



COUNTY EXPLORING NEED FOR NEW ANIMAL SHELTER

MontgomeryCountyVA.gov

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Montgomery County, Virginia – Montgomery County, Friends of Animal Care & Control, concerned citizens and other supporters of humane treatment of lost, neglected and abandoned animals are working together to build a new animal shelter.

An architectural consultant specializing in animal shelter planning met recently with project supporters to discuss “increased adoption by design” or best practices for shelter design that increase the likelihood of pet adoptions. “There is really only one factor that controls how many animals you adopt, and it has nothing to do with how big the shelter is or how long you hold the animal. It is how many people come in the front door that wants to adopt an animal,” said Bill Meade, founder of Shelter Planners of America.

Shelter Planners is currently working on a needs assessment and preliminary design to replace the County’s 1970s era shelter on Cinnabar Road. “We currently have 36 runs for dogs to serve a County that has a population of approximately 90,000,” said Jason Shelton of Friends of Animal Care & Control. “We do not have enough room, in addition to having no facilities for cats. With the new animal shelter, we will be able to offer care and assistance to not only dogs, but cats as well.”

Shelter Planners’ Bill Meade showed County residents photographs of shelters his nonprofit firm has worked on from Harrisonburg, Va., to Monterey, Calif. Many include spay and neuter clinics on site to address pet overpopulation. The shelters are also designed to be practical, reasonably priced and conducive to pet adoptions. The facilities incorporate features such as fresh air filtration, disease resistant flooring, washable surfaces, natural light, landscaping and socialization areas for cats, dogs and visitors. To see the presentation, go to www.montva.com (see animal control).

Meade told County officials that his firm designed a shelter near an upscale neighborhood, which has now become a ‘destination’ for residents to take their children on weekends. Another community replaced a shelter consisting only of a 10-by-10 foot cinder block building and an outdoor fenced area for dogs. “We’re hoping we will be able to do a new generation animal shelter for the area here,” he said. “It looks like you’ve got a lot of good potential to move ahead and really help the animals.”

Shelter Planners’ next step is to provide the County with estimates of construction and operational costs, staffing needs and recommended building size. A preliminary floor plan will also be provided in coming weeks, said Meade, who has worked with more than 700 shelters.

Friends of Animal Care and Control partner with the County’s animal control office to provide care and help dogs find their lost owners or adoptive homes. The group’s volunteers have helped boost the adoption rate from 40 percent to 64 percent from 2004-2007. During the same period, euthanasia rates dropped from 54-to-17 percent, less than half the statewide average.

Interested in adopting, volunteering or making a donation to the shelter building fund? Please e-mail volunteer@mcfacc.org, or make checks payable to MCFACC, 125 N. Main St. SU 500, #129, Blacksburg, VA, 24060. The group is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

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