

# City Council considers site for new regional animal shelter

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 06 March 2020 10:56

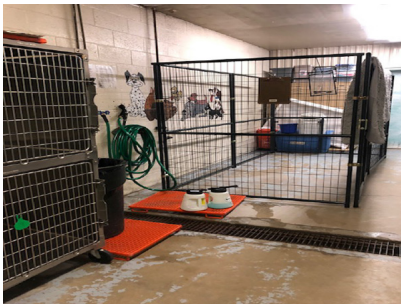
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### WAITS to take action

The Gallup City Council opened their Feb. 25 meeting by hearing a presentation of a feasibility study for a new regional animal shelter.

Public Works Director Stan Henderson said the council previously authorized feasibility studies to assess the practicality of a proposed plan for facilities the city needed, and the animal shelter is the fourth study.

Joe Gallegos, vice president of Huitt-Zolars, Inc., an Albuquerque-based architecture firm, and Larry McDonald, one of the firm's architects, were at the meeting to give the presentation.

“Last year we were commissioned to conduct site assessments and do the study for the future

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City of Gallup Regional Animal Shelter,” Gallegos said.

The current shelter, located on Balok Street off U.S. Highway 491, shares the facility with the Gallup-McKinley County Humane Society north of the animal medical center.

“The existing facility is antiquated and a lot smaller than it needs to be. They take in about 500 animals a month, and it’s really packed in there,” Gallegos said. “There is no separation between sick and well animals. The existing HVAC system is not adequate for the occupants. There is also a severe lack of storage space in the existing facility.”

McDonald spoke about the building space the firm is looking at, which in turn led to the proposed floor plan.

“We take those programmatic spaces, and we have an area attached to them, re-group them, and we start forming the shape of a building,” McDonald said. “We worked with city staff to make sure we were getting the locations correct, and then we refine them to get the floor plan correct.”

Afterward, the firm works to make sure the building circulation flows and notes how the building connects to outdoor sections like kennels, storage, and intake.

This is in addition to the indoor facilities for dogs and cats that will provide for adequate space for the animals, as well as for services like food prep and medical exams.

“Once we have the organization of the space, we start checking each individual section to ensure they have enough space to work,” McDonald continued.

The feedback the firm received from City of Gallup staff showed them the areas they should emphasize, McDonald added.

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“We wanted to make sure we had storage spread throughout the building in convenient locations,” he said.

The presentation slides showed the new facility would have just over 1,320 square feet in storage space, ranging from hazmat, supplies, food, cleaning supplies, records, and more.

Huitt-Zolars has budgeted just under 16,000 square feet for the floor plan. The conceptual floor plan in the presentation takes up about 14,460 square feet.

Currently, there are two proposed sites for the new shelter. The first site is the existing location on Balok Street. The second site is on potentially donated land near Hasler Valley Road.

Gallegos highlighted some of the advantages of building at the first location, including: the site being adjacent to Cedar Animal Medical Center, ample public access locations, available utilities, and the public’s familiarity with the existing animal services.

He also spoke of some of the disadvantages of the first site, the largest being a 20-foot utility easement where they cannot build.

As for the second site, Gallegos mentioned advantages including a possible property donation to the city, ample space for the proposed facilities and a favorable building orientation.

As far as disadvantages, Gallegos said the terrain could be more difficult to build on and there could potential air quality concerns due to the location of a concrete mix supplier in the vicinity.

Mayor Jackie McKinney spoke about the conditions the city would have to fulfill in order to have the property at the proposed second site donated.

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“The condition of potential donated property is the family is willing to donate property if it is used solely and strictly for the animal control center,” McKinney said.

This would in turn affect the estimated costs of the project, he added.

The square foot costs for the facility is about \$325, according to McDonald. This means the whole facility, at the estimated 15,585 square feet, would cost just under \$6 million.

After equipment costs and professional service fees, the overall project cost comes to just over \$7.1 million.

Once site development costs are taken into consideration, which includes work for sidewalks, parking, and utilities, the Balok Street site would total about \$7.9 million.

The Hasler Valley site, which includes site development costs, as well as any specific site costs, comes to just over \$8 million, which includes the potential property donation.

After the presentation, McKinney said he planned to abstain from voting on the matter, given the looming Municipal Officer Elections. There will be a new mayor and potentially new council members having to deal with this matter in the coming weeks.

“I have personal friends of mine on both side[s] of these land issues, I would rather be fully transparent,” he said. “I don’t want to encumber [the next mayor].”

With this detail in mind, the decision to table the selection of the site for an upcoming meeting was approved with a 5-0 vote.

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