

## MEMORANDUM

January 26, 2021

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Robert H. Drummer, Senior Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Bill 37-21, Animal Control – Animal Services Advisory Committee - Established

PURPOSE: Worksession – recommendation expected

**Expected attendee:**

Thomas Koenig, Executive Director of the Office of Animal Services

Bill 37-21, Animal Control – Animal Services Advisory Committee - Established, sponsored by Lead Sponsor Council then Vice-President Alborno and Co-Sponsors Councilmember Navarro, then Council President Hucker, Councilmembers Katz, Jawando, Rice, Riemer, and Glass, was introduced on October 19, 2021. A public hearing with two speakers was held on November 9, 2021. A Government Operations & Fiscal Policy Committee worksession is scheduled for January 31, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Bill 37-21 would establish a new County Animal Services Advisory Committee. The Committee would have 11 voting members representing different stakeholders and 3 non-voting *ex officio* members from the Office of Animal Services. All members would be appointed by the Executive and confirmed by the Council. The Committee would work with the Office of Animal Services to advise the Executive and the Council on issues and recommendations for:

- (1) animal care and welfare;
- (2) animal rescue;
- (3) animal fostering and adoption;
- (4) control of the animal population;
- (5) animal bite prevention;
- (6) zoonotic disease transmission;
- (7) educating the public on safely coexisting with wildlife;
- (8) best practices for animal shelters;
- (9) recruiting volunteers for the County animal shelter; and
- (10) the operation of the Office.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>#AnimalServices

Issues of animal well-being are a significant interest to a large segment of Montgomery County residents as evidenced by the activity at – and calls to - the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC), and by the number of actively supported non-profit organizations providing rescue and care services for domesticated animals and wildlife.

Montgomery County is home to a wide variety of animal care experts and related organizations that can provide OAS with support and expertise that will allow OAS to better serve Montgomery County residents and animals.

OAS already relies on foster and other organizations to extend their reach. An Advisory Committee will provide an institutionalized and formal mechanism for OAS' work with the broader animal care community and interested residents. An Advisory Group will also provide a conduit for discussions with the animal care and broader community. Finally, OAS will benefit from institutionalized input of the community expertise available in Montgomery County, as well as the input from the community they serve.

OLO concluded that the Bill would have a negligible impact on racial equity and social justice in the County (©11) and an insignificant impact on economic conditions in the County (©9). OMB estimated the annual cost to operate the new committee to be \$3480 (©6).

### **Public Hearing**

Both Thomas Koenig, Director of the Office of Animal Services, speaking on behalf of the Executive, and Susan Rich supported the Bill as introduced. The Council also received written testimony supporting the Bill from Jennifer Hughes, representing MCPAW (©13) and Linda McMakin, representing Friends of Montgomery County Animals, Inc. (©14). Ms. Hughes suggested amendments to the membership of the new Committee to specify representatives from 3 different animal rights organizations unless they no longer exist – MCPAW, Second Chance Wildlife Center, and the Montgomery County Cat Coalition.

### **Issues**

#### **1. Should the membership of the new committee be modified?**

Lead Sponsor, Council President Albornoz, may introduce an amendment to specify representatives from MCPAW, Second Chance Wildlife Center, and the Montgomery County Cat Coalition. The amendment would be:

*Amend lines 13-31 as follows:*

(2) The Executive should appoint:

(A) 1 licensed veterinarian with pet and wildlife experience;

(C) 1 person with expertise in animal or pet behavior;

(D) 1 person with experience in recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers;

- (E) 1 person designated by the Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being (MCPAW) or a similar organization operating in the County if MCPAW is no longer operating in the County;
- (F) 1 person designated by the Second Chance Wildlife Center or a similar organization operating in the County if Second Chance Wildlife Center is no longer operating in the County;
- (G) 1 person representing a non-profit organization that provides animal fostering services in the County;
- (H) 1 person representing the Montgomery County Cat Coalition or a similar [[an]] organization for feral cats if the Montgomery County Cat Coalition is no longer operating in the County;
- (I) 1 person representing Friends of Montgomery County Animals (FMCA) or a similar organization operating in the County;
- (J) 1 person representing an animal rescue organization operating in the County; and
- (K) 2 public members who live or work in the County.

Although these amendments would be directive rather than mandatory for the Executive's appointments, they would increase the likelihood that these non-profit animal rights organizations currently operating in the County would have a seat at the Committee's table.

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| This packet contains:                             | <u>Circle #</u> |
| Expedited Bill 37-21                              | 1               |
| Legislative Request Report                        | 5               |
| Fiscal Impact Statement                           | 6               |
| Economic Impact Statement                         | 9               |
| Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement | 11              |
| Public Testimony                                  |                 |
| Jennifer Hughes                                   | 13              |
| Linda McMakin                                     | 14              |

Bill No. 37-21  
Concerning: Animal Control – Animal  
Services Advisory Committee -  
Established  
Revised: 1-24-22 Draft No. 4  
Introduced: October 19, 2021  
Expires: April 19, 2023  
Enacted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effective: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sunset Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ch. \_\_\_\_\_, Laws of Mont. Co. \_\_\_\_\_

## COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Lead Sponsor: Council Vice President Alborno  
Co-Sponsors: Councilmember Navarro, Council President Hucker, Councilmembers Katz,  
Jawando, Rice, Riemer, and Glass

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**AN ACT** to:

- (1) establish an Animal Services Advisory Committee;
- (2) establish guidelines for the appointment of members by the Executive;
- (3) assign duties for the Committee; and
- (4) generally amend the law governing animal services in the County.

By adding  
Montgomery County Code  
Chapter 5, Animal Control  
Section 5-105

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Boldface</b>                     | <i>Heading or defined term.</i>                            |
| <u>Underlining</u>                  | <i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>             |
| <b>[Single boldface brackets]</b>   | <i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>         |
| <u>Double underlining</u>           | <i>Added by amendment.</i>                                 |
| <b>[[Double boldface brackets]]</b> | <i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i> |
| * * *                               | <i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>                    |

*The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:*

1           **Sec. 1. Section 5-105 is added as follows:**

2    **5-105. Animal Services Advisory Committee.**

3           (a)   Definitions. In this Section the follow words have the meanings indicated:

4               Animal means as defined in Section 5-101.

5               Committee means the Animal Services Advisory Committee.

6               Office means the Office of Animal Services.

7           (b)   Established. There is an Animal Services Advisory Committee. The  
8               Executive must appoint the members of the Committee subject to  
9               confirmation by the Council.

10          (c)   Composition and terms of members.

11           (1)   The [[Commission]] Committee has 11 voting members and 3 ex  
12               officio non-voting members.

13           (2)   The Executive should appoint:

14               (A)   1 licensed veterinarian with pet and wildlife experience;

15               (C)   1 person with expertise in animal or pet behavior;

16               (D)   1 person with experience in recruiting, training, and  
17               retaining volunteers;

18               (E)   1 person designated by the Montgomery County Partners  
19               for Animal Well-Being or a similar organization operating  
20               in the County;

21               (F)   1 person designated by the Second Chance Wildlife Center  
22               or a similar organization operating in the County;

23               (G)   1 person representing a non-profit organization that  
24               provides animal fostering services in the County;

25               (H)   1 person representing an organization for feral cats;

- (I) 1 person representing Friends of Montgomery County Animals (FMCA) or a similar organization operating in the County;
- (J) 1 person representing an animal rescue organization operating in the County; and
- (K) 2 public members who live or work in the County.
- (3) Ex officio non-voting members. The Executive must appoint the following ex officio members:
- (A) the Director of the Office or the Director's designee;
- (B) the lead veterinarian for the Office; and
- (C) the budget operations manager for the Office.
- (4) The term of each member is 3 years. After an appointment to fill a vacancy before a term expires, the successor serves the rest of the unexpired term.
- (d) Voting, officers, meetings, and compensation.
- (1) Except the ex officio members, all members of the Committee are voting members.
- (2) The Committee must elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from among its voting members.
- (3) The Committee meets at the call of the Chair. The Committee must meet as often as necessary to perform its duties, but not less than 6 times each year.
- (4) A member must serve without compensation. However, a member may request reimbursement for mileage and dependent care costs at rates established by the County.
- (e) Duties. The [[Commission]] Committee must work with the Office to advise the Executive and the Council on issues and recommendations for:

- (1) animal care and welfare;
- (2) animal rescue;
- (3) animal fostering and adoption;
- (4) control of the animal population;
- (5) animal bite prevention;
- (6) zoonotic disease transmission;
- (7) educating the public on safely coexisting with wildlife;
- (8) best practices for animal shelters;
- (9) recruiting volunteers for the County animal shelter; and
- (10) the operation of the Office.

(f) Requests for information. The Office must respond to Committee requests for information within 30 days after the Office receives the request.

(g) Annual Report. By July 1 each year, the Committee must submit to the Executive and the Council an annual report on its functions, activities, accomplishments, plans, and objectives.

(h) Advocacy. The Committee must not engage in any advocacy activity at the State or federal levels unless that [[activities]] activity is approved by the Office of Intergovernmental Relations.

(i) Staff. The Director of the Office must provide appropriate staff to the Committee.

## **Sec. 2. Transition.**

Notwithstanding paragraph (d)(2), the Executive must designate the Chair and Vice-Chair until the Committee elects the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Executive must stagger the initial terms of the voting members so that the terms of approximately one-third of the members expires each year.

## LEGISLATIVE REQUEST REPORT

Bill 37-21

*Animal Control – Animal Services Advisory Committee - Established*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>DESCRIPTION:</b>                       | The purpose of the Montgomery County Animal Services Advisory Committee is to, in partnership with the Office of Animal Services, advise the County Council and the County Executive on issues pertaining to animal care and welfare, animal rescue, animal fostering and adoption, control of the animal population, animal bite prevention, zoonotic disease transmission, educating the public on safely coexisting with wildlife, best practices for animal shelters now and in the future, recruiting volunteers, and any other issues related to the operation of the County's Office of Animal Services (OAS). |
| <b>PROBLEM:</b>                           | OAS could benefit from advice from an ongoing group of community experts in animal services.  |
| <b>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:</b>              | To improve the operation of the Office of Animal Services.  |
| <b>COORDINATION:</b>                      | Office of Animal Services   |
| <b>FISCAL IMPACT:</b>                     | Office of Management and Budget   |
| <b>ECONOMIC IMPACT:</b>                   | Office of Legislative Oversight   |
| <b>EVALUATION:</b>                        | To be researched.   |
| <b>EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE:</b>              | To be researched.   |
| <b>SOURCE OF INFORMATION:</b>             | Robert H. Drummer, Senior Legislative Attorney (240) 777-7895   |
| <b>APPLICATION WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES:</b> | To be researched.   |
| <b>PENALTIES:</b>                         | Not applicable.   |



**Fiscal Impact Statement**  
**Council Bill 37-21, Animal Control – Animal Services Advisory Committee - Established**

**1. Legislative Summary**

The purpose of Bill 37-21 establishing the Montgomery County Animal Services Advisory Committee is to, in partnership with the Office of Animal Services, advise the County Council and the County Executive on issues pertaining to animal care and welfare, animal rescue, animal fostering and adoption, control of the animal population, animal bite prevention, zoonotic disease transmission, educating the public on safely coexisting with wildlife, best practices for animal shelters now and in the future, recruiting volunteers, and any other issues related to the operation of the County's Office of Animal Services (OAS).

**2. An estimate of changes in County revenues and expenditures regardless of whether the revenues or expenditures are assumed in the recommended or approved budget. Includes source of information, assumptions, and methodologies used.**

There may be costs related to in-person meetings such as travel and childcare which will be submitted for reimbursement through the BCC's \$23,000 appropriation. The BCC allows a flat rate of \$10 for transportation and \$30 for dependent care for a total of \$40 per member. *If half of the members require reimbursements (six members at \$40 per member) for the six in-person meetings, the estimated reimbursement is \$1,440.*

The Office may need to absorb the cost of an interpreter for the monthly meetings. The estimated cost is \$2,040 (*One interpreter at \$85.00 per hour for a two-hour meeting for 12 meetings per year*).

This legislation is not anticipated to have an impact on County revenues.

**3. Revenue and expenditure estimates covering at least the next 6 fiscal years.**

This legislation is not anticipated to have an impact on County revenues for the next 6 years. Expenditure estimates are approximately \$3,480 per year over the next six years based on estimated member reimbursements and the cost of an interpreter for monthly meetings (See question #2 for assumptions).

| FY22<br>6 months | FY23    | FY24    | FY25    | FY26    | FY27    |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| \$1,740          | \$3,480 | \$3,480 | \$3,480 | \$3,480 | \$3,480 |

**4. An actuarial analysis through the entire amortization period for each bill that would affect retiree pension or group insurance costs.**

There is no anticipated effect on retiree pension or group insurance costs.

**5. An estimate of expenditures related to County's information technology (IT) systems, including Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.**

There are no anticipated major costs related to the County's Information Technology (IT) systems including Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.

**6. Later actions that may affect future revenue and expenditures if the bill authorizes future spending.**

There are no future revenue impacts anticipated by this Bill. Bill 37-21 authorizes a member to request reimbursement for mileage and dependent care costs at rates established by the County. See the response in #2.

**7. An estimate of the staff time needed to implement the bill.**

It is anticipated that the Office will be assisting and, at times, facilitating the establishment of this new committee.

There will be a staff commitment to provide statistical data, policy, and procedural documents, reproduction of material, as well as pertinent information involving research and studies related to specific topics requested by the Advisory Committee. These costs will be absorbed by the Office.

To attend meetings as ex-officio members, the Office of Animal Services (OAS) estimates up to 3 senior staff members (Director or Deputy Director, Business Operations Manager and Chief Veterinarian) plus one staff liaison (Office Services Coordinator) attending monthly meetings that are approximately 2-hours long for a total of eight additional hours per month.

The Office will also pay for the Office Services Coordinator's overtime to attend these meetings (*OSC's hourly rate x 1.5 x 2-hour meeting*).

**8. An explanation of how the addition of new staff responsibilities would affect other duties.**

The Office has established staff responsibilities within the Director's Office to respond to requests for statistical data, policy, and procedural documents as well as pertinent information involving research and/or studies. Except for attendance at meetings to be established by the advisory committee, new staff responsibilities should have no or little impact on other duties assigned.

**9. An estimate of costs when an additional appropriation is needed.**

There are no anticipated or additional appropriations needed to support Bill 37-21.

**10. A description of any variable that could affect revenue and cost estimates.**

With the formation of this new advisory committee and stated objectives, there may be additional expenditures related to “educating the public” and “recruiting volunteers” in multiple languages depending on how those priorities are executed. Some expenses may include production of brochures and videos in various languages, fairs, open houses, etc. which will be paid through the Office’s budget.

*Assumptions: Translation of 887-word document from English to Other Language  
\$133.05 (.15 per word per Schreiber Translations contract) x 6 documents plus  
Reproduction cost (.10 per copy x 500 copies x 6 documents)*

| FY22    | FY23    | FY24    | FY25    | FY26    | FY27    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| \$1,098 | \$1,098 | \$1,098 | \$1,098 | \$1,098 | \$1,098 |

**11. Ranges of revenue or expenditures that are uncertain or difficult to project.**

Because the Animal Services Advisory Committee is not yet formed, and an agenda and/or objectives have not been set in place, it is difficult to project a range of expenditures or revenues until the committee is formed. The OAS assumes that most requests will primarily be administrative in nature, to include responding to requests for statistical data, policy and procedural documents; information involving national research and/or studies and recommended operational changes to OAS.

**12. If a bill is likely to have no fiscal impact, why that is the case.**

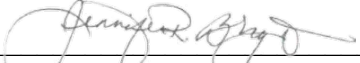
Bill 37-21 is likely to have no or little fiscal impact to the Office except those areas which have been identified above. See responses to questions #2, #3, #7, and #10. The formation of an Advisory Committee and its projected goals or objectives have not been established because the committee does not yet exist. Any resources the Advisory Committee would need is expected to be administrative in nature.

**13. Other fiscal impacts or comments.**

There are no other fiscal impacts or comments.

**14. The following contributed to and concurred with this analysis:**

Thomas J. Koenig, Executive Director, Office of Animal Services  
Bonnie White, Business Operations Manager, Office of Animal Services  
Derrick Harrigan, Office of Management and Budget

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Bryant, Director  
Office of Management and Budget

11/12/21

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Economic Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

## Bill 37-21

## Animal Control – Animal Services Advisory Committee – Established

### SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates that enacting Bill 37-21 would have an insignificant impact on economic conditions in the County.

### BACKGROUND

If enacted, Bill 37-21 would establish an Animal Services Advisory Committee, guidelines for the appointment of members by the Executive, and duties for the Committee. These duties would include advising the Executive and Council on animal care and welfare, animal rescue, animal fostering and adoption, zoonotic disease transmission, and other related issues.<sup>1</sup>

### INFORMATION SOURCES, METHODOLOGIES, and ASSUMPTIONS

The claims made in this analysis are based on the following assumption: While policies related to animal welfare may have economic impacts,<sup>2</sup> the Animal Services Advisory Committee's advisory role to the Executive and Council would have no evident impacts on private organizations based in the County or residents in terms of the Council's priority indicators.<sup>3</sup>

### VARIABLES

Not applicable

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Council, [Bill 37-21, Animal Control – Animal Services Advisory Committee – Established](#), Introduced on October 19, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, John McNerney, Animal Welfare, Economics and Policy, Report on a study undertaken for the Farm & Animal Health Economics Division of Defra, February 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County Code, [Sec. 2-81B, Economic Impact Statements](#).

# Economic Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

## IMPACTS

WORKFORCE ▪ TAXATION POLICY ▪ PROPERTY VALUES ▪ INCOMES ▪ OPERATING COSTS ▪ PRIVATE SECTOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT ▪  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▪ COMPETITIVENESS

### Businesses, Non-Profits, Other Private Organizations

Not applicable

### Residents

Not applicable

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

Not applicable

## WORKS CITED

Montgomery County Code. [Sec. 2-81B. Economic Impact Statements](#).

Montgomery County Council. [Bill 37-21, Animal Control – Animal Services Advisory Committee – Established](#). Introduced on October 19, 2021.

## CAVEATS

Two caveats to the economic analysis performed here should be noted. First, predicting the economic impacts of legislation is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, the multitude of causes of economic outcomes, economic shocks, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to *inform* the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the Bill under consideration

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Stephen Roblin (OLO) prepared this report.

# Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

## BILL 37-21: ANIMAL CONTROL — ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE — ESTABLISHED

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### SUMMARY

OLO anticipates that Bill 37-21 will have a negligible impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in Montgomery County.

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### PURPOSE OF RESJ STATEMENT

The purpose of RESJ impact statements is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. Racial equity and social justice refer to a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, power, and leadership of communities of color and low-income communities with a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities.<sup>1</sup> Achieving racial equity and social justice usually requires seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social harms that have caused racial and social inequities.<sup>2</sup>

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### PURPOSE OF BILL 37-21

The goal of Bill 37-21 is to establish a County Animal Services Advisory Committee to address issues related to animal welfare in Montgomery County. Appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Council, the Committee would consist of 11 voting members representing various stakeholders from the community and three non-voting members from the Office of Animal Services. The Committee would meet at least six times per year and submit an annual report to the County Executive and Council on its functions, activities, accomplishments, plans, and objectives. Bill 37-21 was introduced to the County Council on October 19, 2021.

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### ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

Since the intent of Bill 37-21 is to advance the welfare of animals, OLO anticipates that the bill would have a minimal impact on racial equity and social justice in the County if any impact. As such, no changes in racial equity or social justice for County residents are anticipated under Bill 37-21.

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### CAVEATS

Two caveats to this racial equity and social justice impact statement should be noted. First, predicting the impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice is a challenging, analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJ impact statement is intended to inform the legislative process rather than determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

# RESJ Impact Statement

## Bill 37-21

### CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Dr. Theo Holt, Performance Management and Data Analyst, drafted this racial equity and social justice impact statement.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition adopted from definition of racial equity described in the Racial Equity Policy Scorecard included in “Applying a Racial Equity Lens into Federal Nutrition Programs,” authored by Marlysa Gamblin; see the Government Alliance for Race and Equity’s “Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government” resource guide for understanding of the historical role of government in creating maintaining racial inequities [https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource\\_Guide.pdf](https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Adopted from racial equity definition provided by Racial Equity Tools. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

Good Afternoon Councilmembers and thank you for this opportunity to speak to Bill 37-21, a bill that will establish an Advisory Committee for the Office of Animal Services.

Not everyone may be aware that I have had extensive experience dealing with the County's animal services issues and in my various positions in the Leggett Administration was involved in the construction of the "new" adoption center and other operational issues. Today, I am speaking as a Board Member of MCPAW, an organization initially formed to support the new animal shelter.

I can be very brief. We are very much in favor of this bill with only a couple of minor language tweaks which I believe clarify the intent of the bill. Currently, the language in the bill relating to the members of the Committee reads:

**(E) 1 person designated by the Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being or a similar organization operating in the County; (F) 1 person designated by the Second Chance Wildlife Center or a similar organization operating in the County; (G) 1 person representing a non-profit organization that provides animal fostering services in the County; (H) 1 person representing an organization for feral cats;**

Both MCPAW and Second Chance Wildlife have played an integral role in animal issues for the last several years and I believe it was intended that they would be the priority organizations for representation on the Committee. If those organizations no longer operate in the County, then the legislation could specify that similar organizations would be represented. Additionally, Montgomery County Community Cat Coalition serves as a sort of umbrella organization for a number of the organizations in the County working on feral cat issues. As such, they would be the ideal organization to represent feral cat issues on the Committee. My suggested language is:

**(E) 1 person designated by the Montgomery County Partners 19 for Animal Well-Being or a similar organization operating in the County if MCPAW is no longer operating in the County; (F) 1 person designated by the Second Chance Wildlife Center or a similar organization operating in the County if Second Chance Wildlife Center is no longer operating in the County; (G) 1 person representing a non-profit organization that provides animal fostering services in the County; (H) 1 person representing Montgomery County Community Cat Coalition or a similar organization operating in the County if Montgomery County Community Cat Coalition is no longer operating in the County;**

We very much appreciate the Council's attention to this issue and the care with which you have addressed the concerns of so many in the animal community. We are hopeful this Advisory Committee can significantly improve the reach and knowledge base of the Office of Animal Services and more importantly, improve the lives of the many animals in the County.





November 8, 2021

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of Friends Montgomery County Animals (FMCA), I'm writing to express support for Bill 37-21 to establish a new County Animal Services Advisory Committee.

FMCA was founded in 1974, and we have a long history of interacting with the county shelter. During the years shelter operations were under contract, we were frustrated by the shelter's high level of animal euthanasia and lack of collaboration with nonprofit organizations. Since management reverted to the county, we've seen much improvement in these areas and others.

We've been especially impressed with the progress at the county shelter since executive director Tom Koenig's arrival in 2015. His leadership team and staff's willingness to partner with local and national nonprofits, agencies, and other stakeholders to advance our shared goals has been evident in several projects and initiatives and is the reason we are happy to support the shelter in any way we can, including by serving on an advisory committee.

As one example, in 2016, Mr. Koenig spearheaded a pilot project to proactively address a major source of cat overpopulation in our county. That project led to the formation of the nonprofit Montgomery County Community Cat Coalition (MCC3), which has since sterilized and vaccinated thousands of community cats. The coalition has brought much needed structure and resources to trap-neuter-return efforts in our county, strengthened relationships among animal welfare groups, and reduced the number of cats and kittens flowing into the shelter.

More recently, in 2020, when MCASAC was forced to close its doors to adopters under a state mandate to prevent the spread of COVID-19, shelter staff reached out to FMCA to figure out how we could facilitate adoptions while maintaining safe social-distancing for the people involved. As a result, 148 dogs and cats were placed in homes.

Montgomery County has made significant strides on the animal welfare front in recent years, including dramatically improved live-release rates (FY2021-92%) at the county shelter. Much of that can be credited to Mr. Koenig's leadership.

At the same time, we have plenty of animal welfare challenges that could benefit from a collaboration between the county and local nonprofits. The most pressing concern when it comes to pet overpopulation in this county, is the lack of affordable spay/neuter services. Existing low-cost spay/neuter programs in our area are woefully inadequate for a county of over a million residents. Rescue organizations such as ours are forced to travel to adjacent counties to access their nonprofit high-volume spay/neuter clinics. For Montgomery County residents in underserved neighborhoods who lack reliable transportation and internet access, as well as those whose first language isn't


Council Members  
November 8, 2021

English, getting pets sterilized is a herculean task. This is a decades-old problem that has reached a critical state since the pandemic.

As Mr. Koenig demonstrated when he brought together a coalition to address community cat issues, we can make significant progress when local humane organizations and agencies combine their expertise and collaborate on common goals. We welcome the formation of a County Animal Services Advisory Committee to advance animal welfare and serve the residents of Montgomery County.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any question or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda McMakin".

Linda McMakin

President

Friends of Montgomery County Animals, Inc.

P.O. Box 386, Germantown, MD 20875  
(301) 977-4833 • [info@fmca.org](mailto:info@fmca.org)  
[www.fmca.org](http://www.fmca.org) • [facebook.com/fmcainfo](https://facebook.com/fmcainfo)  
501(c)(3) Tax EIN #23-7370815