

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.