

Trail Days (Sept. 16) will also be made at the Monday meeting.

STEVE HUPPERT
Christiansburg Town Council
Christiansburg

How to help surplus animals

A number of recent letters about the euthanasia of a dog (Brady) at the Montgomery County Animal Care and Control Shelter highlight an important issue but miss the point by focusing on the death of one dog. The issue is the excess of homeless and unwanted companion animals in Montgomery County.

The county shelter, which can house 38 dogs, was completed in 1979, when the population of Montgomery County was around 63,000. The current U.S. Census population estimates are 84,303, and the number of stray and abandoned animals has increased accordingly. Although various rescue organizations and "no kill" shelters provide a haven for some of these animals, the majority of homeless dogs are the responsibility of animal control. The existing shelter is not equipped to care for cats. Given the small size and staff of the current facility, it is simply inevitable and unfortunate that dogs, even healthy dogs, and even dogs that concerned citizens name but cannot adopt, must be euthanized to make space for new arrivals.

The point the letters criticizing the euthanasia of Brady miss is that the animal care and control staff have the unenviable job of making difficult decisions about the future of unwanted animals. These are community-generated animals, and the community should share responsibility for reducing the numbers of surplus companion animals and provide better shelter facilities for stray and abandoned dogs and cats.

There are many things you can do to help change the current situation:

■ Spay or neuter your pets and encourage your neighbors to do the same.

■ Adopt a dog from a local shelter <http://nrvanimalshelters.com>.

■ Make sure your pets

wear identification (ID tag or microchip) and are licensed. A dog license ensures that your dog can be returned to you if lost. Many dogs each year are returned to their owners because they have proper identification and licensing your dog is the law. Revenues from licenses support county animal care and control programs.

■ Join the Montgomery County Friends of Animal Care and Control: <http://mcfacc.org>. MCFACC is a volunteer organization working with the county to improve the shelter, educate and offer incentives to citizens (such as low-cost spay/neuter for animals adopted from the shelter) and establish a volunteer program at the shelter to expand hours on weekends.

■ Let county supervisors know you support increased funding for animal control and expansion of animal care services, including more shelter staff, a shelter medicine program, humane education programs and the building of a large, modern shelter that accommodates cats and dogs. Neighboring counties of Roanoke and Pulaski have managed to build very nice facilities to accommodate their animal control needs, and our goal is to work with Montgomery County to do the same for our community-generated animals.

JASON SHELTON and other members
Friends of Animal Care and Control board of directors
Blacksburg

Cut the 'stand up' council theatrics

A disturbing trend is taking place at public hearings for controversial projects during Blacksburg Town Council meetings. If it continues, residents, including children, may believe that rational, constructive ideas are less important than emotional, superficial theatrics.

The first demonstration of this trend was at the May 9 council meeting. Supporters of the subject South Main Street development came early, filled many seats and stood on cue when asked to

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