

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 15, 2009 – SPECIAL MEETING

The Board of Commissioners met in special session on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. in the Rogow Room at the Transylvania County Library. The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update on the status of the proposed new animal shelter and discuss the renovation of the old Sheriff's Office Building.

Commissioners present were Lynn Bullock, Chairman Jason Chappell, Mike Hawkins, Daryle Hogsed, and Vice-Chairman Kelvin Phillips. Also present were County Manager Artie Wilson, Operations Director David McNeill, Project Manager Larry Reece, Architects Bill Daggett and Evan Williams, Architect Rich Worley, Mike Norris of McGill Associates, and Clerk to the Board Trisha McLeod.

Media: *Transylvania Times* – Mark Todd

There were approximately 110 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jason Chappell presiding called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ANIMAL SHELTER

INTRODUCTION

County Manager Artie Wilson recognized the team members that have been working on the animal shelter project:

1. Steve Smith, Health Director
2. David McNeill, Operations Director
3. Larry Reece, Project Manager
4. Artie Wilson, County Manager
5. Bill Daggett, Architect, Daggett and Grigg
6. Evan Williams, Architect, Daggett and Grigg

HISTORY

Operations Director David McNeill showed a Power Point presentation outlining the history of the animal shelter project as follows:

Timeline of Events

In 2004, Commissioners charged the Animal Shelter Committee with providing an initial report on the status of the current animal shelter and the need for a new shelter. In 2005, Commissioners designated \$300,000 toward the construction of a new shelter. During 2006 a needs assessment was completed with the assistance of Daggett and Grigg, and Commissioners then designated an additional \$450,000 towards the project. In 2007, the County contracted with Daggett and Grigg, and along with the Animal Shelter Transition Committee, began working on the design of a new animal shelter. The final design was reviewed in 2008.

Animal Shelter Committee

The Animal Shelter Committee was established at the direction of Commissioners in 2004 during their Planning Workshop. The first committee was created from discussions that occurred in

2004. Since Commissioners were hearing many different perspectives about community expectations, they decided to form a committee to assimilate information and provide relevant data and report back with some degree of consensus on the options that were listed as follows:

- Develop options for increasing animal adoptions
- Establishing spay/neuter program
- Educating citizens
- Establishing a new shelter

Animal Shelter Transition Committee

Each of the members of the committee provided a different perspective about animal services and the animal shelter. The committee provided their report in October 2004 with the primary recommendation being to “construct a better-located, attractive, modern, efficient, well-lighted, well-ventilated, customer-friendly animal shelter of adequate size that presents adoptable animals to the best advantage”. The consensus of the committee was to promote the shelter as a community facility that supported animal adoptions as much it supported the direct animal control functions.

Subsequent to the committee report, the Commissioners at that time made an initial designation of \$300,000 toward the project which was favorably received by the community as a formal recognition of the need. In early 2006, the County contracted with Daggett and Grigg to conduct a feasibility study and needs assessment. This was a preliminary report that reviewed the current facility, intake numbers for animals, and trends within the County so the initial projections could be made about the basic size and the need. Following that report, Commissioners increased the designated funds by an additional \$450,000. In 2007, the County advertised for Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) for architecture design services and operational programs. Daggett and Grigg fully met the criteria that was outlined in the RFQ and was chosen to design the new animal shelter.

The Animal Shelter Transition Committee was formed in 2006 around the same time as the initial needs assessment was completed by Daggett and Grigg. The Committee was charged with defining specific action steps to accomplish recommendations from the original committee and providing input for shelter location, design elements and operations. There were some cross over members from the general committee, but this committee had a revised membership with even more specific expertise associated with animal shelter operations to try to identify the best method for setting up a shelter and how that philosophy fits with operating the shelter in an appropriate manner.

Philosophy & Features

Part of the concept for an animal shelter originated from correspondence from Mr. Don Jones to Commissioners. In his letter, Mr. Jones stated that any shelter design along with operational programming decisions was ultimately guided by the State’s philosophy and objectives of the operations. Discussions revealed there were multiple perspectives about the specific features a new animal shelter could have and different philosophies about the role of the animal shelter. The shelter proposal by Daggett and Grigg represents a compromise between the mandated minimum requirements and the ideal adoption facility. The proposal meets the needs of both the County’s animal control functions as well as the ability to be more proactive in adopting animals and make the County’s animal shelter a facility that the community utilizes on a regular basis.

The distinctive features of the proposed shelter meets the County's needs for 25+ years and includes segregation of public access areas, acoustical control within the facility, landscape buffers on the exterior, and viewing and adoption areas. The proposed shelter is also compliant with the Animal Welfare Act and is consistent with the recommendations of the Animal Shelter Committee.

Site Selection Criteria

Several stakeholders lobbied for sites in Brevard. Some of the impetus for the sites was the perception that more volunteers may be available in a Brevard location and more members of the public would likely visit the shelter for adoptions. Several discussions with the City of Brevard Planning staff indicated there would be some substantial challenges to achieve all the requirements associated with establishing a shelter inside City limits. In addition, there was very little property within the City that was zoned for that type use. Most stakeholders conceded that the Calvert site was a reasonable choice given the limited funds for the project. It was important for the Committee to select a site that was accessible to most of the public within the County and had water and sewer accessibility. In their research the Committee found onsite waste water treatment systems to be unfavorable.

Summary

The demands on animal control services and the current shelter is expanding on a fairly regular basis. The existing facility does not meet the needs in effectively taking care of animals. The facility is outdated and there are increased demands for animal housing space due to population growth. A key point, being the animal shelter is inspected on an annual basis, is the ability to ensure the County meets the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act.

A series of Commissioners have made formal decisions to obtain broad community input about the objective and information relative to the establishment of a new shelter. Since 2004, there has been lots of public input with the respect to what the public want to see in a shelter. The proposed design is a product of those discussions.

REVIEW OF DESIGN

Bill Daggett of Daggett and Grigg Architects showed a Power Point presentation outlining the process which determined the proposed design of the animal shelter, noting that the proposal meets the County's needs now and well into the future:

Planning Goals

1. The County must comply with the comprehensive North Carolina Animal Welfare Act
2. Program capacity to 25+ years
3. Program facility to encourage adoptions, reduce euthanasia rates, and increase the life of the facility
4. Program facility to meet budget expectations

Shelter Sizing

Over a 3 year average, the shelter is receiving animals at a rate approximately 4% of the population. National averages are between 3% and 4%. The current shelter averages 755 canines and 437 felines. A 5 year projection factors in a population growth rate of 2% and provides an initial planning goal of 835 canines and 485 felines.

The average adoption for both canines and felines at the current facility is 17%. An average adoption rate should be 40-60%. The County's euthanasia rate is 78% whereas the national

average is 10-40%. The focus of the new shelter will be to increase adoption and reduce euthanasia rates.

Programming to Achieve Goals

The proposed shelter will accommodate cats to year 2030 and dogs to approximately 2015, at which time the facility can be expanded to add kennels.

Architectural Response

Seven primary functions that are critical to any animal shelter and are important to increased adoption, decreased euthanasia and extending the life span of the facility:

1. Public reception and sales of basic pet care needs for adopted animals
2. Administrative areas including private offices for Animal Control Officers and staff
3. Public education provisions such as classroom or multi-function meeting room
4. Animal receiving, including examination and grooming function
5. Animal kennels for adoption and strays
6. Animal kennel for quarantine and routine observation
7. Clinic spaces(s) for shelter animal care, euthanasia, emergencies and spay/neuter programs

The first architectural response was to evaluate the site. The Calvert site is relatively flat and provides the opportunity for a formal public entrance and a small parking lot directly related to the public entrance to the building. A secondary entrance has been included in the design to keep animal control functions separate from the public. The design also includes a play yard behind the facility, kennels that are open to the outdoors, an area for storage, and incorporates sound buffers to adjacent properties.

The second architectural response was to design the building plan and includes the following features:

- Large reception area with seating space for the public
- Multipurpose room
- A room for puppies and small breeds
- Additional space for an animal display and play area
- Cat adoption area
- Dog adoption kennels with interior and outdoor runs
- Two small acquaintance rooms for families to meet with animals
- Cat isolation and observation areas
- Laundry and grooming area
- Clinic and euthanasia room
- Animal receiving area through garage/sally port
- Dog isolation area and holding cells

Chairman Chappell asked if the enclosed sally port is standard in animal shelter designs. Mr. Daggett said an enclosed sally port offers protection for the public from animal control officers who are often dealing with rabid or vicious animals; however it is possible to incorporate an uncovered sally port which is included as an alternate in the proposal. He noted that an uncovered sally port exposes the officer and the animal to the elements.

Technical Issues/Influences

Mr. Daggett said it was the desire of the County to create a low maintenance facility which is the focus of the general design. The County also desired to incorporate sound proofing to address the concerns of some of the public. Daggett and Grigg took extra efforts to include a sound absorbing material that can resist a high humidity environment.

Besides having the ability to sanitize the primary enclosures around the animals, the Animal Welfare Act specifically addresses drainage in that it must be designed in a manner where disease can not be transferred from kennel to kennel. As a result, Daggett and Grigg recommended individual drains for every single kennel. The Act also addresses air ventilation systems. Sick or potentially sick animals must be separated from other inhabitants so that the air that enters the isolation areas does not become mingled with the air in the healthy kennels. In response, Daggett and Grigg incorporated a negative pressurized system where all air flows into the isolation area and is collected and returned through a very extensive filtering process and an ultraviolet chamber that kills both viruses and bacteria.

Daggett and Grigg also incorporated a septic pretreatment system in the design. Mr. Daggett said grinder pumps will not grind animal hair which can clog the intake of the grinder pump and inhibit the flow of storage. The Architects created a system similar to a septic tank. All of the animal waste would flow into a septic tank where a filter traps the animal hair and allows only the effluent to flow into the sewer system. The filter would need to be cleaned periodically.

Daggett and Grigg also included a number of cost control measures in the design through a series of alternates. He reviewed the alternates for the structural systems, roofing, flooring, windows, lighting, garage, sound isolation, kennel walls, ceilings, and sound absorption. Mr. Daggett noted that the current bidding climate is very favorable at this time.

Discussion

Commissioner Hogsed inquired about the ability for expansion. Mr. Daggett said the proposal allows for the addition of wings of kennel. Other options can increase the capacity easily.

Commissioner Hogsed also inquired about the ability for this facility to offer a spay and neuter clinic and provide public education. Mr. Daggett replied that the shelter will provide opportunities for a clinic and the multipurpose room can accommodate training sessions, community meetings, etc.

LOCATIONS

The Manager reviewed the pros and cons of potential locations for an animal shelter.

Calvert Property

Pros:

- County owns the property
- Identified by the study group as a good location and easily accessible
- Water and sewer are adjacent to the property

Cons:

- Rosman Aldermen have expressed concern about locating a shelter on the property
- Question remains whether the Town of Rosman would allow water and sewer connectivity to their utilities

Landfill Property

Pros:

- County owns the property

Cons:

- Not easily accessible
- Does not have access to water and sewer; costly for construction of treatment facility
- Layout of property is restrictive

Other

Pros:

- The Manager did not cite any pros

Cons:

- Would have to purchase property unless it is donated
- Must be located near water and sewer utilities
- Must deal with the City of Brevard's UDO if built within city limits

ESTIMATED COST

The Manager reviewed the estimated construction costs.

Construction Costs	\$ 997,000
Contingency 5%	\$ 49,850
Remaining Architects Fees	\$ 39,000
FF & E	\$ 69,790
<u>Misc. Bidding, etc.</u>	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$1,151,640

The Manager pointed out that this project has not been bid; therefore the costs may be lower especially in the current building climate. There are several alternates included in the design to reduce the costs as well.

Discussion

Commissioner Bullock stressed the importance of working with the Town of Rosman on providing water and sewer for a new animal shelter; however he noted that the County may have to determine a secondary source for both water and sewer. He also noted the current favorable bidding climate and said the cost of the shelter will increase if the County waits any longer. Chairman Chappell responded saying it would be costly to construct an alternate water and sewer source.

Commissioner Hogsed said the County should be prepared to construct a shelter on a different site if no compromise is reached with the Town of Rosman. He would like to the County to bid the project before the end of the year.

MCGILL ASSOCIATES - STUDY OF CALVERT SITE

The County hired the services of McGill Associates to evaluate the Calvert property to determine if there were uses for the property other than the animal shelter. Some have expressed an interest in constructing workforce housing at this location.

Mike Norris of McGill Associates reviewed the existing conditions of the Calvert site. The County owns 25 acres at this site. The animal shelter could fit on approximately 2 acres. The remaining 22 acres consist of mainly valleys. Mr. Norris noted that one of the primary elements of this property is that it is adjacent to the old landfill. The old landfill is unlined and the County purchased the property to serve as a buffer between the landfill and neighboring property owners. McGill Associates considered these factors when determining the best use of the property. The property has a mixture of vegetation, open meadows, and large existing mature wooded areas. The topography is general rolling but very steep in other areas. There are also existing roadways running through the property, a Duke Energy utility right of way and a 50' deeded right of way, although no roadway has been constructed, all of which present various restrictions. In addition there are 2 wells located on the property to monitor potential contaminants.

McGill Associates considered the topography, existing grading features, rights of way, natural features, etc. to determine the best use of the property; however the primary consideration was the landfill and the intent to provide a buffer to surrounding properties. Mr. Norris said any contamination from the landfill would relatively follow the existing topography. In order to have the ability to remediate in case of any ground water contamination, Mr. Norris presented a plan that includes green space which is directly adjacent to the existing landfill and a 100' buffer on either side of the creek. This allows the County to access these areas and maintain ownership. Mr. Norris included the location of the animal shelter on the site and space for single family workforce housing units. Another portion of the property is fairly steep and developing it could be costly unless a portion of the adjacent property could be obtained to allow better roadway access.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if workforce housing could be constructed on the site without connectivity to water and sewer. Mr. Norris said it would be prudent to provide water and sewer for workforce housing because of the relationship of the property to the landfill. Commissioner Hawkins said this information should be shared with the Town of Rosman because denying water and sewer to the site could prevent the construction of workforce housing which is presumably needed in this community.

Chairman Chappell instructed staff to schedule a joint meeting with the Town of Rosman. Commissioner Hogsed asked staff to explore other locations for an animal shelter, specifically at the current landfill site.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ann Holshouser: Dr. Holshouser, a local veterinarian, said she reviewed the proposed plan from Daggett and Grigg with her colleague. She supports the plan based on the proposed location, the continuing growth in the population, the number of animals taken in by the current shelter, and the future projections. Her long term vision for this facility would also include an adjacent adoption facility run by the local animal groups, as well as a spay and neuter clinic to target the revolving door concerns and to address the animal population in the County. Dr. Holshouser also noted the proposal addresses key concerns such as ventilation, drainage and noise control. She thanked Commissioners for continuing to work on this project and also thanked the local animal groups for all the work they do in rescuing and adopting animals out of the current facility.

She asked Mr. Daggett to address a concern posed by the Town of Rosman about the load the animal shelter will place on their sewer system. Mr. Daggett said a shelter of this size will produce less water in the sewer system in a day than a single family residence. With the pretreatment system that is included in the plan, none of the detrimental effects of the animal waste will ever reach the Rosman facility.

Don Jones: Mr. Jones inquired about the cost per square footage of the shelter, consideration for the adoption of older animals, and the air ventilation system. Mr. Daggett responded. The cost per square footage of the proposed shelter is \$181; although he noted the project has not been bid and the bidding climate is favorable at this time. Secondly, the older animals will be on display in the larger runs where they are more comfortable. Lastly the air ventilation system does an excellent job of filtering air and is the most economical and efficient solution for the shelter. Mr. Jones also recommended constructing the shelter at the new jail site where the public will have easier access and recommended against the current landfill as a possible location.

Nita Hunt: Ms. Hunt thanked the Board for moving forward with this project. She agreed with the previous speaker that locating the shelter at the current landfill location is not appropriate if the goal is to increase animal adoptions. She suggested the Board explore the possibility of donated property. Ms. Hunt also suggested the Board set a deadline for choosing a location because the project can not move forward until a location is determined.

Vicki Walker: Ms. Walker said she believes the Town of Rosman will do whatever it can to keep the shelter from being built on the Calvert site. She encouraged the County to consider other locations and said that local animal rights groups will assist in raising money to ensure a new animal shelter is built.

Evelyn Bridges: Ms. Bridges stressed the importance of the Board dealing with animal rights issues, specifically the medical treatment of animals in the current facility.

Chairman Chappell called for a break at 8:30 p.m. The meeting resumed at 8:40 p.m.

POTENTIAL RENOVATION OF OLD SHERIFF'S BUILDING

OVERVIEW

The Manager provided an overview of this project which was first proposed to Commissioners a couple of years ago while reviewing space needs. The Sheriff's Building will be vacated when the new Public Safety Facility is complete in the very near future. Space needs for the District Attorney and the Clerk of Court in the Courthouse has not diminished. To provide some temporary relief for them and reduce traffic at the Courthouse, the Manager proposed relocating the Register of Deeds and Tax Offices from the Courthouse into the old Sheriff's Building when it is vacated.

The Register of Deeds currently occupies just over 1,100 square feet and the Tax Offices utilize approximately 2,000 square feet. They would gain 1,700 square feet of much needed space by relocating to the Sheriff's Building which would meet their long term needs. The Manager pointed out that when the Tax Administration and Collection offices were combined, the County realized a savings of approximately \$100,000 a year. This move will provide an even larger cost savings by having all the staff and resources located in one space.

REVIEW OF DESIGN

Architect Rich Worley reviewed the proposed design and discussed some of the renovations that would have to be made. The cubicles will be removed from the current setup. The main load bearing walls and the public restrooms will remain. The plan includes more office space and a work area for the public to help reduce traffic in the hallways. The floor and ceilings will be replaced. The current HVAC system is too large and causes moisture problems in the building. It will be replaced with a more efficient system. One feature Mr. Worley added was a drop box at the main entrance where residents could drop off payments 24 hours a day and without having to

enter the building. Because of the wear and tear on the facility, some of the exterior finishes will be replaced. Lastly, a good portion of the electrical system and all of the light fixtures will be replaced.

The lower level will be renovated to provide storage for both departments. The existing break room will remain, providing for accessibility to one of the sinks. No changes will be made to the small restroom. This level includes a room for electrical and mechanical equipment.

Tax Administrator David Reid commented about the renovations. He said the new location will improve efficiency in his office by having all his staff and resources in one location. The space will still be accessible to the public, attorneys, etc. since the location remains downtown with available parking. Another advantage is that both offices will be able to share the terminals in the lobby. Because both offices get very heavy traffic, he said these terminals provide an excellent access point. Mr. Reid said this is a very good plan and he would like to see the Board move forward.

Register of Deeds Cindy Ownbey also commented about the potential renovations. She said her office is desperate for space and the new location will help them tremendously. The public portion in the front of the building will be beneficial for anyone coming in to do research for either office because the public will have access to information from both offices and some information from the Clerk of Court's office.

ESTIMATED COST

The Manager reviewed the estimated cost of the project. The estimated cost of the renovation ranges from \$556,615 to \$690,588. The project has not been bid.

The Manager reported there is approximately \$800,000 in capital reserves designated for the animal shelter. He said one of the Board's top priorities has been to gain space in the Courthouse and there are monies available for this project as well. There is roughly \$2 million in capital reserves that could be re-designated to fund both of these projects. The Manager also noted there is \$200,000 designated for renovating the large courtroom in the Courthouse. The cost to expand the District Attorney's office in the Courthouse would be minimal.

Mr. Worley said these drawings are almost complete and noted a few minor adjustments are pending. The plans would be finalized in about a week and would be ready for staff to go out for bid at the Board's direction. In response to a question from Chairman Chappell, Mr. Worley commented on the time frame. He said the bidding process takes about three to four weeks after the advertising period. Construction could begin in the winter with a construction time of about three months. Mr. Worley also noted the favorable bidding climate and expects to generate a lot of interest in this project.

The Manager pointed out that the District Attorney and the Clerk of Court are desperate for space. By relocating the Register of Deeds and Tax Offices, the entire first floor would be freed up. He said the space could be used in a number of ways, including providing storage for the Clerk of Court, providing space for the Public Defender for whom the County currently rents space at a cost of \$900 a month, etc.

Commissioner Bullock inquired about space for the Board of Elections. The Manager said relocating the Board of Elections was part of the last phase of a plan that was presented to the Board a couple of years ago. There are currently no monies designated for this move. The Manager said the layout of the old jail could easily be used for storage for the Board of Elections.

After discussion, Commissioners requested to revisit the space needs issue and the best use of the County's facilities at their next regular meeting and discuss how to fund these projects.

Commissioner Hogsed proposed to enter into discussions with representatives from the Heritage Museum concerning whether the use of the old Library is a suitable location for a museum.

The Manager asked for permission to have the drawings complete for the Sherriff's Building and prepare to go out for bids while revisiting the other space needs issues.

Commissioner Hawkins moved to authorize Rich Worley to finalize the drawings while the Board is examining the other questions that were brought up at this meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bullock and passed by a vote of 4 to 1, with Commissioner Phillips voting against.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carroll Parker: Mr. Parker urged the Board to expedite both of these projects and put people in the community back to work.

Jack Hudson: Mr. Hudson commended the Board for considering the needs of the Board of Elections. He also agreed with Mr. Parker's comments, saying the County will save money by getting these projects under way. Mr. Hudson reported that the Heritage Museum has expressed an interest in exploring whether or not the old Library will meet their needs. Lastly, Mr. Hudson urged Commissioners to move forward with the recommendation of the two Courthouse Committees and construct a new courthouse facility.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Hogsed said he agreed with an earlier comment made by Nita Hunt about setting a deadline for determining a location for the animal shelter. He proposed a deadline of December 1, 2009 for determining a location and asked staff to explore and consider all available real estate with the help of a realtor.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Bullock moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins and unanimously carried.**

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha D. McLeod
Clerk to the Board