



Grand Jury
County of San Joaquin
Courthouse
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Stockton, California 95202
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SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

BY *Patricia Paulse*
DEPUTY

FINAL REPORT
CASE #0702 CITY OF STOCKTON ANIMAL CONTROL

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

The complaint alleges that the City of Stockton Animal Control does not provide proper care for the animals housed in their facility, the euthanasia policy is not being followed, injured and sick animals are not receiving medical treatment, staff is not being properly trained, rescue groups are charged a fee to take animals, public access to stray dogs needs to be reviewed and the new building is not being utilized.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

Interviewed Tom Ramirez, Supervisor, Animal Control.
Interviewed Allen Perry, Senior Animal Control Officer.
Interviewed Lori Doran, Animal Control Assistant.
Interviewed Stockton Police Lt. Blair Ullring, overseer of building project.
Two unannounced visits were conducted to the Animal Control facility.
Reviewed policies and procedures for:

- Euthanasia
- Cleaning and Maintenance Schedule
- Staff Training Policies
- Orientation Policies for Volunteers
- Staffing
- Handling Sick and Injured Animals
- Animal Adoption Fee Schedule
- Listing of construction repairs necessary

OBSERVATIONS:

An unannounced visit to the Animal Shelter was made on December 05, 2002 to observe the facility in operation. We were escorted through the shelter by Tom Ramirez and Allen Perry. Mr. Ramirez was interviewed with regard to the operation of the facility and the above listed complaints. It appeared that policies and procedures were being followed. However, there were problems with the construction of the new building with regard to the roof and other minor areas which created a safety issue and prevented its opening. The euthanasia policy was reviewed with Mr. Ramirez. However, we did not observe any animals being euthanized. It should be noted that many of the animals are being kept longer than the required time. If strays are found with identifications, an active effort is made to notify the owner.

The group did not observe any sick or injured animals during our visits. However, we were shown the area where these animals would be housed, away from the other animals.

The Animal Shelter currently has six Animal Control Assistants, of which, two are certified by the State of California to provide medical services to any injured or sick animals. They are also guided by local veterinarians via conference call when necessary. If the shelter receives an animal that has been hit by a vehicle and exhibits an open wound or obvious discomfort, is bleeding severely, appears to have a broken bone, distorted member, or a compound fracture, has a large, gaping wound or is in convulsions or experiencing severe shaking, it is taken to a veterinarian.

A second unannounced visit was made on December 26, 2002, and we observed that the new building was open, with the exception of the cattery, which has construction pending. However, it was reported that the roof still leaked and other repairs were in progress.

FINDINGS:

1. The San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (SJCCGJ) found that the "dead animal drop" (a fifty-five-gallon drum, which occasionally overflows) is located in the front area of the shelter, is not enclosed and is visible from the street.
2. On both visits, we found that cleaning was in progress and it appeared that the cleaning policy was being followed. The general appearance of the facility was clean and the animals had fresh food and water in their cages.
3. The fee charged to rescue groups to take animals from the shelter is consistent with policy and is imposed to recover a small portion of the cost of sheltering the animal. These fees are set by the City Council, in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors.
4. The public is not denied access to adoptable animals. By policy, quarantined, sick or injured animals are housed separately and are not available to the general public. Stray animals are kept separate for four days to allow time for owners to claim them and if they are not claimed, they are made available for adoption, if they pass a temperament test.
5. The new building was scheduled to open June 19, 2002. However, due to safety concerns and lack of staffing, this did not happen. The floors were not finished properly and were too smooth when wet, which made them very slippery and hazardous.
6. Four new positions were authorized to be filled for Animal Control Assistants. However, qualified persons could not be found for these positions until October 2002. These employees are currently receiving on-the-job basic training and are required to pass certification requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The SJCCGJ recommends the following:

1. That the "dead animal" drop-off container be enclosed to prevent view from the street.
2. That the construction of the cattery area be completed.
3. That the necessary repairs to the facility be completed in a timely manner.

RESPONSE REQUIRED:

Pursuant to Section 933.05 of the Penal Code:

The City of Stockton and Stockton Police Department shall report to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin Superior Court, in writing and within 90 days of publication of this report, with a response as follows:

As to each finding in the report a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The respondent agrees with the finding.
- b. The respondent disagrees with the finding, with an explanation of the reasons therefore.

As to each recommendation, a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary of the action taken.
- b. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be with a time frame for implementation.
- c. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation of the scope of the analysis and a time frame not to exceed (6) six months.
- d. The recommendation will not be implemented, with an explanation therefore.