



AGENDA MEMO

Business of the City Council

City of Sweeny, Texas

Meeting Date	03.19.2024	Agenda Item	
Approved by City Manager	Yes	Presenter(s)	Lindsay Koskiniemi, City Manager Leigh Ann Thornton, Donor
Reviewed by City Attorney	Yes	Department	Animal Control
Subject	Discussion and possible action to authorize the City Manager to enter an agreement for the acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$50,000.00 US Dollars for the sole purpose of improving the Sweeny Animal Shelter and request for approval of the proposed animal shelter improvement for inclusion into the City's adopted CIP.		
Attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed agreement prepared by Legal Counsel - Site map - Staff prepared preliminary concept - Email form L. Thornton concerning in-kind contributions - Email to / from B. Kotrla concerning in-kind contribution commitment - Draft RFQ for architectural / engineered design services for proposed animal shelter building 		
Financial Information	Expenditure Required:	N/A	
	Amount Budgeted:	N/A	
	Account Number:	To be created as a segregated fund at Council's direction.	
	Additional Appropriation Required:		
	Additional Account Number:		

Executive Summary

Fundraiser:

On February 10th, 2024, private citizen, Leigh Ann Thornton, a resident of the City of Sweeny, hosted a fund raiser at the Sweeny Community Center to raise donations for the sole purpose of improving the existing animal shelter, an outdoor structure maintained at the Sweeny Sewer Plant, a facility outside of the City's limits. The event and raffle tickets raised approximately \$50,000.00.

Shelter Background:

This agenda item proposes the execution of an agreement to accept the raised donations for the sole purpose of improving the animal shelter.

Prior to the event, staff had conducted internal discussions around prospective projects to include with a Capital Improvement Project program (CIP) for Council's consideration. While the animal shelter improvement project has not been formally presented and accepted into the adopted CIP by City Council, internal discussions have involved repurposing a dilapidated building between the Sweeny Public Works Office and the Sweeny Water Plant along 2nd Street and facing Peach Street.

This site is currently in poor condition with broken windows, missing doors, and rusted through corrugated aluminum sides and roofing (images below), however, staff's assessment of the structure is the steel beams comprising the frame are in good condition. It is the opinion of City staff that the concrete foundation and steel beams could be repurposed to a climate-controlled facility and serve as an improved animal shelter site. The approx. square footage of the building is 1,450 sq ft.



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The current animal shelter is outside of the City's limits and inconveniently inaccessible to the public. Currently, if potential adopters wish to see the shelter dogs, they must have an appointment with the Animal Control Officer to have a site visit, as the facility is in a secured site. The existing animal shelter does not offer air conditioning and is strictly outdoors with a roof structure and secured fencing to house the shelter dogs.

Staff assessments of how to improve shelter dog adoption rates indicate the location of the shelter is the most imposing roadblock to achieving higher adoption rates.

New Shelter Site:

A new facility at the proposed site would keep shelter dogs within the City's limits and increase the public's access to the animals. In addition to having a climate-controlled site, the reduction in potential animal contracted diseases and infection due to the outdoor elements could be significantly reduced such as heartworm disease, caused by a parasitic worm called *Dirofilaria immitis*. The worms are spread through the bite of a mosquito.

Proposed site improvements developed by City staff include:

- Climate controlled building
- Indoor / outdoor dog kennels
- Dog run (outside)
- Visitation room (inside)
- Office space for Animal Control Officer to meet with members of the public
- Lobby and service counter
- ADA-approved restroom with shower facility (shower for staff use – currently NO city facilities offer a functioning shower for employee use.)
- Supply area
- Mop closet
- Roll up door for easy transport of animals (may be able to repurpose existing roll up doors)
- Feline adoption kenneling area
- Intake / medical room
- Parking improvements (asphalt pavement)

With the acceptance of the donation of raised funds, the City will request the support of Council to open a dedicated bank account and start a dedicated fund for the animal shelter (subsequent actions items on Council Meeting agenda for March 19, 2024).

Although the building is proposed to be repurposed to be the most cost-effective solution to having a true animal shelter facility, professional architectural design will be required pursuant to the City's liability insurance and windstorm coverage policy.

Estimated costs for design is typically 12% to 18% of the construction cost (conservative general rule of thumb). A draft Sweeny Animal Shelter Improvements Request for Qualifications is included as an attachment to this agenda item and is ready to publish upon direction from City Council.

In a previous discussion with Texas Rebuild, the estimated turnkey cost to rehab the Peach Street building was \$200,000. Staff believes the overall cost could be closer to \$300,000, therefore, we estimate the design of the building could cost between \$36,000 and \$54,000. Staff is also assessing the valuation of in-kind contributions that have been verbally committed by various businesses.



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In-Kind Contributions:

Ms. Thornton had initially requested that the donation be contingent on the completion of the project within an 18-month timeframe, however that is not written in the agreement, due to not fully knowing what the project scope is with consideration to possible in-kind service contributions.

- Ronnie Stewart, a local contractor, verbally stated he was willing to try to donate materials in amounts to be determined once materials needs are known. Labor would not be included with an in-kind donation.
- Steve Linder – Per attached email, will provide labor to install H/VAC and can get H/VAC units at cost (City's obligation).
- Bob Kotrla with Kotrla Electrical Services (KES) – possible contribution of donated professional electrical services in discussion. Specific scope of work unknown.
- Tom Baily with Straight Fence Company – donation of labor, cost of materials incumbent on City.

Alternative Option (If Council decides now is not the right time to approach the animal shelter improvement project:

This project will need to be funded in part by the City. At this time, the City has not capital projects funding budgeted in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Should City Council decide that now is not the right time to begin this project, the staff recommendation will be to accept the donation and open a high interest-bearing account through the Logic Investment Pool to keep the total donation and allow it to gain interest until the project is fully funded, should Mrs. Thornton be amenable to that arrangement. Logic Investment Pool daily average yield for the month of February 2024 was 5.4812%



Backside of proposed location



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North side of building



Front of building – additional parking and paving needed.



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Backside of building



Steel beams inside building



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Steel beams

Recommended Action

If Council approves of the Animal Shelter Improvement Project at this time, staff recommends council accept \$50,000 in funds raised by Leigh Ann Thornton for use animal shelter improvements and authorize the City Manager to enter an agreement to accept the funds. Additionally, staff also recommends that Council adopt the animal shelter into the City's CIP plan, and if Council chooses, will direct the City Manager to assemble a project team and advertise a request for qualifications for building design services to assess the project budget and report back to City Council with a project scope and budget for construction.

Motion to Approve:

"I move we: 1) Accept the animal shelter improvement project into the City's adopted CIP plan, 2) the authorize the city manager to enter into an agreement with Leigh Ann Thornton to accept funds raised for animal shelter improvements for Sweeny Impound in the amount of \$50,000; and 3) direct the city manager to assemble a project team and solicit for professional design services of the new site and report back to City Council with a solidified project scope and budget by the regular City Council meeting on September 24, 2024."

Alternative Motion:

"I move we 1) enter an agreement to accept the donation in the amount of \$50,000.00 between the City of Sweeny and Leigh Ann Thornton and 2) Authorize staff to open a dedicated Logic Investment Pool account for the entirety of the donation until the project is fully funded, and 3) direct the city manager to budget for capital costs related to this project in subsequent fiscal years for approval by City Council, and 4) assess associated costs by hiring a professional design consultant.