



Questions That May Be Asked and Appropriate Answers

Regarding the Animals

- Q How many animals do you handle a year? How many cats/dogs?
A See the Friends Fact Sheet – about 2,700 in 2003. Average intake increase over the last 8 years has been about 4%.
- Q How much do you charge to adopt an animal?
A See http://www.dearborn-animals.com/adop_info/AdoptionFees.htm (note that this sheet is dated and that adoption prices will always be current here)
A Cats - \$70, Kittens (4 months or younger) - \$80 Note that we have a special program currently in effect called *Adopt a Friend for a Friend* – this is a 25% reduction in the total adoption cost if two cats or kittens are adopted at the same time (note that this is equivalent to a 50% reduction in the adoption fee for the second cat or kitten).
A Dogs: Puppies (4 months and younger) and Adult Lap Dogs - \$150, Larger Adults - \$120, Note that we have a special program for Golden Years - \$100.
- Q What does your adoption price include?
A See http://www.dearborn-animals.com/adop_info/AdoptionFees.htm In general, testing, vaccinations, sterilization, and microchip identification.
- Q Can you tell me about your adoption process?
A Refer to http://www.dearborn-animals.com/adop_info/adoption.htm for complete information. Every prospective adoptor must complete an application (available at the Shelter or online) which is fully screened. Appro
- Q What kinds of dogs / cats do you have available for adoption?
A All kinds including purebred dogs. You can visit the Shelter, visit our website www.dearborn-animals.com for photos and descriptions of all our adoptable animals, or attend one of our many offsite adoptions (call the Shelter or check the calendar on the website for dates, locations, and times). If they have a specific question or seems generally interested, please offer to have Elaine stop by their table to answer their questions and then tell Elaine.
- Q Why do you require that adopted animals be spayed or neutered?
A The State of Michigan requires that Shelters collect a deposit to help ensure that animals are sterilized. Given that there are an estimated 70,000 dogs and cats are born every day because of unwanted breeding in the United States alone, we are committed to reducing this pet overpopulation problem and the needless suffering of all these animals. The State of Michigan estimated that the mandatory spay/neuter law helps save an estimated 250,000 dogs and cats from being unwanted.
A Spaying /neutering your pet is good for your pet, you, and the community. Please refer to <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11879> for more information.

Spaying or Neutering Is Good for Your Pet

- Spaying and neutering helps dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives.
- Spaying and neutering can eliminate or reduce the incidence of a number of health problems that can be very difficult or expensive to treat.
- Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the incidence of breast cancer, particularly when your pet is spayed before her first estrous cycle.
- Neutering eliminates testicular cancer and decreases the incidence of prostate disease.

Spaying or Neutering Is Good for You

- Spaying and neutering makes pets better, more affectionate companions.
- Neutering cats makes them less likely to spray and mark territory.
- Spaying a dog or cat eliminates her heat cycle. Estrus lasts an average of six to 12 days, often twice a year, in dogs and an average of six to seven days, three or more times a year, in cats. Females in heat can cry incessantly, show nervous behavior, and attract unwanted male animals.
- Unsterilized animals often exhibit more behavior and temperament problems than do those who have been spayed or neutered.
- Spaying and neutering can make pets less likely to bite.
- Neutering makes pets less likely to roam the neighborhood, run away, or get into fights.

Spaying and Neutering Are Good for the Community

- Communities spend millions of dollars to control unwanted animals.
- Irresponsible breeding contributes to the problem of dog bites and attacks.
- Animal shelters are overburdened with surplus animals.
- Stray pets and homeless animals get into trash containers, defecate in public areas or on private lawns, and frighten or anger people who have no understanding of their misery or needs.
- Some stray animals also scare away or kill birds and wildlife.

Q Why do you require that cats be kept indoors?

A Millions of cats suffer and die because their owners give them free reign to roam the neighborhood. When cats are left outside unsupervised, their freedom to roam comes at a cost because they have a vastly increased chance of being injured, becoming ill, or even dying. The estimated average life span of a free-roaming cat is less than three years—compared to 12–15 years for the average indoor-only cat. Even the cat who only occasionally ventures outdoors unsupervised can fall victim to automobiles, predators, disease, and other hazards. In fact, two out of three veterinarians recommend keeping cats indoors, most often citing dangers from vehicles and disease. Even cats in "safe" suburban neighborhoods can meet untimely fates and never return home. Fewer than 5% of "found" cats taken in by animal shelters are reunited with their families.

A For more information, please see <http://www.hsus.org/ace/13960>.

Q What is a microchip?

A We use AVID® microchips. Developed by a veterinarian, the AVID® microchip is safe, permanent and takes only seconds to administer. The tiny injectable "chip" contains a one-of-a-kind identification number and is recognized worldwide. For those animals being spayed or neutered, we send the microchip injection for the vet to administer while the animal is under anesthetic. A special scanner is used to read the microchip through the skin of the animal. When an animal is found, the animal feels nothing as the chip's number quickly appears in the scanner's viewing window. With a phone call, the registered chip can be traced back to the Shelter's records of who adopted the animal.

A For more information and other possible Q&As concerning microchips, please refer to <http://www.avidmicrochip.com/>.

Q Why do you require a microchip?

A According to the Humane Society of the United States, more than 8 million dogs and cats a year end up in shelters and of those, about half are euthanized. Most of these animals are "owned" and have just become lost. Owners often do not know where to look for their lost animals or give up looking before the animal is found. Very few lost animals wear identification tags. A microchip is a permanent identification and in effect, is the animals way of finding their lost owners. Our goal is to return as many animals as possible to their caring owners, thereby reducing the need to euthanize.

Q Are you a no-kill shelter?

- A Although we strive to find every adoptable animal a home, we can not guarantee this. We are striving to be a no-kill facility and are pleased to report that for the past 4 years we have not had to euthanize an animal because of cage space. Animals whose temperament is judged to be a safety risk or whose health condition is too serious are humanely and lovingly euthanized. This summer has been especially difficult and we are currently overcrowded with cats. Increased adoptions and foster care homes can assist with this situation.
- Q Do you Board animals?
- A No, but you can check our web site or the yellow pages for a listing of available Boarding facilities and pet sitters in the area. You also can call the Shelter for this information. We do not make recommendations, merely provide the information as a service.
- Q How do you dispose of deceased animals?
- A We have a contract with AAA Pet Services in Taylor. Our animals are cremated.
- Q Can you tell me what flats, apartments, and condos in the Dearborn area allow pets?
- A Please contact the Shelter at 943-2697 for a current list.

Regarding the Friends

- Q Do you own the animal shelter?
- A No. The City of Dearborn owns the animal shelter. The Friends operate the Shelter under contract with the City.
- Q How many employees do the Friends have?
- A We currently have 4 full time and 6 part time employees. Our Executive Director is a Licensed Veterinary Technician with over 20 years of experience in the animal-sheltering field. She came to us from Michigan Humane Society. Our Kennel Manager also is a veterinary technician.
- Q How many volunteers do the Friends have?
- A We have over 600 on the volunteer roster.
- Q How are the Friends governed?
- A We are governed by Bylaws that are registered with the State of Michigan, a set of Policies, and operate according to an annually refreshed strategic plan.
- Q How are Board members elected?
- A See the Bylaws for Board member requirements and election process.
- Q Do you need volunteers? What do volunteers do? How do I become a volunteer?
- A We are always in need of great volunteers. Volunteers can contribute their time by working in the Shelter with the animals or doing administrative tasks, or outside the Shelter by helping with events, working on the newsletter, doing mailings, etc. Even if you can only give an hour or two, you can make a dog happier by giving it a walk or a cat happier by providing needed loving. You can get a volunteer application at the Shelter or from the web site or I would be happy to take your contact information and mail one to you. We provide an orientation for volunteers including specific information about how to handle the animals. In-shelter volunteers are assigned a "Buddy" to help them.
- Q What percentage of the Friends expenses go to administrative costs?
- A Only 5% of all funds go to administrative costs. This is well below the national guidelines for nonprofits of 20%. We apply every penny we can directly for the animals.

Q What percentage of the revenue does the City provide?

A The subsidy paid to the Friends for the operation of the Shelter is negotiated every year as a part of the contract renewal. Currently, this subsidy accounts for about 25% of our revenue.

About the Shelter and Plans for the New Shelter

Q How large is the Shelter? When was it constructed? Where is it? What are the hours of operation? Etc?

A Please refer to the Fact Sheet.

Q How has the economy affected the plans for the new Shelter?

A Unfortunately, we had delays in 2002 – our new Shelter Director had a new baby and operating requirements took priority. This year, we have geared up again with a working Committee. The City has partnered with us in supporting the need for a new shelter and has allocated the land, but can not at this time commit any funds. So, we have undertaken the full fundraising effort. If you are interested in the details, we'd be happy to meet with you and review them.

Q How much is the new Shelter expected to cost?

A Currently the projected costs are about \$5 million.

Q Why so much money?

A There are several reasons:

- All of our benchmarking studies showed that new buildings increase traffic. The building was designed to handle an increased number of animals.
- The current facility has no public spaces where community members can spend time with the animals – either through volunteering, spending time with an animal they are considering making a family member, cuddling a cat, etc. This new facility has been designed to encourage the public to visit and make it a pleasant experience.
- The front wing of the building has been designed to accommodate educational and revenue generation activities. Owned animal services will not only generate revenue, but also help to keep animals in caring homes. A frequent reason animals are returned to the Shelter is poor behavior. Dog and pup training classes help remedy this. A doggie day care and spa will help busy working people.

Q Will any of the revenue generating activities compete with local business?

A No – the medical clinic will be for Shelter animals only. It also will be used a few times a year to provide low cost spay neuter programs to help with the pet overpopulation problem. The retail store will offer primarily logo merchandise and pet starter kits. Competitive studies show that there is a huge demand in the area for an upscale doggie daycare.

Q What are the current problems at the existing Shelter?

A There are numerous compelling reasons to construct a new facility. The more major concerns are that the current facility is:

- 24 years old and in need of major and most probably increasingly expensive repairs
- Insufficient to provide a positive experience for visiting members of the community (unappealing location, crowded conditions, high noise and odor levels, no get-acquainted or counseling areas)
- Very difficult for the staff and volunteers to work in (constrained and difficult work areas and limited storage space)
- Inadequate to provide a healthy environment for the animals (poor air exchange, poor sewage disposal, porous housing materials).

Q I've heard that the new Shelter is going to be a green building. What does this mean?

A A green or environmentally sustainable building is one, which in its design, construction, and operation, makes a minimal draw on non-renewable resources and give high priority to respecting the

physical environment. Such things as maximum natural light usage, the use of sustainable non-toxic materials, energy and water conservation are considered. In general, building green provides enhanced health and happiness for both the animal and human occupants. There are increased initial upfront costs, but these are more than offset in the ongoing operation.