



CITY OF JERSEY CITY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
201 CORNELISON AVENUE JERSEY CITY, NJ 07304
PHONE: 201-547-6800 ■ FAX: 201-547-6816

JERRAMIAH HEALY
MAYOR

HARRY MELENDEZ
DIRECTOR

August 5, 2009

Robert Byrne
City Clerk
City of Jersey City
280 Grove Street
Jersey City, New Jersey 07302

Dear Mr. Byrne:

I write in response to a request by the Municipal Council outlined in your memorandum dated June 23, 2009. The subject of the memorandum is Animal Control-Corrective Action.

The mission of the Jersey City Animal Control Program is to provide the citizens of Jersey City with effective and cost efficient animal control services by active enforcement of State and local laws, the humane sheltering and disposal of stray and unwanted animals, and the promotion of responsible pet ownership and animal welfare.

Our responsibilities include the enforcement of local and state animal control laws, the humane capture and treatment of unwanted animals, investigation of animal abuse, neglect, cruelty, and the provision of emergency transportation and care for injured animals found within the City of Jersey City. We also investigate animal bites, nuisance animals, unlicensed domestic pets and wildlife, and aggressive animals.

The Jersey City Animal Control Program is dedicated to protecting the health and safety of the public from animal borne disease - to protect property, the environment and the community from animal nuisances and hazards created by uncontrolled animals. The primary objective of animal control officers is to provide quality service to the residents of Jersey City. This is will be accomplished by:

1. Providing round-the-clock response to calls
2. Reducing the number of stray and homeless animals
3. Promoting responsible pet ownership
4. Promote "best practices" in animal control operations
5. Partnering with Liberty Humane Society in providing annual health and adoption events.

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Below are listed a series of initiatives we have or will implement at our Animal Control Division:

- Each animal control officer has received a copy of the policy which requires all animals captured by animal control to be impounded at the local shelter/pound operated by our contractual shelter the Liberty Humane Society. The only exceptions in this policy are for animals which the law requires to be released back into the wild.
- Establish a second shift to reduce overtime costs and respond to calls received after regular working hours. To further reduce overtime costs we will evaluate the second shift to determine if schedules can be altered to provide a regular shift during weekend hours.
- A new Daily Trip Sheet has been developed for the officer's use which will track the disposition of every call responded to by animal control.
- Animal control trucks will be equipped with a camera to photograph animals impounded at the local shelter/pound or delivered to animal hospitals.
- Animal control officers will be informed and encouraged to attend educational classes/seminars sponsored by the state and animal welfare organizations.
- New software is in place to provide better tracking and reporting of complaints received in the office.
- The Jersey City Health and Human Services Director has established an Animal Welfare & Population Control Committee in cooperation with our contractual shelter, Liberty Humane Society. This committee shall also be a resource providing advice and recommendations on "best practices" to the Jersey City Animal Control Program.
- Animal Control will work with the Animal Welfare & Population Control sub-committee on the Cat Colony Management at LHS by providing information to residents and making referrals to LHS.
- Future complaints or issues between our contractual shelter, Liberty Humane Society and Jersey City Animal Control will be addressed to the Health and Human Services Director who will be responsible for following up and resolving them in consultation with Liberty Humane Society.
- An employee from another department has been transferred to the Animal Control Office. This person is to provide technical, administrative support and constituent service. The new employee will report to the Director of Health and Human services. This employee will be learning all aspects of this Division.

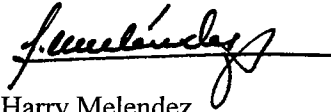
Robert Byrne
August 5, 2009
Page 3

- Assist in the implementation of effective public policy and ordinances to promote and enforce responsible pet ownership.

One area which will require a little more time in resolving is having a point person appointed in the Law Department and the Municipal Prosecutor's Office. This would be extremely helpful to the Animal Control Office when questions arise and an opinion is needed on what we can do in certain situations. We need them to interpret the law currently on the books and provide an opinion about what we can do and if new legislation on a local level is necessary.

Finally, permit me to express my gratitude to the Municipal Council for the time and consideration it has given to animal control issues over the past months. The commitment and understanding the council displayed towards municipal employees and the public merits acknowledgement. The Municipal Council may be certain of my continued efforts and commitment to help foster an animal control program which meets the goals of its mission while providing the best service possible to the residents of Jersey City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Melendez", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Harry Melendez
Director

c: Brian O'Reilly, Business Administrator