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Clerk 10/09/2007

A MOTION accepting the King County animal care and control citizen's advisory committee's report on improving the humane care of animals in King County's shelters and requesting that the executive take immediate steps to determine the feasibility of the recommendations identified in the report, in addition to exploring the business decision of discontinuing the provision of animal sheltering services and declaring an urgent need for action.

WHEREAS, on May 29, 2007, the council adopted Ordinance 15801 to reduce rates of euthanasia, redefine the roles and responsibilities of the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee, and reduce access to animals by individuals convicted or charged with animal cruelty, and

WHEREAS, on May 29, 2007, the council passed Motion 12521 relating to the provision of services to animals and requesting that the executive transmit a report to include recommendations to improve the humane care of animals and develop a model animal services program, and

WHEREAS, Motion 12521 further requested that the executive work with the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee to develop the report, and

WHEREAS, the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee has completed a special report to the council and the executive, and

WHEREAS, the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee's special report states that King County's animal services program has deplorable shelters, does not offer sufficient programs to move animals out of the shelter or stem the flow of animals into the shelter and systemically fails to properly investigate

animal cruelty, and

WHEREAS, the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee's special report contains forty-seven recommendations to improve King County's humane care of animals and develop a model animal services program, and

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for action to address the deplorable conditions at King County animal shelters, and

WHEREAS, the feasibility of implementing the recommendations of the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee's special report is unknown;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The metropolitan King County council accepts the report of the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee recommending improvements for the humane care of animals and the development of a model animal services program. The executive is requested to urgently act on the report and work diligently to determine the feasibility of implementing the recommendations contained in the report as well as consider the business decision of discontinuing the provision of animal sheltering services. The executive should provide weekly progress reports to the council through March 31, 2008, regarding changes to the animal services program. Should the executive find the feasibility and benefits of continuing the provision of animal sheltering services a prudent business decision, the executive is requested to implement, at minimum, the following recommendations:

1. Develop a facilities plan for King County's animal shelters with identified renovations that are aligned with current best practices in animal sheltering and architecture;

2. Reorganize staff and evaluate appropriate staffing levels and training to address access to medical care, the coordination of volunteers, community and media outreach and improve the safety of employees, the humane care of animals and customer service;

3. Institute an intake exam for every animal, to be performed by clinic staff;

4. Review and implement cleaning protocols to reduce rates of disease and improve sanitation;

5. Cover open sewer drain in the Kent shelter;

6. Develop new performance measures that increase accountability for euthanasia decisions, record keeping, animal care and other activities;

7. Purchase new animal control transport enclosures for all vehicle chassis that are insulated and temperature controlled for the humane transport of animals;

8. Provide social housing and enrichment programs and protocols to improve socialization of animals and reduce behavior problems;

9. Increase the spay/neuter program and participate in spay/neuter awareness campaigns to reduce the flow of animals into the shelters;

10. Oversee discussions between the sheriff and prosecuting attorney's office to develop a plan to improve in animal cruelty investigations;

11. Revitalize the volunteer program to maximize community participation and care for animals in the shelters and expand community adoption events;

12. Develop a media plan to maximize community exposure to information about animals available for adoption and resource needs; and

13. Revise shelter hours to be open additional evenings and weekends when the public is more likely to visit the shelters; and

B. The metropolitan King County council reasserts its policy directive for the executive to implement a "no-kill" type animal services program that reflects King County's prosperity, compassion, and generosity. A "no-kill" type animal services program would save all healthy and treatable cats and dogs and euthanize only those cats and dogs with severe health problems that preclude a reasonable quality of life or temperament problems that pose a threat to public safety. A "no-kill" type animal services program would permanently place animals into homes within its community and have a euthanasia rate of less than fifteen percent, and potentially

as low as ten percent. This program would require an aggressive and innovative approach to achieve "no-kill" standards and draw upon the available resources in King County and reflect community values. This program should pursue grants, donations and partnerships to accomplish its objectives and look to the model jurisdictions identified in the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee's special report as well as local programs such as the

Humane Society for Seattle/King County and the Seattle Animal Shelter for information on how to meet these objectives.