

Council Meeting of
May 15, 2007

Honorable Mayor and Members
Of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Feral Cats

Expenditure: No Funding Required

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Development Director and the Torrance Environmental Quality Commission recommend the formation of a Charter Club for feral cat feeders and the creation of an Ordinance banning the feeding of feral cats on city property except at certain locations and under specific conditions.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

In February 2007, the Environmental Quality Commission began a three-month discussion of the issues surrounding the feeding of feral cats. The first meeting examined the problems from the City's point of view, as well as the problems identified by those involved in the feeding of feral cats. The second meeting identified potential solutions, and at the third meeting, a conceptual recommendation was presented and approved based on the input from the previous meetings.

From the City's point of view, the major issue was that there was no method to control the feeding of the ferals and the maintenance issues that arose from the feeding. While there had been an agreement in place at one time, the signatories were no longer involved and many of the agreed upon conditions were no longer being enforced, nor was there any mechanism in place to allow enforcement.

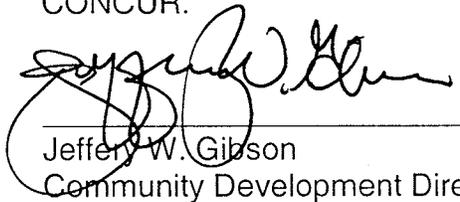
The feral cat feeders felt that they could address the issues brought forth by the City, and over the course of the meetings, actions were taken to mitigate the flea infestation. In addition, many concerns were brought forth by the feral cat advocates, including the need for spay/neuter programs, trap, neuter and return (TNR) programs, concerns about animal dumping, and education and outreach.

Based on the information gathered during the course of the first two meetings, staff felt that the best solution was one that would provide the City with a measure of control over the activities conducted on City property, as well as providing the feral cat advocates with a formal structure that would allow them to implement not only appropriate guidelines for the feeding of feral cats, but also promote additional programs that would benefit the animals. **It was clear that there were expectations from the feral cat advocates which were unmet by our Animal Control program, and would not be able to be met under the constraints of the current staffing levels and demands for service. To that end, the Charter Club would allow for a formal, recognized organization that could partner with Animal Control and the City to help create and advocate for programs that would ultimately answer some of the concerns brought forward at the meetings.**

The second part of the recommendation is an Ordinance that would specify locations and conditions under which feeding of feral cats would be allowed on City property. **This Ordinance would address only City property and would allow enforcement against unauthorized feeding, particularly at locations such as the Madrona Marsh, where feeding of ferals interferes with the indigenous wildlife.**

The recommendation being brought before Your Honorable Body this evening is conceptual in nature. With your concurrence, staff will begin working with the feral cat advocates to form a Charter Club and, after the club guidelines have been established, an Ordinance will be formulated that will regulate the feeding of ferals on public property. The Ordinance will then be brought back to the TEQECC for review and on to Your Honorable Body for adoption.

CONCUR:



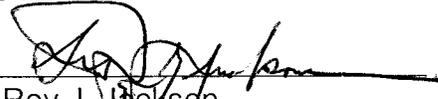
 Jeffrey W. Gibson
 Community Development Director

Respectfully Submitted,



 Linda Cessna
 Deputy Community Development Director

NOTED:



 LeRoy J. Jackson
 City Manager

Attachments:

- A. TEQECC Minutes from 2-07, 3-07 and 4-07
- B. TEQECC Items from 2-07, 3-07 and 4-07
- C. TEQECC Attachments from 2-07, 3-07 and 4-07 (Limited Distribution)

EXCERPT OF MINUTES

√ Minutes Approved
 Minutes Subject to Approval

February 1, 2007

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
 THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
 ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:05 p.m. on Thursday, February 1, 2007 in the West Annex Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Chim, Decker, Griffiths, Reilly, Watson, and Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: Commissioner Minter.

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna, Development Review and Environmental Manager Lodan, and Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to grant Commissioner Minter an excused absence for this meeting. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson McCabe so ordered.

8. ANIMAL MATTERS

8A. DISCUSSION OF FERAL CAT ISSUES

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna reported that this item was referred to the Commission by City Council in December 2006, noting that it would take a minimum of three meetings to hear the issues and formulate a recommendation. She stated that the goal of this initial meeting was to identify the issues that need to be addressed and to understand why the City felt it needed to move in the direction of considering passing an ordinance to ban the feeding of feral cats. She advised that staff would provide potential resolutions to address these issues at the March 1, 2007 Commission meeting, with recommendations for the Commission to consider to be presented at the April or May 2007 Commission meeting. She noted that issues surrounding a potential ban on the feeding of all feral animals might need to be considered.

Park Services Manager Wilson discussed unhealthy conditions for employees at Wilson Park since 1992 that include fleas and feces. He stated that guidelines outlined in an agreement, crafted in 1999 between the City of Torrance Parks and Recreation Department and Concerned Caregivers Regarding the Feral Cats at Wilson Park, were not being followed by the current feeders. He noted that last summer the maintenance building had to be sprayed for fleas every three days and that he had to

reassign employees to other parks. He stated that he was hopeful that a solution could be found for the employees as well as the cats.

He provided clarification that to date there have not been any Workers' Compensation claims, that approximately three employees have been affected, that there are 40 to 70 feral cats at Wilson Park, and that the organization Actors and Others for Animals helped to craft the 1999 agreement.

Responding to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Park Services Manager Wilson stated that the agreement was made in 1999 because the situation at Wilson Park had become unmanageable and intolerable. He stated that the problems have resurfaced possibly due to lack of resources, training, or failure to adhere to established guidelines. He noted that this is an international issue, and that if there was an organized group working cohesively the situation could be better controlled.

In response to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, Park Services Manager Wilson stated that there has also been vandalism at the maintenance building.

Animal Control Supervisor Brinkerhoff reported that his office has received complaints from residents, Torrance Unified School District, and businesses near Wilson Park, including a claim that damage was done to a car engine. He stated that there are also problems with littering, that there has been an increase of animals killed on nearby roads, that the feeding attracts skunks and other wildlife, and that it promotes dumping of animals. He stated that there are no licensing requirements for cats and pointed out other areas in the City that have feral cat colonies that include Torrance Park, De Portola Park, the 1700 block of Del Amo Boulevard, and the Madrona Marsh Preserve.

Commissioner Reilly requested that Supervisor Brinkerhoff provide statistics on the volume and location of dead animals killed on the roads near areas where there are cat colonies.

Risk Manager Sellers discussed liability concerns for the City, noting that as landowners the City can be held responsible for the condition of its property. He stated that there was a possibility that the City could be sued by neighbors and would have to pay legal fees and damages over the condition of their property as a result of the condition of the City's property. He provided clarification that if an employee becomes sick or injured they would have a Workers' Compensation claim that the City would need to honor.

At 8:16 p.m., Deputy Director Cessna welcomed public input.

Margaret O'Regan, Sara Drive, expressed concern that the cats at Wilson Park would be left to starve to death and stated that the City needs to do something about people who drop off cats and other animals at the park.

Bill Dyer, Howland Canal, Venice, from In Defense of Animals, discussed the success of the Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) program at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center. He suggested that City officials and caregivers work together to address concerns and to penalize people for illegally dumping cats. He stated that the banning of feeding feral cat would only increase their population and that it is better to have managed control colonies.

Christi Metropole, Executive Director of Stray Cat Alliance, Los Angeles, stated that there would be an increase of cats if the City banned feeding and that compassion cannot be legislated. She recommended that the City adopt TNR, implemented with an organized program, as an official policy.

Ed Boks, General Manager of Los Angeles Animal Services, Los Angeles, discussed his experience with feral cats and the development of the FELIX program. He suggested that there has been a mismanaged TNR program at Wilson Park and, with proper management, there would be amazing results. He offered his assistance and urged the City not to make criminals out of the people who can help them.

Donna Baker, president of Feral Cat Caretakers Coalition, Los Angeles, stated that her organization is presently conducting feral cat caretaking workshops at city and County shelters and has published a booklet to guide feral cat caretakers.

At Commissioner Reilly's request, Ms. Baker described behavior of feral cats and related how she got involved with their caretaking.

Mary Zeitler, Calle de Andalucia, President of TLC Cat Adoptions Rescue and Adoption, described her experiences with trapping feral cats for the last 18 years. She stated that in 2006 her organization trapped, neutered, and returned over 500 cats, mainly in Torrance, and that residential developments that have been built near Wilson Park have forced cats into the park. She explained why feeding stations at Wilson Park had to be moved due to illegal trapping, how ears of neutered cats are clipped, and noted that dogs and other animals are also flea carriers.

In response to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, Ms. Zeitler stated that she feeds feral cats at nine locations and estimated that there are thousands of feral cats in the City.

Jeanne Young, West Carson Street, provided background on feral cats at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center and efforts to produce the managed colony that exists there today. She offered suggestions for flea, feces, and odor control, offered her assistance, and stated that everyone needs to work together to find a solution.

Jackie Dehavan (no speaker card), Animal Alliance, commended the concordance of attitudes this evening. She stated that the ground needs to be treated for fleas and questioned the validity of the purported damage to a car engine.

Susan Taylor, Executive Director of Actors and Others for Animals, North Hollywood, stated that TNR works and needs to be implemented and recommended that the City pass a spay/neuter ordinance.

Judy Carnes, San Pedro, stated that she takes care of two managed colonies.

Mark Dodge, Best Friends Catnippers, Woodland Hills, stated that managed a TNR program will work, requires enormous volunteer efforts, and encouraged a City/private partnership.

Timothy Robinson, Los Angeles, challenged Commissioners to participate in a feeding at the park to give this subject the true weight it deserves. He suggested

reasons why many men do not like cats, noted that cats keep the rodent population down, and urged that cats not be punished for problems that humans have caused.

Stacy Polk, Ardath Avenue, Pet Assistance Foundation, stated that she takes care of a colony in the City of Hawthorne and supports mandatory spay and neutering, the use of microchips, keeping cats indoors, and decriminalizing people who own more than four cats.

Liz Cava, Best Friends Catnippers, Woodland Hills, expressed support for managed TNR, commended volunteer caregivers, and discussed funding opportunities for spay and neuter surgeries.

David Young, Victor Street, stated that he takes care of several colonies in the City and that feeders should not be driven underground.

Codelle Perez, Harbor City, stated that she has been the main feeder at Wilson Park for 12 years and that her feeding areas are in the trees and behind fences. She stated that there was no reason for workers to be where the cats are, that there is not a flea problem, and that 99% of the cats have been fixed.

Jackie Sherman, Manhattan Beach, discussed her experience as caretaker of feral cats in the City of Manhattan Beach and noted that cats are instrumental in keeping the rodent population down.

Peter Dabbieri, Via el Chico, stated that the City should educate residents about their responsibilities as pet owners as well as implement spay/neuter laws, penalties for abandoning animals, and penalties for not picking up after their pets.

Sara Cozolino, Venice, stressed the importance of education and communication and shared information about Capstar for flea control.

Pat Figueroa (no speaker card), stated that it costs less to spay or neuter a cat than to euthanize one and that it is important to catch people who are dumping animals.

The Commission was in recess from 9:40 p.m. to 9:50 p.m.

Mary Catalano (no address given) commended volunteer caretakers for their hard work and stated that a solution is viable.

Ron Corcello, North Hollywood, offered an explanation how and why TNR works. He noted that the spay/neuter program in Santa Barbara has been so effective that there are no kittens available for adoption there.

Abe Levine, Avenida de Jose, suggested that they look for data and documentation about health problems due to exposure to feral cat colonies and to contact the Center for Disease Control for information.

Jeralynn, North Hollywood (no speaker card), stated that the situation would become worse for residents if the feeding of feral cats were banned.

Debra Corwin, Purrfect Partners, stated that she would support mandatory neuter/spay laws and the use of microchips and offered to provide flea control in the

form of liquid Program at Wilson Park. She distributed notebooks to each Commissioner on general information about feral cats.

John Constable, Bulova Street, discussed noise, health, and property damage issues in his neighborhood due to the feeding of crows, pigeons, and seagulls. He distributed copies of the July 19, 2006 "Identification and Assessment of Wildlife Damage: An Overview" from the Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management.

David Young, Victor Street, noted that Debra Corwin and Purrfect Partners donate the funding for many TNRs. He suggested that the City implement a voucher program for spaying and neutering, and stressed the importance of providing education in all languages.

Abe Levine, Avenida de Jose, stated that he was supportive of TNR.

Rosemary Bailey, Purrfect Partners, requested that the Commission consider all correspondence received from residents.

Deputy Director Cessna encouraged audience members to attend the March 1, 2007 meeting that she hopes will be in a larger room.

The following issues were identified and recorded at the meeting:

Unhealthful conditions for employees (fleas, feces)
Feeding guidelines not followed
Workers' compensation
No organized group of caregivers
Resident complaints
Business complaints
Littering
Attracts skunks and other wildlife
Roadkill
Promotes dumping of animals
Liability concerns for City
As landowners we can be held liable for conditions resulting from cats
Educate residents about their responsibilities as pet owners
Penalties for dropping off animals
Pooper scooper laws
Spay/neuter laws
Microchips

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EXCERPT OF MINUTES

Minutes Approved
 ~~Minutes Subject to Approval~~

March 1, 2007

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 1, 2007 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Chim, Decker, Griffiths, Minter, Reilly, and Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: Commissioner Watson.

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna and Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to grant Commissioner Watson an excused absence for this meeting. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson McCabe so ordered.

8. ANIMAL MATTERS

8A. DISCUSSION OF FERAL CAT ISSUES

Commissioner Minter stated that he has been advised by the City Attorney to remove himself from discussion on this item due to his position as Senior Business Manager for the Community Services Department. He left the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Commissioner Chim commended staff for preparing the agenda package for this meeting as well as the February 1, 2007 meeting. She stated that she was glad to see that the possible ordinance banning the feeding of feral cats was "off the table" and admitted that she was a feral cat caretaker during college.

Staff presented a 24-minute video presentation by Alley Cat Allies on Trap-Neuter-Return: A Humane Approach to Feral Cat Control. The video outlined steps for implementing a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program, steps to successful trapping, sterilization of cats and kittens, returning the cats, and relocation of a cat colony.

Deputy Director Cessna reported that at the February 1, 2007 Commission meeting staff and community members identified issues that needed to be addressed to understand why the City was considering passing an ordinance to ban the feeding of feral cats. She advised that the goal of tonight's meeting was to explore possible resolutions and solutions to the problems in order to formulate recommendations that address City and community concerns. She noted that the agenda material included

some ideas for potential solutions that were proposed by staff from input received at the February meeting. She reviewed the suggested proposals and noted that, based on input gathered this evening, staff would return on April 5, 2007 with a tentative plan that could be forwarded to City Council.

At 7:46 p.m., Chairperson McCabe welcomed public comments.

Margaret O'Regan, Sara Drive, stated that the City should take responsibility for maintaining its property, for long-term care of feral cats, identify that the primary cause of the problem is the dumping of cats, require mandatory microchipping, ban leaving unattended pet food outdoors, and oversee the health of City workers.

Mary Zeitler, Calle de Andalucia, TLC, suggested the possibility that rashes on City workers at Building 8 were caused by asbestos exposure and not from flea bites and volunteered to clean up the compound to determine if there is still a problem there.

Park Services Manager Wilson clarified that Building 8 has been determined to have no free asbestos and that the building would be undergoing a complete restoration to become a new maintenance shop.

Christi Metropole, Stray Cat Alliance, Los Angeles, provided information about Nylar insect growth regulator to control fleas as well as the proposed California Health Pets Act legislation. She noted that the majority of feral cats at Wilson Park have been spayed or neutered.

Donna Baker, Feral Cat Caretakers Coalition, discussed her organization's feral cat caretaking workshops, suggested creating a group of caretakers that could follow organized guidelines, discussed her success with TNR with her own feral cat colony, and recommended the use of a Four Paws flea control product.

Jeanne Young, West Carson Street, discussed the managed feral cat colony at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center, distributed information about Program and Capstar flea control products, and stated that she was supportive of most of staff's ideas for potential solutions with the exception of the idea to enclose an area in Wilson Park for the exclusive use of the feral cat colony.

Codelle Perez, South Normandie Avenue, Harbor City, stated that the Wilson Park cats are behind fences, are well contained, and that volunteers and not the City should be responsible for their care taking. She expressed concern that an individual was trapping cats and skunks and dumping them in North Torrance and Madrona Marsh.

Madrona Marsh Preserve Manager Drake stated that she did not want skunks or cats dumped at the Preserve because it upsets the natural balance of the habitat.

Lauren, Carson Street, Culver City, discussed her cat colony and the importance of care for life and recommended accessing Google Alert/Feral Cats for information.

Peter Dabbieri, Via el Chico, stated that there should not be a ban on feeding pets outdoors and that registering caretakers should be encouraged but not mandatory.

Debra Corwin, Purrfect Partners, distributed correspondence from Tairnie Bryant, Professor of Law at UCLA, and Lisa Pierson, DVM, and expressed concern that a Torrance Unified School District employee is trapping and dumping feral cats.

Animal Control Supervisor Brinkerhoff stated that the individual has been informed that any trapped wildlife should be taken to the Carson shelter.

Lisa, one of three eighth grade students from Parras Middle School, Redondo Beach, stated that they chose animal rescue and overpopulation as their topic for the Democracy in Action—The Power of One project and invited Commissioners to attend the presentations on April 4, 2007 at Parras Middle School, Redondo Beach.

Rebecca Chambliss, San Pedro, shared information about the February 25, 2007 Free Spay event in San Pedro where 123 cats were spayed or neutered. She noted that it costs less to spay/neuter than to round up and euthanize animals and that the City would benefit by implementing a low or no-cost spay/neuter program.

Ron Corcillo, North Hollywood, suggested the use of nematodes, diatomaceous earth, ants, and boric acid for flea control and indicated that outdoor pets that are not spayed or neutered are a bigger problem than pet food left outside.

Ha Adolfo (no speaker card), discussed her involvement with the Free Spay/Neuter event in the City of San Pedro and offered her assistance in helping the City organize a similar event.

Laurie Clark, Plaza del Amo, stated that there have been feral cats at Wilson Park for over 30 years, that there is not a major problem there, and that she hoped a solution could be found.

Brian Benoit, 242nd Place, stated that he adopted a Wilson Park kitten and urged them not to “put them down.”

David Young, Victor Street, stressed the importance of educating the public in all languages. He suggested offering incentives to management companies that make their apartment buildings “pet friendly.”

Chairperson McCabe requested that comments be offered on staff’s ideas for potential solutions and reduction of feral cats with a TNR program.

Mary Zeitler, Calle de Andalucia, stated that the number of feral cats at Wilson Park has gone down drastically in the last 15 years and that the majority have been spayed or neutered. She noted that there is not a major problem there, questioned why it has become such an issue now, and expressed concern about the individual who is trapping and dumping animals.

Animal Control Supervisor Brinkerhoff stated per Torrance Code that if an animal is found trespassing on private property it can be legally trapped and released within a half-mile radius or be legally euthanized at an animal shelter.

Park Services Manager Wilson clarified that recent interest is due to employee health and safety as well as the safety of the cats because of nearby condominium development, construction within the Park, and if the Plaza del Amo extension goes through. He stated that aerial photographs of the Park might determine a possible relocation area for the cats.

David Young, Victor Street, stated that numbers in four out of five of his feral cat colonies have been reduced with TNR.

Cordelle Perez, South Normandie Avenue, stated that the approximately 10 cats on the north side of the Park could be relocated to the south side.

Yvonne Slinger, Ocean Avenue, commended volunteer efforts, discussed limited hours at the City's Animal Control center and the Carson shelter, and commented that some City employees were disrespectful at the February Commission meeting.

The Commission was in recess from 9:04 p.m. to 9:16 p.m.

Laurie Clark, Plaza del Amo, related her understanding that the dumping of animals was not a high priority of the Torrance Police Department.

Donna Baker, Feral Cat Caretakers Coalition, stated that reduction of feral cat colonies is inherent in the actual outdoor lifestyle of the colony and that the life expectancy of a feral cat is six or seven years. She suggested that the focus should be on ongoing managed care and scheduled trapping rather than reduction of the population.

Jeanne Young, West Carson Street, discussed the attrition rate at Harbor/UCLA Medical campuses, noting that reduction in numbers is extremely slow.

Peter Dabbieri, Via el Chico, stated that an overall animal program should address penalties for dumping animals, enforcement of spay/neutering, adoption programs, making services available, education, and management programs.

Yullan, 182nd Place, Redondo Beach, suggested that the City advertise a list of adoption agencies in local newspapers.

Patrick Wren, Torrance Animal Control, clarified that their work hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily and until 8:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and that the Carson shelter is open 24 hours a day for impoundment of animals and emergencies. He noted that Torrance has two animal control officers and a supervisor.

Ron Corcillo, North Hollywood, proposed that the City implement a spay/neuter voucher program and advertise that dumping of animals is illegal.

David Young, Victor Street, suggested a voucher program and free spay/neuter days in the City.

Lauren, Culver City, discussed the importance of ongoing trapping, difficulty in determining if an animal is on private property or lured onto that property, offering incentives to management companies for making their buildings "pet friendly," and to position a spay/neuter van in front of City Hall.

Susie Park, Elgar Avenue, noted that pet stores do not allow adopted animals to be returned and that people should be encouraged to adopt from private organizations.

Geralyn Ruane, North Hollywood, stated that it should be the City's responsibility to take care of a problem that has been generated by its citizens.

Donna Baker, Feral Cat Caretakers Coalition, stated that it would be difficult to ever stop the dumping of animals and that the solution to the problem is long-term managed care and scheduled trapping.

Commissioner Griffiths initiated a brief discussion regarding the possibility of implementing a mandatory licensing or microchipping program for cats in the City.

Chairperson McCabe asked staff to research the cat licensing program in the City of Lomita.

Commissioner Decker recommended that the City allow the TNR program to continue, ensure that the cats are in a safe location, and provide backup for caretakers.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that at the April 5, 2007 meeting staff would present at least one recommended action to be forwarded to City Council.

Commissioner Chim stated that she would be absent from the April meeting and recommended, along with a TNR program, establishing a volunteer organization for feeding feral cats in the City. She further suggested that the City print brochures to educate the public about feral cats, offer free spay/neuter days, and publicize the ordinance against the dumping of animals.

Animal Control Supervisor Brinkerhoff provided clarification that there were signs posted at Wilson Park.

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EXCERPT OF MINUTES

Minutes Approved
 Minutes Subject to Approval

April 5, 2007

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
 THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
 ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:01 p.m. on Thursday, April 5, 2007 in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Decker, Griffiths, Reilly, Watson, and Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: Commissioner Chim.

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna and Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones.

It was noted that Commissioner Chim was previously granted an excused absence for this meeting.

7. ANIMAL MATTERS

7A. DISCUSSION OF FERAL CAT ISSUES

Deputy Director Cessna presented staff recommendations in the material of record that address concerns expressed by the City and by feral cat advocates. She stated that the first recommendation would be to establish a "feral cat club" through the Community Services Department that would provide training and information to the public as well as serve as a liaison between the City and feral cat feeders. The second recommendation is to adopt an ordinance that would regulate the feeding of feral cats on City property only. She noted that the "feral cat club" could consider the implementation of a spay/neuter and/or microchipping ordinance after the establishment of the first two recommendations. She stated that staff anticipated that the "feral cat club" would provide guidance and direction to anyone who wishes to feed feral cats within the City and not just on City property.

Responding to Commissioner Griffiths' inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that the Community Services Department would oversee the "feral cat club," noting that they already have a number of charter clubs such as the Dog Obedience Club.

In response to Commissioner Reilly's inquiry, she advised that the ordinance would allow for changes to be made to the designated feeding areas, as circumstances require, but that at this point there are no specifics. She explained that the ordinance may specify that feeding areas would be approved through the "feral cat club" and would

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

not necessarily be specified in the ordinance itself; rather, it would specify a way of determining and keeping track of feeding locations through the "feral cat club."

Responding to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna explained that the initial concept is that anyone who wishes to feed feral cats on City property would be registered through the "feral cat club" so that the City would know who is authorized to feed and on what City locations.

Commissioner Griffiths received clarification from staff that probably very little feeding occurs on City property as compared to on private property.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that staff was looking for consensus on a general conceptual plan from the Commission and City Council before writing an ordinance and charter.

When Chairperson McCabe stated that he would like to see a comprehensive education program included in the recommendation, Deputy Director Cessna responded that the educational component would come from the "feral cat club" itself.

At 7:37 p.m., Chairperson McCabe welcomed public input.

David Young, Victor Street, stated that he would support the recommendations and advised that Donna Baker, Feral Cat Caretakers Coalition, has recently received a grant to conduct a Trap, Neuter, Return program.

Laurie Clark, Plaza del Amo, stated that she was in favor of the recommendations and that she hoped the feral cat caretakers would be asked for input when the details of the program are being established.

Debra Corwin, Purrfect Partners, West Bulova Street, suggested that information about a low-cost spay and neuter program be promoted in the Torrance Seasons.

Deputy Director Cessna advised that, if approved by the Commission, the recommendations would go to City Council in mid-May 2007 for consideration. If approved, staff would work with Community Services to establish the "feral cat club" and the Legal Department to develop an ordinance.

When Commissioner Griffiths inquired about the problem of pet "dumping," Deputy Director Cessna stated that the club would come up with ideas and methods of dealing with this and other issues.

Commissioner Griffiths noted that the previous agreement with the Parks and Recreation Department did not work out and questioned why this one would. Deputy Director Cessna responded that there is a bigger understanding now of what the issues are in the community and that this would be an established, formalized, chartered group overseen by the City.

Codelle Perez, Harbor City, explained that the lead person who signed the previous agreement moved out of the City and that the feeders lost contact with the Parks and Recreation Department. She suggested that Animal Control officers distribute educational materials at schools, the Farmers' Market, and fairs.

Chairperson McCabe asked staff how the Commission would get feedback to make sure that all its collective wisdom and suggestions are implemented in the

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

program. He stated that he wanted to make sure that the general framework is consistent with priorities that the Commission has focused on the last two Commission meetings.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that the program would be the people who organize the "feral cat club," noting that it will be their decision how they want to move forward with issues and to serve as liaison with the City, the Parks, and Animal Control. She stated that club members have the expertise and passion and should determine what is in the charter and how it should be implemented.

Park Services Manager Wilson stated that the club would need to be granted a charter by the City and that the framework and guidelines would need to be in place before being approved.

Chairperson McCabe stated that he wanted the Commission's recommendation to City Council to be well thought out and to provide a framework for the program to succeed.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that the ordinance would definitely come back to the Commission for approval before going to City Council and that the charter could come back for review once it is put together. She advised that, following conceptual approval from City Council, staff would work with the club to iron out the details.

Mary Zeitler, Calle de Andalucia, stated that the cat caretakers have been doing most of the proposals and networking with each other for 18 years but do not know how to comment until the program is in writing.

David Young, Victor Street, received clarification that the charter group would work with a staff liaison from the Community Services Department.

Jeanne Young, West Carson Street, expressed concern about the wording of the ordinance and suggested that specific City locations be banned from feeding.

Deputy Director Cessna responded that there would be a specific ban at Madrona Marsh and that other areas would be included as designated through the club, noting that there would be an opportunity for flexibility.

Ron Corcillo, North Hollywood, suggested that the ordinance be written in a way that would provide a warning system to feral cat feeders.

When Codelle Perez, South Normandie Avenue, questioned how to stop the general public from feeding feral cats, Deputy Director Cessna stated that the ordinance would allow Animal Control to give a written warning before issuing a citation.

MOTION: At 8:20 p.m., Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Watson, moved to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Decker stated that it was important to educate the public that leaving pet food outside attracts skunks.

Commissioner Reilly stated that the Torrance Seasons and homeowners associations could be source of education and communication.

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

MOTION: Commissioner Decker moved to recommend that the following staff recommendations be forwarded to City Council for its approval:

1. Establish a "Feral Cat Club" through the Community Services Department, which would provide training and information to interested members of the public, as well as serve as a liaison between the City and the feral cat feeders. In addition, this group could become the sponsor of spay/neuter days and other educational outreach efforts within the community; and
2. Adopt an ordinance banning the feeding of feral cats on City property, except for certain, designated locations and requiring that any person feeding feral cats on City property be registered to do so through the "feral Cat Club." Protocols such as Trap, Neuter, Return and guidelines such as those presented by Alley Cat Allies should be included either within the ordinance or as a part of the registration process for feeders. The ordinance should allow for changes to be made to the designated feeding areas, as circumstances require.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Griffiths and passed by unanimous roll call vote approval (absent Commissioner Chim).

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TORRANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

February 1, 2007

To: Chairman McCabe and Members
of the Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

Subject: Feral Cats

In December of 2006, the City Council referred a proposed ordinance banning the feeding of feral animals in the City of Torrance to the Environmental Commission for discussion and public review. As a result, this evening we will begin a series of meetings identifying and discussing the issues behind this proposal, potential resolutions to the issues and finally, formulating a recommendation to forward to the Council for their consideration.

Tonight, we will focus on a brief history and identification of the issues involved both from the perspective of the City and of the community. At our March meeting, we will be taking input from staff and the community regarding ways in which the issues that were identified at tonight's meeting might be resolved or mitigated. We will then formulate potential recommendations for the commission to consider at either our April or May meeting.

Background and Analysis

There is currently a sizeable colony of feral cats at Wilson Park. This colony has been in existence for several years, and since 1999, there has been an agreement in place between the Community Services Department and the feral cat feeders, outlining the conditions under which the colony would be maintained and cared for. This agreement was a result of complaints from the community regarding potential health hazards caused by fleas, feces and vomit from the feral cats in the park, and the proximity of the colony causing these problems in an area frequented by children and families. The agreement was designed with the public's safety as a priority while considering humane treatment of the feral cats, with the goal of managing the feral cat colony and mitigating its negative impact on the community.

The Community Services Department has a copy of the agreement, with notations as to whether the conditions are being met or not, which is attached. Based on the observations of the Community Services Department, most of the conditions required of the feral cat feeders are not currently being met. Cats are being fed in area other than those designated by the City, the feeding areas are not being kept clean, flea control is not being provided, nor are vaccinations and neutering being provided for the cats. Probably the biggest impediment is the current lack of a responsible group of caregivers, as the City currently has no official contact persons.

Aside from the problems with the feeding agreement, the City has begun to believe that it faces considerable liability under the current circumstances. Not only have employees filed grievances against the City alleging that they are being forced to work under unsafe and unhygienic conditions due to their exposure to fleas, cat feces and urine from the feral colony, the City has also received correspondence from neighboring property owners, stating that they are having health and safety issues stemming from the feral colony and that they hold the City responsible for any damages that may arise as a result of the colony.

In addition to concerns regarding the feral colony at Wilson Park, there have been problems at the Madrona Marsh caused by cat feeders. Because the feeders at the Marsh placed ant poison around the food, several wild animals native to the marsh have been poisoned, and the feral cat population has had an adverse impact on the balance of the ecosystem at the Marsh.

With all these issues in mind, the City felt that the best method to insure the health and safety of its employees as well as to reduce the potential liability to the City was to introduce an ordinance that would prohibit the feeding of wild animals within the City.

We have received a great deal of correspondence from groups and individuals interested in the feeding of feral cats, which is attached. Correspondence includes information addressing methods of dealing with issues caused by the presence of cat colonies, proper establishment and care of feral colonies, potential issues that may arise if feeding is banned and some simply states that to ban feeding of feral cats would be cruel and inhumane.

At tonight's meeting we will be hearing from representatives of the City as well as community representatives on both sides of this issue, and will attempt to identify the major issues surrounding the keeping and feeding of feral cat colonies, as well as the issues surrounding a potential ban on feeding of feral animals.

Respectfully Submitted,



Linda Cessna
Deputy Community Development Director

Attachments:

(Limited Distribution)

1. Annotated copy of Feral Cat Feeding Agreement
2. Memo from Animal Control
3. Outline of City Issues
4. Letter From Cypress Land Co. regarding Hazards Caused by Feral Cat Colony
5. Correspondence and E-mail
6. Articles forwarded regarding Feral Cats
7. Materials from Alley Cat Allies

TORRANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

March 1, 2007

To: Chairman McCabe and Members
of the Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

Subject: Feral Cats

In February, the Commission heard from staff and members of the community regarding the care and feeding of feral cats. Our challenge will be to formulate recommendations that will address the concerns of the City as well as the concerns of the community.

To recap, the City was concerned that there is no specific group feeding cats, especially in Wilson Park, that will take responsibility for any problems that occur and ensure that the feeding is being done in accordance with the guidelines that had been previously set out. In addition, concerns were raised regarding potential liability and workers comp issues for employees working in the Wilson Park area arising over the presence of fleas, urine and feces from the cats.

Concerns brought up by the community included humane considerations should feeding be banned, leaving the cats to starve, as well as the potential for a proliferation of rats and mice should the cats no longer be able to keep their numbers in check.

Many speakers brought up Trap, Neuter and Return or Release programs (TNR), as well as spay/neuter ordinances, required microchipping, education and increased penalties for dumping of animals.

Some of the ideas for potential solutions include:

- A completely enclosed area in Wilson Park for the exclusive use of the feral cat colony
- The establishment of a "Feral Cat Club", similar to the "Dog Obedience Club", that would take responsibility for feeding of feral cats throughout the City as well as training of all feral cat feeders
- Establishment of a TNR program within the City
- Passage of a Spay/Neuter ordinance
- Requiring microchipping of all animals within the City
- Requiring registration and training for anyone who wishes to feed feral cats
- Responsible group (non-city sponsored) established to coordinate feral cat feeding throughout the city as well as training of all feral cat feeders

These are some of the ideas that have been presented; at this time we need to discuss the relative merits of each of them, and the potential for designing a program that would include some or all of these ideas, as well as additional ideas that may be brought forward at the March commission meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,



Linda Cessna
Deputy Community Development Director

Attachments:

1. TEQECC 2-1-07 Meeting Notes
2. Correspondence

TORRANCE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

April 5, 2007

To: Chairman McCabe and Members
of the Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

Subject: Feral Cats

In February and March, the Commission heard from staff and members of the community regarding the care and feeding of feral cats. At this time, staff has formulated recommendations for your consideration, that are intended to address both the concerns expressed by the City and those expressed by the feral cat advocates.

Recommendation 1:

Establish a "Feral Cat Club" through the Community Services Department, which would provide training and information to interested members of the public, as well as serve as a liaison between the City and the Feral Cat feeders. In addition, this group could become the sponsor of spay/neuter days and other educational outreach efforts within the community.

Recommendation 2:

Adopt an ordinance banning the feeding of feral cats on City property, except for certain, designated locations and requiring that any person feeding feral cats on City property be registered to do so through the "Feral Cat Club". Protocols such as Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) and guidelines such as those presented by Alley Cat Allies should be included either within the ordinance or as a part of the registration process for feeders. The ordinance should allow for changes to be made to the designated feeding areas, as circumstances require.

In addition to these recommendations, commission may also wish to consider the following:

- Spay/Neuter ordinance or educational program
- Microchipping ordinance or program

These could be included as part of the charter of the "Feral Cat Club" initially, and the need for a separate, formal ordinance requiring spay/neuter and/or microchipping assessed after the initial program has been operating for a period of time.

Respectfully Submitted,



Linda Cessna
Deputy Community Development Director

Attachments:

1. TEQECC 2-1-07 Meeting Notes
2. Correspondence