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August 27, 1991

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Ans'd. DJA

Dear Mr. Hickey,

I am writing in support of Supervisor Golding's recommendation to establish "Blue Ribbon Panels" to overview the various county departments. I realize that we presently have advisory committees in place, but it is my experience with the Animal Control Advisory Committee (and I have heard similar perceptions of several other department advisory committees) that although the members may be well-intentioned, they have little first-hand knowledge of the workings of the department they are advising. Many of the Animal Control Advisory members have not been at a county shelter for years and I venture to say some may have never spent time in the kennels. It is my considered opinion that one cannot provide valuable and well-considered suggestions and review unless one has a thorough working knowledge of policies, operations and financial data.

If the volunteer "Blue Ribbon Panel" was composed of individuals who had consistent, first-hand experience with the specific department and also had skills in areas relevant to the specific budgetary needs and could be instrumental in pinpointing inappropriate expenditures and developing cost conscious utilization of funds and private resources, then monies could be freed for intense needs in other areas and departments. In other words, we would rather maintain beds in the Point Loma Mental Health Facility by drawing on fat in other agencies. As it now stands, numerous advisory committees depend upon their respective department for setting agendas, for taking minutes, and as their primary source of information. Our constitution is predicated on checks and balances. Having an advisory committee is a good concept but they generally lack the substance to make informed decisions.

I know that there are citizens in our community who have the time and energy to give more than a couple of hours per month for a meeting. These people could be an invaluable aid to county administration at times of budget review, etc.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Schumann

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cc: Board of Supervisors