spay/neuter program for residents of the City of Berkeley. The City agreed to help fund the program by contributing \$30,000 per year from the General Fund. The SNYP program works as follows: residents make a co-payment to the shelter for a SNYP voucher (\$15 for cats, \$25 for dogs), they present that voucher to the veterinary hospital where the surgery is to be performed, and the veterinary hospital then bills the City for the surgery. If a resident cannot afford even the co-pay, it is covered by the SNYP funds.

Two years after the program was started, the nonprofit dissolved, leaving the City to provide all funding for the program. By 2004, however, with veterinary costs continually on the rise, BACS was having to supplement the City's annual \$30,000 with funds from the BACS donations account in the amount of \$15,000 to \$25,000 yearly. This is still the case.

Since its inauguration, the SNYP program has offered low cost or free spay/neuter for animals of low income residents of Berkeley, and any residents who own pit bulls and/or chihuahuas—the two dog breeds most often seen in animal shelters in the Bay Area. Approximately 70 residents per month currently use this service and **BACS estimates that 8,000 animals have been sterilized through this program since its inception.**

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The cost of a spay/neuter surgery (\$50 to \$120) is minimal compared to the cost of sheltering an unwanted and abandoned animal (at a minimum \$195 for the first seven days, and in our low-kill shelter, where animals may be resident for an extended period of time, quite often more).

Since 2000, the SNYP program has worked to reduce uncontrolled dog and cat breeding in Berkeley, thus lowering the potential for unwanted puppies and kittens ending up in the animal shelter. BACS, the Berkeley East Bay Humane Society, and other local rescue groups recognize the importance of spay neuter programs and will not adopt out animals that have not been sterilized.

Unsterilized animals are more likely to suffer from certain infections and tumors of the reproductive organs. Neutering a male dog or cat can also reduce aggression and other undesirable traits.

For the past nine years, BACS has supplemented the \$30,000 they receive from the General Fund with funds from the BACS donations account, however BACS now needs to use the donation funds to help pay for exceptional veterinary costs, medical supplies for the new shelter's in-house clinic and to support the volunteer program.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None

CITY MANAGER

See City Manager companion report.

CONTACT PERSON

Kate O'Connor, Manager, Animal Care Services, (510) 981-6601

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

DIRECTING THE CITY MANGER TO CONTINUE TO FUND THE SPAY/NEUTER YOUR PET PROGRAM OUT OF THE GENERAL FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000 PER YEAR

WHEREAS, harm reduction and prevention is a core Berkeley value; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley's Spay/Neuter Your Pet program has worked since 2000 to reduce uncontrolled dog and cat breeding in Berkeley, thus reducing the potential for unwanted puppies and kittens ending up in the animal shelter; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley Animal Care Services and the Berkeley East Bay Humane Society and other Berkeley animal adoption groups recognize the importance of spay/neuter programs and will not adopt out animals until they have been spayed or neutered; and

WHEREAS, spaying or neutering your pet has additional health advantages for pets, such as preventing certain infections and tumors of the reproductive system; and

WHEREAS, the cost of the SNYP program (\$50 to \$120 per animal) is minimal compared to the cost of sheltering and possibly euthanizing an abandoned animal (\$195 or more); and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Animal Care Commission strongly urges the Berkeley City Council to continue to fund the SNYP program from the General Fund in the amount of \$50,000 per year.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is directed to continue to fund the Spay Neuter Your Pet program out of the General Fund in the amount of \$50,000 per year.

