

From: myjanation@verizon.net
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2021 2:34 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: New Vision for Animal Services Board of Supervisors Meeting May 18 2021



Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

Like everyone, 2020-2021 has been a 'seat of the pants' year, especially with Animal Services. Though many of the proposed changes in Animal Services are much needed and have my support; the focus on fostering, help for difficult animals and partnering with animal organizations for services, there are some items that are concerning, and I believe a disservice to the communities SBCAS serves.

The mission of Santa Barbara Animal Services as stated on their website:

'Provide services to the public to aid them in locating lost animals.'

'To manage unclaimed and homeless animals through medical and behavioral rehabilitation, foster care, adoption, or transfer to approved partners.'

'To have 90% of the County's dog population 90% vaccination for rabies.'

Stated on website:

Policy for found strays :

- Encourage finder to keep the stray in the finder's home (truthfully, I would not know how to take care of the Iguana found in a dumpster)
- Finder to advertise for the animal's owner on Facebook and lost pet websites
- Last resort, finder needs to make an appointment at the shelter to hand over animal to the shelter

This policy puts the finder of a stray animal responsible for the animal, and places them in a difficult position. The finder - someone who is concerned about an animal and trying to do the right thing – is to choose between being responsible, keep the animal and find the owner or a new owner, or leave the stray animal. It's not a solution, it just shifts the problem to someone else.

On owner surrender of healthy pets:

- Can't surrender a healthy pet
- Up to the owner to find a new home
- Call a behaviorist or trainer for problem animals
- For medical concerns talk to a vet
- If you are moving, take your animal with you, talk to landlord and insurance
- Encourages people to go to humane society or rescue group to surrender the animal
- Stated 'The shelter should be your last resort because we cannot guarantee adoption.'

People who surrender healthy animals are usually in crisis. It is not what they would choose to do, it's what they have to do. I have witnessed too many crying families at the shelter surrendering their pet, or a loved one surrendering a pet because the owner passed away, or an airman that is being deployed. These people most likely have tried to find another home for their pet, but often it's proved not to be a good solution when done in desperation.

County vaccination and spay/neuter clinics have been suspended for over a year. People are told to contact humane societies and Care4PAWS.

Local humane societies are not equipped for that volume, and a large area of the County is currently not served by a local humane society. In addition, most humane societies can refuse to accept any animal as they do not have a mandate to be an open admission facility like County facilities.

Lastly, the closing of the Lompoc Shelter. This shelter serves Lompoc, Vandenberg Village, Vandenberg Space Force Base, Santa Ynez Valley, Solvang and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. I agree that the kennels were a safety hazard to both humans and animals, and why, for the past six years CAPA has been offering to help raise funds to build new kennels, but without a commitment from the County, we couldn't proceed. In theory, the shelter was providing services while closed, but in reality it was a phone call to Santa Maria. The pet food pantry was unavailable, something many people relied on even prior to the pandemic. Fortunately, through the efforts of Care4PAWS there was food availability twice a week in Lompoc as well as spay and neuter clinics, and together with CAPA, free microchips. I do not know how sustainable this is over a period of time.

Though many of the SBCAS changes are for the better, SBCAS has shifted some of their core responsibilities. Here is my concern - once taken away, services are difficult to have reinstated. During the pandemic people adjusted and accommodated to the changes, but not become a permanent policy for the welfare of our animals, the people or for our communities.

My name is Jan Kays, a resident of Lompoc, a volunteer for Santa Barbara County Animal Services, and President of Companion Animal Placement Assistance, an organization formed in 1987 to solely support Lompoc Animal Services and the people of Lompoc.