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New spay, neuter clinic to help with overpopulation

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Marie Leonard |

A low-cost spay and neuter program has been in the works in Nacogdoches for five years, and the dream is now a reality after the Nacogdoches city council authorized the program at Tuesday's meeting.

The Nacogdoches Humane Society started the effort, and during the past five years various members of the Nacogdoches community have come together to assist with the project.

Dr. Wendy Blount, veterinarian at Eastex Veterinary Clinic, was contacted by members of the Humane Society last August to see if she would be willing to help with the surgeries and finding equipment.

"We need this clinic because our euthanasia numbers per capita are very high," Blount said. "The ideal number would be no more than five in 1,000, but our numbers here are many times higher."

Individuals must demonstrate financial need to access the services, since it is a discounted clinic, Jim Jeffers, city manager, said at Tuesday's council meeting. Those who are eligible will receive the services at a lower cost compared to what the process would cost at a veterinary clinic, and individuals beneath the poverty line may have the service subsidized for free, Blount said.

Jamie Shelton, animal control supervisor, hopes the clinic will help individuals who can't afford to have their pet spayed and neutered.

"All the veterinarians here in town do a wonderful job, but some people just can't afford it, for whatever reason," she said.

"Your pet almost becomes more important to you, because you dedicated some of your time and finances to the project. There are a lot of people out there who would love to have their pet neutered but just can't afford it," she said.

Last year, an estimated 5,000 cats and dogs from throughout Nacogdoches County were brought to the Nacogdoches Animal Shelter. Approximately 1,300 were adopted, but Shelton wants to get to the point where the number of unwanted pets is reduced, thus not as many strays are coming through the door.

"We also intend to be performing the spay and neuter procedure on the dogs and cats adopted from the shelter, which will generate income for the program," Jeffers said. "We are benchmarking the program to determine whether or not we are successful, and if we don't increase the number of animals being spayed or neutered, we will reevaluate the program at a later time.

"This program has been developed from the bottom up, which is the best way to do it," he said.

The project will have an estimated cost of \$98,000 and an approximate revenue of \$98,000, so Jeffers anticipates the program will pay for itself. The clinic will operate one day a week while it is getting off the ground, and will have one full-time city employee to assist with the weekly clinic and take care of the animals after the procedure.

"The veterinarian fees and equipment fees will be paid for by the Nacogdoches Humane Society," Jeffers said. "Grants and donations will continue to be an important part of this program, and we are anticipating 1,300 procedures per year."

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