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CF 11-1345 OPPOSITION to Best Friends Contract for NE Valley Animal Shelter

1 message

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PROTEST - CITY CLERK'S FILE

August 10, 2010

Honorable Council President Eric Garcetti
and all Members, Los Angeles City Council:

CF 11-1345 OPPOSITION - BEST FRIEND CONTRACT FOR NORTHEAST VALLEY ANIMAL SHELTER

The limited adoptions and education programs proposed by Best Friends Animal Society do not constitute the full public services badly needed for the North East Valley communities. Also, the Mission shelter is the ONLY City shelter which contains equine and large animal housing. This reflects the large horse-owning constituency in that area and the need for the unique services for which Mission shelter was designed.

At least 50% of the animals at the East and West Valley shelters come from the service area of the Northeast Valley. Opening this shelter at least four days a week would decrease the need for staffing and resources at both those shelters and also reduce their budgets. Those combined savings, plus an effective licensing program, would support services at this shelter (both dogs and horses are licensed by LA City.)

The proposed contract with Best Friends Animal Sanctuary is a gift of public funds and possibly indicates that Prop. F was a misrepresentation to the voters. The 2000 Prop. F. Ballot clearly states, "The number of animal shelters—6 for the entire City—does not meet the health care requirements set by the State."

If this is not true—if the NE Valley shelter—which is shelter #7—is NOT needed to meet State health requirements by housing stray animals from that community, then the public's money paying \$19 million for the shelter, should be refunded.

The core questions that need to be asked by Councilmembers are:

1. With about 50 hand-selected dogs and cats at a time (and no euthanasia), how will this contract have a notable positive effect on the "live-save" rate (given citywide intake of 55,000 dogs and cats or more)?
2. What is the specific method or process for Best Friends to select pets for their adoption center? Obviously, they must select the most desirable animals. Will that leave other shelters with only pit bulls? Or will Best Friends—which is a pit bull advocacy group—attempt to adopt pit bulls from South La and other area into the Northeast Valley communities?
3. The City will spend \$200,000 a year to support Best Friends. What will Best Friends actually spend to support 50 animals at a time? What will they spend to support the entire operation? How and how often will the City audit the contributions of Best Friends compared to the cost to taxpayers?

4. What is Best Friends' projected revenue at their full service veterinary clinic and their pet supply shop and their dog training classes? Where is the proforma submitted for all aspects of this operation for comparison to the City's base costs?
5. The Department had previously been precluded from having a pet supply counter, even if run by an outside group. Has Bond Counsel reviewed and approved all aspects of this agreement, including the pet supply store?
6. What "adoption fee" will Best Friends pay the City per dog or cat?
7. What latitude does Best Friends have to request and receive donations, or run fundraising events? Are there limits? Does the City get a cut?
8. How/who will perform the remodeling to customize a spay/neuter clinic for Best Friends? Will a private contractor be allowed to make changes to a City facility or will Best Friends have to pay General Services at the City rate?
9. If Best Friends—as it indicates—is only adopting out City-owned animals, does the City retain liability for any bites, attacks while Best Friends' staff/volunteers handle them at the Mission shelter or at offsite locations?
10. Will this contract allow the Northeast Valley shelter to merely become a "transport hub" for animals being shipped to unknown destinations in Canada and other states?

Thank you for considering all these issues before making a decision on the proposed Contract. We need to be sure the animals are safe and the community is well served.

This contract does not fulfill the City's obligation and I hope you will reject this proposal and consider a "shared sacrifice budget" between the three Valley shelters.

Sincerely,

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