

CHARLOTTESVILLE-ALBEMARLE SPCA ZMA & SP NARRATIVE

Project Proposal:

Background Information:

The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA (CASPCA), founded in 1914, is a nonprofit, open admission animal shelter whose purpose is finding permanent adoptive homes for animals. In addition to functioning as a nonprofit organization, the CASPCA performs an important community function by providing pound services to the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County for seized, stray, homeless, abandoned, or unwanted animals. The organization also serves this community by offering lost & found services, low-cost spay-neuter, vaccinations, and microchipping, as well as educational opportunities, youth camps, pet therapy and dog obedience. The CASPCA provides employment for an average of 60 people, and serves over 2,700 shelter animals a year. More than 4,500 spay/neuter surgeries were performed in 2016, 2,900 of which were for owned pets within our community. CASPCA continues to serve at the forefront of No Kill communities in this country, helping thousands of animals each year receive the care they need to find homes or remain with their families.

The CASPCA has completed a multi-year Master Planning process and is now ready to move forward with implementing the Master Plan. The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA's entire current facility is located on TMP 45-86, but it purchased an adjacent parcel, TMP 45-88, in late 2013 in anticipation of future expansion needs. TMP 45-86 is zoned C-1 and has Special Use Permits in place for an animal shelter, veterinary hospital, and outside fenced dog exercise areas. TMP 45-88, however, is zoned R-6, which does not permit these uses. The CASPCA is submitting this rezoning application to request a change from R-6 to C-1 for TMP 45-88. They are also submitting a special use permit application to amend and expand their current special use permits for an Animal Shelter, Veterinary Hospital and outside fenced dog exercise areas (reference SP200000022 & SP200700044) for both parcels.

Need for Improvements:

CASPCA's current facility was designed and built over a decade ago for a population who was either adopted quickly or euthanized. The organization realized a No Kill vision in 2006 and committed to saving all healthy and treatable animals brought to the shelter. With this policy shift, however, the length of stay and number of animals with serious health and behavioral problems has increased, and the facility is consistently strained to meet the needs of the animals and the community. Additionally, veterinary services have substantially expanded to address the comprehensive health care of shelter animals, yet function from a space originally designed for limited, short-term care. Despite dramatically increased needs and demands, there is little that can be done with the existing shelter design to accommodate these changes.

The proposed building expansion and renovation will address several immediate needs:

Improved housing for dogs and cats: As services have expanded, the CASPCA has been able to save more lives of those animals requiring extensive medical and behavioral rehabilitation. Subsequently, these animals have a longer length of stay in the shelter. The proposed building expansion and renovation will allow for enhanced housing options for the animals, providing stimulation, increased social interaction, and promoting expression of natural behaviors.

Updated, expanded veterinary facility: The CASPCA clinic provides care for all animals residing in the shelter, the 100+ animals in foster homes throughout the community, feral and free roaming community cats, and pets from underserved areas within our community. In addition, spay/neuter services are available to all members of the public. All of this work is currently accomplished in a small, outdated clinic that shares a lobby with the rest of the shelter. The proposed building expansion and renovation includes an updated veterinary facility with a separate entrance. This clinic will support our work to prevent disease transmission and outbreak both in the shelter and in the community, and save more lives of injured and diseased animals in need.

Refined capacity to address behavioral concerns: Leading shelters across the country are able to save more sick and injured animals; therefore, addressing behavioral health of sheltered animals is becoming increasingly necessary. As one of the leading shelters in the country, this trend holds true at the CASPCA. We have found that unwanted behavior is one of the main reasons for animal relinquishment. The proposed building expansion and renovation will provide appropriate space to address these concerns, allow for stress reduction via enhanced housing, and offer the ideal space to hold obedience classes for members of the public.

Enhanced ability to function as a community resource center: In addition to sheltering homeless animals, the CASPCA promotes animal welfare through educational opportunities for the community, such as youth camps, birthday parties, pet therapy, and obedience classes. The proposed building expansion and renovation will increase our ability to provide these important services within the community through meeting spaces, a resource center, and allowing adequate parking.

Saving more lives through collaboration with other organizations: The proposed building expansion and renovation will strengthen our established relationship with the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County Animal Control. New space will be designated as intake and isolation for animals brought in by Animal Control, as well as a private office for Animal Control Officers. In addition, the expansion and renovation will give us the ability to widen our area of support for shelters in neighboring and outlying communities, providing aid for animals residing in kill facilities.

Project Information:

The project is a multi-phased renovation and expansion of the CASPCA facility. The expansion consists of the construction of an approximately 9,200 SF cat facility and veterinary clinic, and other existing shelter additions such as a salliport, intake addition and new entrance totaling +/- 3,225 SF. The design also includes a new entrance canopy. The renovation includes extensive renovation of the existing facility (dog kennels, vet clinic, reception and front desk area, etc.). The project will also include construction of additional parking and a stormwater facility. The phases are planned to be executed in a linear manner. A more long-term phase is the addition of an animal training center.

Phase 1 – Dog Kennel and Outdoor Atrium Renovation

Phase 2 – Cat Facility/Veterinary Clinic Addition, Sitework, Parking, Sallipoint/Intake and Kennel Additions

Phase 3 – Main Building Interior Renovation

Phase 4 – Entry and New Canopy Façade Addition

Phase 5 – Training Center/support building, outside fenced exercise areas and trails

Special Use Permit Information:

A special use permit on TMP 45-86 was approved in 2000 for an animal shelter and veterinary clinic. In 2007 a special use permit was also approved for outside fenced dog exercise areas. These uses have not resulted in substantial detriment to adjacent lots. Given the history of the current facility, the scope of the proposed renovation and expansion, the services provided to the community, and the limited size of TMP 45-88, amending and expanding the special use permit should not result in any substantial detriment to the adjacent parcels. The parcels are either currently undeveloped or have existing commercial or industrial uses. The conceptual layout provides additional screening area where possible, and keeps the uses as condensed as topography, logistical requirements, and other site constraints allow. CASPCA has existed in this same area for decades and hasn't had issues with their neighbors. This proposal will not change the character of the zoning district.

The Zoning Ordinance allows for all of these uses by special use permit in the C-1 district; therefore, the intent of the ordinance would appear to be to allow these uses where appropriate. As noted, all of these uses are already permitted on TMP 45-86 and expanding the special use permit to TMP 45-88 allows for

necessary enhancement and expansion of CASPCA services. The C-1 zoning district allows for a variety of uses; the proposed/existing special permit uses are in keeping with the uses permitted by right.

It is imperative that the CASPCA maintain a location that is convenient for County and City animal control employees, as well as citizens of the community. This location is, however, limited in size which makes it difficult to provide the separation requirements listed in section 5.1.11. While this proposal includes applications for special exceptions from the separation requirements, as were approved for the current facility, the CASPCA intends to continue to be a good neighbor with a concept that, while it cannot provide a 200' or 500' separation, will maintain as much wooded area as possible between CASPCA uses and neighboring parcels. The planning commission was generally supportive of the necessary special exceptions during the CCP review; the associated applications have been included as part of this submittal package.

The public health, safety and welfare is very closely tied to the mission of, and services provided by, the CASPCA. As mentioned throughout this narrative, they provide several important community services that benefit the health, safety and welfare of citizens. In addition to providing high quality pound services for Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville, they also serve the public at large through their various services. The goal of this proposal is to enhance their facility to provide even better-quality services to the community.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:

The subject properties have two different Comprehensive Plan designations; Parcel 86 (existing SPCA facility) is shown as Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial and Parcel 88 is shown as primarily Urban Density Residential with a small portion as Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial. These properties lie within the Berkmar Drive corridor. This particular section of the corridor is increasingly exhibiting a more commercial character. Most of the parcels along Berkmar are zoned either C-1 or HC. TMP 45-88 was sold to the CASPCA by the current owner of TMP 45-90 to the south. The CASPCA has been in this location, either in the previous or current building, since 1955; as it grows to offer improved and additional services it is essential that it has room to adequately address the needs of the animals in its care, and the community at large.

This proposal was reviewed through a CCP application for conformity with the comprehensive plan. Both staff and the planning commission felt that the proposal was in conformity and did not necessitate a comprehensive plan amendment. As was included in the Staff Report, uses like the SPCA, which blend elements of institutional, service, and public use categories, may be considered as a secondary use in the Urban Density Designation, particularly when proposed at an appropriate scale.

The Comprehensive Plan speaks to the importance of compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods and uses when introducing infill and redevelopment. Specific language that is most relevant to this proposal is found under "Objective 6: Promote infill and redevelopment that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and uses." This proposal to rezone TMP 45-88 seeks to match the existing zoning of the adjacent current CASPCA parcel and will provide screening in the required 50' building setback along the adjacent residentially zoned parcels. Given the dense, urban designations provided in the comprehensive plan, a 50' wooded screening area should provide for adequate compatibility with the neighboring parcels. As mentioned above, it is imperative that the CASPCA maintain a location that is convenient for the community but this convenient location means there is limited land available.

Since Phase 5, the training and support facilities, is a future phase of the project, the exact location and size of this building is yet to be determined. The concept plan shows the 50' screening area along the adjacent property lines, but allows for flexibility for the future locations of the building, parking, fenced exercise areas, walking trails and other associated elements. The entire area outside of the 50'