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January 27, 2016

Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: CHANGES TO THE FREE AND DISCOUNT SPAY/NEUTER CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. APPROVE inclusion of rabbit sterilizations in the Free Spay/Neuter and Discounted Spay/Neuter Certificate Programs.
2. INCREASE the Free Spay/Neuter Certificate Program voucher from \$70 to \$125 for dogs and rabbits.
3. INCREASE the discount certificate from \$30 to \$50 for dogs and rabbits.

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting on July 28, 2015, the Board of Animal Services Commissioners considered an item recommending an increase in low income free spay/neuter vouchers from \$70 to \$125. Likewise there was a recommendation to include the sterilization of rabbits in the program. After a lengthy discussion, the Commission asked the Department to report back on the following:

- Separation of species (dog and cat sterilizations may require separate pricing);
- Increasing the value of the discount vouchers to encourage more participation;
- Increased payments for animals with pre-existing medical conditions such as crypt orchid, pregnancy, and uterine infections.

On August 11, 2015, the item was reconsidered by the Commission. After additional research, staff reported that the cost for altering cats is far less expensive than for dogs. As such, it is not

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necessary to increase the current \$70 allowance for cats. Conversely, dogs and rabbits require a higher voucher redemption as these surgeries have increased in cost and are currently beyond the \$70 threshold. The \$125 should cover the costs in most cases.

Similarly, the increase in free vouchers creates a need for increasing discount vouchers. While these vouchers are not intended for low income residents, it is the intent of the Department to encourage residents to spay/neuter their pets. As such, the amount of the discount should be slightly raised from \$30 to \$50 to encourage participation.

Animals with pre-existing medical conditions can present complicated, lengthy surgeries. Additionally, medication and post-op care are all areas in which there are associated costs. In an attempt to address these instances with shelter animals that are altered by contract veterinarians, the Department recommended to the Commission that an additional \$50 voucher be provided to those veterinarians who perform those surgeries. This recommendation was not adopted by the Commission as there are concerns with adequate documentation and verification of pre-existing conditions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total amount of funds available for animal sterilization for the Department varies year to year. Approximately \$1.1M is allocated to the Animal Sterilization Fund (ASF) as a fixed amount each year with an additional, variable sum added based on donations and licensing surcharges. In FY 14-15, a total of 3138 (\$219,660) free spay/neuter vouchers were redeemed; 1037 (\$72,590) for cats and 2101 (\$147,070) for dogs. Likewise in FY 14-15, a total of 2979 discount vouchers were redeemed for a total of \$89,370. Increasing the monetary value as described in this report would have resulted in a \$115,555 increase to the ASF for the same fiscal year.

Brenda F. Barnette

Brenda F. Barnette
General Manager

Attachments