

Statement regarding May 11, 2010 euthanizations at the City of Troy shelter facility

May 13, 2010

On behalf of the Troy Animal Shelter Coalition, Inc. / Pike Animal Shelter Board of Directors, I am writing to provide some perspective on the euthanizing of 21 dogs by city animal control officers on May 11, 2010, at the current City of Troy animal shelter facility. This story was reported in the Troy Messenger on May 12, 2010. The Troy Animal Shelter Coalition, Inc. / Pike Animal Shelter was not involved in this euthanization, and this situation is what we hope to prevent in the future by replacing the current City facility with a new, larger, staffed and publicly accessible facility in the heart of Troy.

The Troy Animal Shelter Coalition, Inc. / Pike Animal Shelter is a nonprofit organization that works as a support mechanism for the city of Troy and the animals it houses in the current city pound. For more than three years, the TASC/PAS has been working to build and operate a new shelter facility in the heart of Troy that will replace the current, inadequate City pound. This new facility, the Pike Animal Shelter, will be operated by one and one-half employees hired by our nonprofit organization, in partnership with the city, rather than by the city animal control officers who have law enforcement duties as well as responsibilities for care of the animals in the current facility. We have been honored to work with the City throughout this time, and we will continue to support the City and its animal control officers as we work together to find new solutions for housing animals.

Recently, following tremendous work in creating a business plan based on successful models from other communities, after building a construction fund of \$100,000, and after receiving the donation of two acres of prime land for a new facility in the heart of Troy, the TASC/PAS organization brought a financial request to the City of Troy. This financial request in the amount of \$81,741 annually may seem like a large amount, but it is significantly less than the average a community our size would expect to spend on an animal shelter. According to national data, communities in the United States spend approximately \$8 per capita for animal shelters. To serve Troy's 15,000 residents, we could expect the annual expenditure for a shelter to be \$120,000. Because the Pike Animal Shelter nonprofit organization is able to raise funds with the help of good people who care about the welfare of animals, the annual cost to the City of Troy will only be \$81,741, or 68% of what the city could expect to pay without assistance.

An animal shelter is not an optional amenity for a community like ours. Rather, it is a key part of the city's function and services to citizens. Animals are not the only ones who benefit from a positive, professional animal shelter. A good shelter serves the *people* of a community by providing practical resources for professional and compassionate animal care, educational opportunities for all ages, volunteer opportunities to shape the lives of youths, and so much

more. An \$87,741 annual cost is not only reasonable but a bargain to support a modern, professional shelter in the heart of Troy that has one and one half employees and provides essential medical care for the animals as well as adoption and educational programs, a dog park, and much more.

On May 11, as part of our efforts to provide useful information to members of the Troy City Council who are considering the city's financial commitment, representatives of our nonprofit organization invited Council members to visit the current city pound so we could demonstrate how our volunteers inventory the city's dogs, place their photos and descriptions on [www.Petfinder.com](http://www.Petfinder.com) and [www.pikeanimals.org](http://www.pikeanimals.org) in hopes of finding forever homes, and administer kennel cough vaccine. It turned out to be a sad day for all involved when we learned on arrival that 21 of 22 dogs had recently been euthanized.

Sadly, the reality in our community, like most communities, is that there are more animals than homes. Euthanasia is a terribly difficult last resort that no one wants to use. This week's situation is what we hope to prevent in the future by replacing the current city facility with a new, larger, staffed, professional and publicly accessible facility. The facility we wish to build is one in which putting animals to sleep is only compassionate end-of-life care for animals in great suffering, not a solution to overcrowding.

The plans for the Pike Animal Shelter call for *tripling* the capacity of the current city facility for dogs, as well as adding spaces for cats that are currently not provided any sheltering. The design will also allow efficient expansion when possible. The facility will be located at 800 Henderson Highway in the heart of Troy and will be easily accessible not only to animal control officers but also to citizens. The facility will be built to current shelter design standards and will allow for long-term maintenance, efficiency of cleaning and public accessibility. Adoption programs already created by the TASC/PAS to find homes for dogs held at the current city pound will grow to become daily activities rather than periodic, volunteer-coordinated events that must be held at a location other than the current pound. New educational and volunteer programs will be created, and the new shelter will create one and a half new jobs in the City of Troy.

In addition, the Pike Animal Shelter will eliminate the need for City animal control officers to feed and clean a shelter daily, including weekends; provide necessary quarantine and separation of strays from adoptable animals; provide around-the-clock access to City of Troy Police animal control officers who have animal control responsibilities; ensure that standards of practice align with nationally recognized standard operating procedures for the care of animals; provide basic medical care for animals to discourage the spread of disease and improve the welfare of the animals; promote spay and neuter of dogs and cats to reduce the number of

strays; provide accessibility to the community without an appointment with an animal control officer; serve as an educational and practical resource for community members of all ages; and much more. We see a new shelter as a joyful part of the life of this community in the future, as well as the solution to difficult days like the one many of us experienced this week.

If we are to avoid the circumstances of this week, we must have a new, professional, larger, staffed, and publicly accessible facility. The TASC/PAS is committed to making that happen for this community. If you haven't already joined the effort, we need your time, your talent, and yes, your funds. You can find more information about the organization at [www.pikeanimals.org](http://www.pikeanimals.org) or speak with any volunteer.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Donna Schubert  
Chair, Founder's Society