



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DATE:** August 2, 2017

### **Prince William SPCA Supports “Option C: New Construction” for County Animal Shelter**

*Community urged to contact Supervisors before final vote on September 19*



August 2, 2017 - Woodbridge, Va. – On Tuesday, August 1, 2017, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors heard a presentation from county staff on several options for a new animal shelter. Based on that presentation, the Board will vote on a funding plan on September 19, 2017. The Prince William SPCA, which has been at the forefront of the advocacy campaign to build a new shelter, endorses **Option C: New Construction**. The organization is asking the public to join them

in their support of Option C and be the voice for companion animals in the community.

“It is clear that we need a new animal shelter, but it is absolutely crucial that it meet the needs of the community. Option C fully meets guidelines of the Virginia Code, Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) and the County’s Internal Audit Report on the Animal Shelter. It is the only option that is within the County’s budgeted 5-year Plan that fully meets the needs of the facility for 20 years,” says Denise Gable, Prince William SPCA board member. She adds, “This option is the most cost-effective and has sufficient double-sided cat and dog kennels, a welcoming adoption lobby, complete veterinarian and Animal Control Officer suites and dedicated animal isolation, quarantine, and recovery areas. The other options don’t fully meet the guidelines, have much higher operating costs or will be too small for the volume of animals that are processed each year. Building a shelter that is too small or fails to meet guidelines puts us right back where we started. We will be having this same discussion 5 or 10 years from now if we cut corners and don’t listen to the experts. No question about it, Option C meets the needs that have long been ignored.”

While the dialog during the presentation seemed positive, there was some pushback on the cost of a new shelter. The four options range in cost from \$11.35 - \$16.02 million, with Option C priced at \$14.12 million. Carol

Litchfield, Prince William SPCA board member and volunteer with the Prince William County Animal Shelter, says, “New animal shelters have a strict set of guidelines that must be met. This affects the cost but also ensures the success of the shelter as an effective county building. The Haymarket Gainesville Community Library and Montclair Community Library were built in the last two years and came in at \$15 million each. The county’s only animal shelter, which serves all 450,000 residents, was built by a local nonprofit and then donated to the county in 1975. It is amazing that the county has never built an animal shelter. It is time to address this unmet critical need and finally invest in a new facility that meets the needs of the community.”

The final vote is expected to take place on September 19, 2017. Before that time, the Prince William SPCA is asking everyone in the community to contact the supervisors at [bocs@pwcgov.org](mailto:bocs@pwcgov.org) and urge them to vote for Option C. There is a board meeting on September 5th where citizens can come and speak in support of the project. “We need the community to get behind this effort one more time to push it across the finish line,” says Litchfield. “Animal lovers, citizens, shelter volunteers, vet offices, animal rescue organizations, pet sitters, dog trainers—it’s time to speak up. We won’t get a second chance to do this right.”

### **History of the Animal Shelter Advocacy Campaign**

The Prince William SPCA kicked off the animal shelter advocacy campaign in September 2014. Throughout the last three years, the group’s volunteers have been at the forefront of educating the public and county officials on the importance of a new animal shelter. In October 2015, the idea picked up traction when the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) made a staff directive to include the shelter in the county’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Since that time, the public has overwhelmingly come out in support of a new animal shelter. The Prince William SPCA’s efforts were the catalyst in bringing attention to the problem, which is now being discussed at the highest level of the county. The public has voiced its support by sending thousands of postcards to the BOCS, speaking at Citizens' Time, sending emails, writing essays, creating posters and spreading the word to others all over social media. This has truly been a grassroots effort.

### **About the Prince William SPCA**

The Prince William SPCA is an independent, all-volunteer nonprofit organization established in 2004 to benefit the animals of the greater Prince William County, Virginia, area. It sponsors a "Friends of the Shelter" program that provides funding, in-kind donations, and volunteer support to the Prince William County Animal Shelter. The P.A.W. Express Mobile Adoption Van takes shelter animals to community events to increase visibility and adoption rates. The Prince William SPCA volunteers visit the shelter each week to photograph adoptable pets for Petfinder and social media. Each animal adopted or redeemed from the shelter is microchipped by the Prince William SPCA. Support this program by making a tax-deductible donation to: Prince William SPCA, PO Box 6631, Woodbridge, VA 22195. Learn more at: [www.pwspca.org](http://www.pwspca.org)

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