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(no subject)

1 message

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Thu, Aug 11, 2011 at 5:09 PM

Dear Councilmember,

I am writing you to ask you to please oppose the proposition of Best Friends taking over the Northeast Valley Animal Shelter.

The Northeast Valley Shelter was funded by Proposition F and its cost was \$19 million. Its aim was to help end overcrowding of the other shelters. While Northeast Valley has not functioned at its full capacity, it has functioned as an overflow shelter for the animals held for cruelty cases, evidence, nursing moms with babies, and animals awaiting out of state transport. And since LA Animal Services is part of the Emergency Response team, Northeast Valley Shelter would be used to house additional animals in need in case of natural disasters or emergencies such as fires and earthquakes. What will happen to the animals should a natural disaster strike Los Angeles in the near future?

Now that NE has closed its door, the six shelters are taking up its previous responsibilities. As things stand, all shelters are already overcrowded. If Northeast remains closed or is given to Best Friends to operate, more euthanasia is only immediate and imminent simply because there is no longer an overflow shelter to help house the animals. Each shelter will have to house its own evidence dogs, and nursing mom with babies. And when it comes time to process out of state shelter transfers, the shelter doing the out of state transfer work will have to give up its Isolation and Hospital space in order to quarantine and accommodate the animals pending transfer. This process takes weeks to complete. Where will the sick and injured animals of that shelter go? There will be no room in Evidence kennels either because those too, will be occupied by evidence dogs.

Northeast Valley Shelter has the capacity to hold at least 120 dogs in its regular kennels and 60 dogs in Isolation and Hospital, and has space to hold over 100 cats, which means they can hold a minimum of 300 dogs and cats. In the past, the Northeast Valley Shelter housed at least 175 dogs and cats on average. In the proposal to the City, Best Friends states that they will not perform any animal control related activities or take in any animals from the public, and its operation at Northeast Valley will "reduce the number of animals euthanized due to time and space constraints...". How will Best Friends' proposal help to alleviate the overcrowding when it will only have "on average a combined 50 dogs AND cats"? And what will they do with the 200 empty kennels and cat cages? Will they use that as a boarding facility for animals they take from other areas? Does this mean a LA City taxpayer funded project will be used to house animals that belong to a private organization?

Also, the City will continue to pay for facility maintenance and utility expenses while Best Friends operates the shelter, which is budgeted at \$200,000. How can the City use the taxpayers' money to support a private organization that will only perform a fraction of the responsibility of a city animal shelter?

It is important to note that this is not about what Best Friends can do for the community, because Best Friends can still provide these services if it's their intention- with or without Northeast Valley Shelter. Rather, this has to do with how the City and LA Animal Services department work with budget and spending. If the City closes one shelter now because of budget issue, what will stop it from closing another next year? And what is the City going to do about the new shelter currently being built in South Los Angeles? Will the City give that away as well before it's opened?

The closing of the Northeast Valley Shelter will have detrimental impact on the community and its animals. It only means more euthanasia because of the constraints placed upon the current city shelters, especially on East Valley

and West Valley shelters. Best Friends occupation and operation of Northeast Valley Shelter is not the answer, for its proposed benefit does not outweigh the disadvantages. Meanwhile, there are still too many unanswered questions about its operation there. We cannot afford to close the Northeast Valley shelter. This is not the answer to the budget issue we face, and this is hardly a step towards moving LA to "no kill".

Thank you for your time.

Veronica Hernandez
