




Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

October 23, 2007

To:  Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Jim Hynes, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject: Animal Shelter Reconstruction: 2013 Second Street

INTRODUCTION

In November 2002, the residents of Berkeley approved Ballot Measure I, a \$7.2 million General Obligation Bond to acquire property, if necessary, and to construct or rehabilitate a building for an animal shelter that meets the requirements of state law. With no suitable alternative site, staff and animal shelter volunteers have concluded that the only alternative is to rebuild the shelter on the present site.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The current shelter was built in 1940 and is an old and unsafe building badly lacking space, isolation facilities, and the building is discouraging to visitors who may want to come to the shelter to adopt an animal. However, after visiting scores of potential building sites, staff and other interested parties have not been able to find a suitable site for a new shelter within Berkeley. It is close to 5 years since the Ballot Measure passed, and with each passing year the new construction purchasing power of the \$7.2 million is diminishing.

On October 9, 2007, Council adopted a declaration of intent to reimburse animal shelter pre-development expenditures prior to issuance of General Obligation bonds. This allows for the City to implement the RFQ and cost estimate process without drawing down Measure I funds.

Staff met with the citizen Humane Commission on September 19, 2007 to discuss the City's interest in using the current animal shelter site for constructing a new facility. While the commission did not adopt a formal recommendation to Council, the majority of commissioners were supportive of this proposal contingent on the City securing the services of a qualified outside architect and that the architect would meet with the Commission to solicit their input.

BACKGROUND

Shortly after Measure I passed, the City Council approved the formation of a Council subcommittee to conduct a search and evaluate sites for a new animal shelter. Due to zoning considerations, all of the sites investigated were located in west Berkeley. The subcommittee consisted of 2 council members, 2 humane commissioners and city staff. Various sites were located and their feasibility explored but for various reasons such as price, size and location, all sites were rejected by the Council subcommittee, and has since sunset.

Sites investigated include:

McCauley Foundry site
Ashby and 9th
7th and Carleton
2nd and Cedar
East Bay Humane Society

Staff have solicited opinions for rebuilding at the present location and received positive feedback. The current shelter is located in an area zoned for light industry therefore noise from the dogs during the day does not affect neighbors. Aquatic Park is nearby and an excellent place for volunteers to walk dogs. The shelter is located close to Hwy 80 making it easily accessible to visitors.

The current site is 12,000 sq feet with 8,000 sq feet of building. By building a second story for offices and small animal rooms, the site would be suitable for the new shelter. However, as the entire foundation must be raised by 3 feet to avoid future flooding, the shelter will have to relocate to a warehouse or other suitable site during construction.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The City of Berkeley will solicit written proposals from qualified firms or individuals to provide Architectural and Engineering Services for a new Animal Shelter to replace the existing shelter at the same location, at 2013 Second Street, Berkeley, CA. 94710.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Given the inflation rate in the construction sector over the last few years (steel, concrete etc.), it is unlikely that the \$7.2 million bond will cover all costs associated with reconstructing the animal shelter on 2nd Street. On October 1, 2007, the City received a construction cost estimate report from Leland Saylor Associates that indicated that the cost for reconstruction of a new shelter at its current location at 2013 2nd Street would cost approximately \$1,000,000 more than the voter approved bond measure for \$7.2 million. City staff are currently exploring a variety of options to narrow this funding gap.

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