

******* AT THIS TIME A PRESENTATION FROM OXFORD WATCHDOGS WAS PRESENTED. NO ACTION WAS TAKEN*******


ORDER: OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO INSTALL A MANUFACTURED HOME IN A RESIDENTIAL ESTATE (RE) DISTRICT ON LAFAYETTE COUNTY PARCEL 133-05-011 (50 CR 104) IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 802E1 OF THE LAFAYETTE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE

Motion was made by David Rikard, duly seconded by Larry Gillespie, to open Public Hearing on conditional use permit to install a manufactured home in a Residential Estate (RE) District on Lafayette County Parcel 133-05-011 (50 CR 104) in accordance with Section 802E1 of the Lafayette County Zoning Ordinance.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Supervisor Brent Larson, voted yes
Supervisor Larry Gillespie, voted yes
Supervisor David Rikard, voted yes
Supervisor Chad McLarty, voted yes
Supervisor Mike Roberts, voted yes

After the vote, President Roberts, declared the motion carried, this the 19th day of July, 2021.



Mike Roberts, President
Board of Supervisors



Sherry Wall, Clerical Clerk



Presentation to the Lafayette County Board of Supervisors

Topic: The need for a county animal shelter

July 19, 2021

Contacts:

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Remarks

Good morning, supervisors. I'm Leigh Ann Hubbard, president of Oxford Animal Shelter Watchdogs. Mr. Roberts, you're my supervisor. It's nice to meet you. And I'm Donna Niewiaroski, Oxford Watchdogs vice president. Mr. Rikard, you're my supervisor. Thank you for having us here today.

As you know, Lafayette County has no shelter for abandoned and abused animals found outside Oxford city limits. This is causing significant problems for citizens.

We're here to talk about the urgent need for a shelter—and about potential solutions. We're offering knowledge, insights, data and expert connections to help you decide what's best for your citizens and the animals. In fact, we have five specific ideas for solutions. Before we get to that, we'd like to explain the scope of the problem.

As an animal advocacy group, Watchdogs represents more than 1,000 members in the Oxford, Lafayette County, area. We speak for untold numbers of domesticated animals who rely on humans to survive and who need our help. They're being shot, starved and abandoned to mangle, ticks, fleas, injury and communicable disease. This is an unhealthy situation for humans and animals.

We understand that about four months ago, the city asked you to pay \$29,000 a month to help fund the new Oxford Animal Resource Center. That's almost three times the amount the county was paying MS Critterz. You must question this number to be fiscally responsible. We appreciate your oversight.

Public records do suggest that this budget is not off the mark. In 2018, a group named Mississippi Humane Association submitted a proposal to run the shelter, and their budget was the same. In addition, we would like to remind you what the \$9,994 a month got you. It was this: cruelty and neglect. *[Poster shown of neglected and crowded dogs and cats in the shelter, when it was run by Mississippi Critterz.]*

As you consider solutions, we urge you to act quickly. Donna will explain why. Donna?

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak with you today. We hope to show you that any county policy regarding animals affects the people of the county as much as it does the animals.

County Policy Affects People First and Foremost

- Public records show the city shelter has taken in 2,000 animals per year, with 60%, or about 1,200, from the county.
- This spring and summer has been especially difficult for rescuers. In the first five days in June, a local rescuer received calls for: 17 kittens, 2 adult cats, 5 adult dogs, and 14 puppies. Other calls included a litter of kittens abandoned in the middle of the road; and starving puppies covered in mange (they did not survive).
- Many local rescuers, like that one, are individuals working out of their homes, motivated by concern, and operating on a shoestring. They have been overwhelmed and “worn out,” said another, offering more free spay and neuter services than ever. A Water Valley rescue began fielding calls for help from Oxford/Lafayette residents in *March*.
- This has put an unprecedented strain on animal rescues in surrounding areas. For example, on June 15, Second Chance Animal Alliance in Water Valley shut down for the first time ever since opening doors in 2015.
- One county citizen told us, “I’ve never seen so many dead dogs on the side of the road.”

People Want the County to Act

This Friday night after the storm, eight kittens were found trapped in a storm drain. There are too many animals dumped and abandoned, too many reports of lost and found animals, too many sightings on the side of the road, and too many accidents this spring and summer for government officials not to come up with a solution.

We want to help you. We count 1,000 members, city and county residents, animal lovers, teachers, policemen, veterinarians, businesspeople who are passionately involved in the community. They want you to know that since the county has had no shelter, members routinely field desperate requests for help with neglected, injured and abandoned animals. These are just a few:

A woman called a rescuer for help. She had been forced off her property and had left her dogs behind. Volunteers hacked through underbrush with a machete to reach the pen where they were kept.

A woman called for help and said her husband would shoot the dogs on their property if someone did not come and get them.

A young man said people routinely dump unwanted animals near his property and some are sickly. This spring he shot four kittens, blowing their heads off. He said he was frustrated and overwhelmed and did not know what else to do because they were ill. A fifth was found alive.

Another county couple asked for help because they found 18 cats and kittens dumped on their property. Ultimately, rescuers found 31 cats and kittens there.

Taxpayers Pay Twice

These 39 animals are a fraction of the cases that occurred over the last few months. We estimate local rescuers were contacted about more than 200 county animals in June alone. Sadly, overextended rescuers had to turn many away for lack of capacity across the area. There are continuing reports of dead kittens and puppies on the side of Route 30 and 6 and elsewhere. Local vets say it is common for a good Samaritan to bring in dogs suffering from bullet wounds.

Where did lucky pets go, the ones accepted? Many, to the homes of city and county residents, friends, and volunteers. Care and supplies were paid for by the rescuers themselves. Taxpayers are essentially funding a shelter on their own, each and every day they rescue, foster and fund efforts.

People Need Help

People need help. Animals need help. We would like to help the county find a solution. This is not a problem that will just go away. This weekend a story about a cyclist who died this month from injuries incurred by off-lead dogs in the county ran in the paper. As one volunteer said, we can't euthanize our way out of this. That is neither humane nor moral nor fair. Not one of these people wanted to kill or abandon animals. Many took the time later to seek out the rescuers and thank them.

Solutions

Our members are active and involved. Over 1,000 people signed a Watchdogs petition advocating the county join with the city shelter. Since that time, and because of the magnitude of the crisis unfolding this spring and summer, our members, citizens and residents have made other suggestions we would like you to consider:

1. Partner with ARC, even if only short term, and re-evaluate conditions in six months.
2. Build a separate Lafayette County shelter, possibly partnering with neighboring counties. This does not address the current crisis.
3. Investigate and invest in low-cost spay and neuter programs, and publicly encourage the practice with marketing and education programs.
4. Consider partnering with animal organizations or research universities and participate in shelter studies, pilot programs or community projects.
5. Connect with animal experts for advice on viable animal programs in Southern states.

We Hope You Have Seen What We See

We hope you lawmakers can see some of what we have seen and experienced. The main function of our group—why we came to be and the reason we continue to exist—is to report and communicate important information to interested parties and provide transparency and facilitate connections. We tried to do that today. So much of what goes on with animal abandonment and neglect and cruelty, as well as the heroic efforts of rescuers and caregivers, stays out of the public eye. It is important for the well-being of all citizens and pets that we all know what is going on. Positive change cannot happen when everyone's in the dark.

You'll see in the supplement wrenching testimonies of those who have rescued animals, those who want and are willing to work for change, those who see taxpayer-funded animal care as a public health issue; a petition calling for county involvement; and relevant news articles. Please see our efforts and those of others in the community concerned about animal welfare as a desire and willingness to work with you on this matter. We also hope you see *the need* for a change in how Lafayette County handles animal care. We all want to work together to find a solution.

About Oxford Animal Shelter Watchdogs

Oxford Animal Shelter Watchdogs is a grassroots citizens organization formed February 16, 2021, in response to claims of animal abuse and neglect at the Oxford, Mississippi, animal shelter. Watchdogs' investigation and advocacy efforts played a large part in the city deciding to end the contract with the group running the shelter. Watchdogs now advocates for the well-being of abused and abandoned animals in Oxford and greater Lafayette County.

Board of Directors:

Leigh Ann Hubbard (president)
Donna Niewiaroski (vice president)
Karen Gill (secretary)
Deborah Buchanan
Katie Griffin
Jennifer Lundeby

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/OxfordWatchdogs>

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/OxfordWatchdogs/groups/>

Supplemental Information

Stories From Rescuers and Citizens

NOTE: Rescuers are having to turn away animals. Everyone is full. One told us about a kitten with his pelvis broken on both sides. He and his sibling had been thrown from or hit by a car. Dogs are routinely shot and left to suffer or are hit by cars, which can cause a lingering death.

"This has been absolutely horrible this year," says Shannon White, who runs the local Cats of CatNip Row Rescue & Sanctuary. She attributes this directly to the shelter situation. **"It's crippling and makes me want to quit."** If the county had a shelter, she says, "I would absolutely be less swamped."



Rescuers had to mow through overgrowth to get to these Lafayette County dogs in May. The owner, going through difficult times, had been struggling to care for them for weeks and had no shelter to surrender them to. When rescued, they had no drinkable water.

The lack of options for county animals is impacting rescues outside Lafayette County as well. "Our phone calls for help have definitely increased," says Mandy Mills Beard of Second Chance Animal Alliance in Water Valley. "Intake hasn't increased much because **we don't have the room to take them in.** But the need is there."

Second Chance Animal Alliance, Water Valley, May 13:

This sweetheart has been sitting in the same spot for a week in Oxford on the road to the lake. Chasing every truck that goes by. No tags on his collar. Our requests for help have increased drastically since the Oxford shelter closed intake. We have no open kennels to help dogs close to us-much less ones in other counties. Somebody please get it together more quickly for animal control in the area. Good samaritans are feeding this pup-but it's only a matter of time before chasing vehicles claims him.

MS Critterz Mississipi MUTTS Robyn Tannehill for Mayor of Oxford



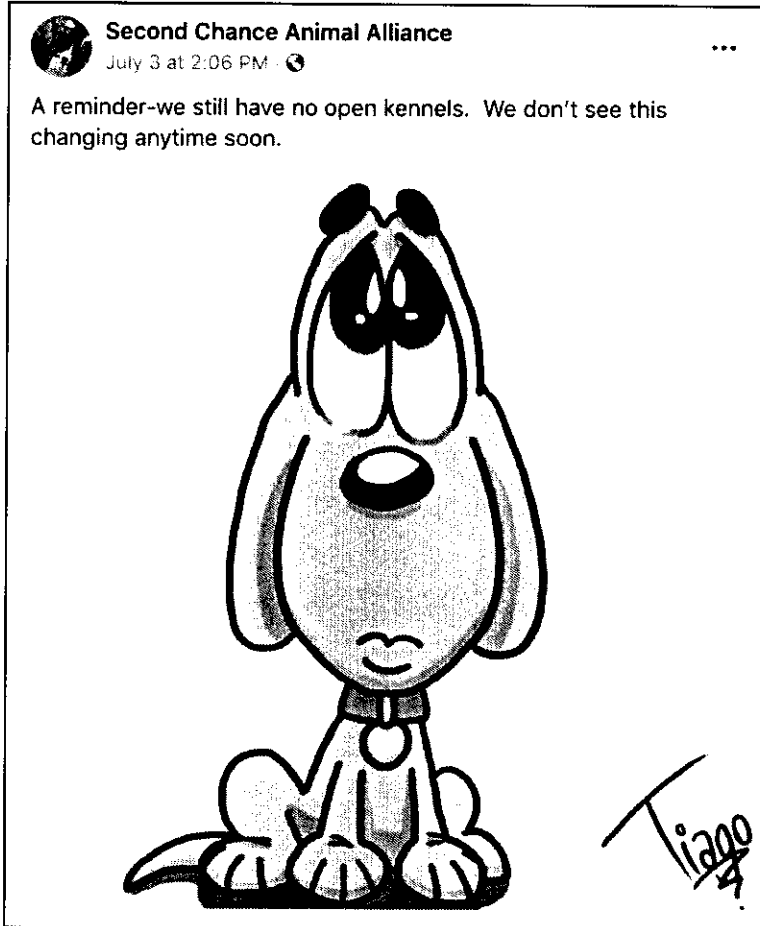
Second Chance Animal Alliance

June 15 · 🌐



For the first time (and hopefully last), we have to close intake temporarily. We have been full for months with just a very few adults and many puppies being able to go to rescue. That well has now dried up with no end in sight.

Note: Second Chance opened in 2015.



May 20 2021 5:57 PM

Hello I live in the county. Someone apparently dropped off a female dog who appears to have had puppies recently. I cannot keep her & I am in the process of getting ready to go out of town. Is there an animal shelter I can take her to?? I just want to do the right thing & make sure she is getting fed & taken care of. Thank you.

I called & spoke with Lafayette County Sheriffs Department & was told there was currently no shelter & maybe to try & call other counties to see if they could take her. I did nicely tell the deputy I spoke with that as a tax paying citizen of this county for many years that I felt this was ridiculous.

1

Pam Austin 🐾

Stacey Branson Spiehler I live on a farm in the county. In the last 2 years, 3 cats(one litter) & 1 dog(one litter) have been dropped at our farm. It was very difficult to find homes for them. We had the mother dog neutered & plan to have the mother cat neutered. We are maxed out on the animals we can adopt. I urge my supervisor, Chad McLarty, to vote YES to joining the Oxford Animal Shelter.



This skinny, scared dog, nicknamed Banjo, was dumped near a house in Lafayette County. He chased the property owner's cat. Having no shelter to take him to, she said she would dump somewhere else. Rescuers learned of his plight and scrambled.



Hi! We just found 18+ kittens that have been dumped at the end of our dead end road. Is there anyone that can help?

Oh my gosh. Thank you for reaching out. Are you in the city or county?

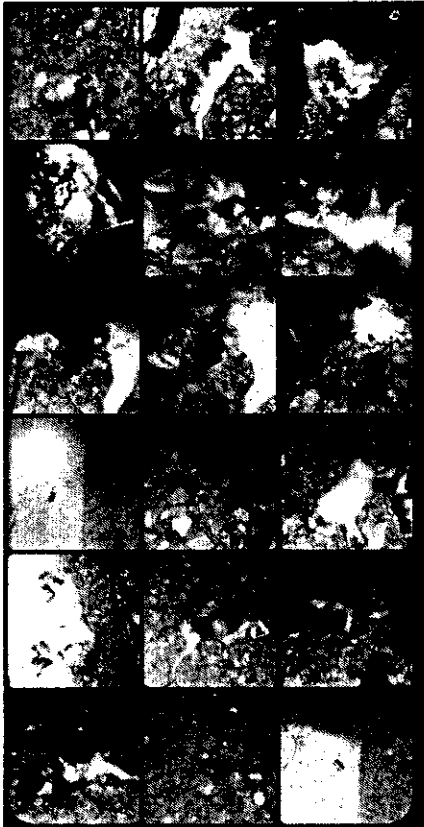
Sent by Leigh Hubbard (2)

Unfortunately, in the county. We can help trap and/or donate funds to help but don't know where to start.



Turned out to be 31.
What would you do?

Media



Kittens Found Shot in Lafayette County Spurs Call for Joint Animal Shelter

Oxford Eagle, June 22

<https://www.oxfordeagle.com/2021/06/22/kittens-found-shot-in-lafayette-county-spurs-call-for-joint-animal-shelter/>

A local veterinarian says it's common to see dogs brought in with gunshot wounds. ... One man had 31 cats and kittens dumped by his house.

—*Leigh Ann Hubbard, president, Oxford Animal Shelter Watchdogs*

Online Petition Calls for Oxford Shelter to Take in County Animals

Hotty Toddy News, June 22

<https://www.hottytoddy.com/2021/06/22/online-petition-calls-for-oxford-shelter-to-take-in-county-animals/>

Animal rescue volunteer Carlin Curtis said without a shelter in Lafayette County, stray kittens and puppies are being dumped out on back roads and, in at least one case last week, shot and killed.

Community Raises \$24K for Wife of Man Who Died Cycling in Abbeville

Hotty Toddy News, July 15

<https://www.hottytoddy.com/2021/07/15/community-raises-24k-for-wife-of-man-who-died-cycling-in-abbeville/>

Tucker, 35, died last week at Regional One Hospital in Memphis from injuries he sustained that weekend when he was thrown from his bicycle after dogs ran out in front of him.

Petition: "Allow Lafayette County animals access to the Oxford shelter"

Signatures: 1,221

<https://www.change.org/HelpLafayetteCoAnimals>

Reasons for signing (examples):

Screenshots from petition



Misty Goodson

4 weeks ago

Because I care deeply about animals, and I have worked in rescue for a while. I see the need. We are drowning in abandoned, unwanted, unloved animals!!



Melinda Clemons

4 weeks ago

Lafayette County. The City of Oxford needs and deserves a shelter funded by the city and county. I see countless post about found and lost dogs with no where for the finders to take the dogs or the owners of a lost dog to look for their family member.



Gloria Harmon

4 weeks ago

I have witnessed first hand animals dropped in my community.



Wendy Underwood

3 weeks ago

We have so many strays in Lafayette county that have no safe place to go.



Nancy Jones

4 weeks ago

I cannot understand how the county supervisors don't understand the urgent need of our community. Not just Oxford but all of Lafayette county.



Herman Morran

3 weeks ago

When people do this abuse to animals, they will do this abuse also to people when the time is there, it is the same energie.



Christi Hardy
4 weeks ago

I don't understand why the city and county can't work together to have a good animal shelter. There are so many animals that are lost, found or strays that need a safe haven and help to get home. Please share the word and sign the petition!



Liza Johnson
4 weeks ago

This is America in 2021 and a simple Animal Shelter for your community is basic humanity.



Susanne Carver
3 weeks ago

This is the USA, the richest country on earth, let's act like it and treat God's creatures with more respect!



Disne Onrien
4 weeks ago

Can The city and county at least agree on compassion. Allow access to the Oxford shelter. The voiceless and abandoned have nowhere to go.



Kathy Garrett
3 weeks ago

Why wouldn't I sign? Lafayette County either needs its own animal shelter or the county supervisors need to work with the city of Oxford to develop a plan of action to assist in the rescue of animals.



Angelina Brummett
3 weeks ago

The county money was used to build and maintain the LO Animal Shelter. There should be an agreement for both intencies to fund it per animal each.



Frankie Holland
3 weeks ago

Animals need a home period and if the city can't help then the county needs to have one.



Betty Holden
4 weeks ago

Yes it needs one in the county. I live on the east side of Lafayette county. It is a drop off spot for animals



Lorri Cook
4 weeks ago

I cannot believe the city and county cannot get together, and quickly, on implementing a plan for an animal shelter. Taking care of local animals speaks volumes about the quality of life in a town. Oxford purports to be a great place to live, yet you fail in humane treatment of animals. This is shameful.



L. Lewis Raney
1 month ago

Irresponsible and uninformed County residents are the cause of this perineal stray pet overpopulation problem. But it's the animals who suffer from malnutrition, die from flea and tick infestation & diseases, are injured by vehicles and die in pain. They get shot for hanging around looking for a handout and either die on the spot or die a lingering, painful death. Unless and until Lafayette County Citizens become educated enough to spay and neuter their pets, Lafayette County Citizens need to pay to humanely manage this huge stray pet overpopulation problem.

Amy Geiger
1 month ago

I am signing this petition. Lafayette needs to get this together. There are more strays in the county and supervisors need to step up now!



Michelle Woy
1 month ago

It is unforgivable that this county has no animal shelter! They care more about sports than they do animals.



Kate Kenner
3 weeks ago

The real problems are the lack of responsibility and caring by people there. Spay/neuter clinics are few if there are any at all and people treat animals like objects. Animals are homeless through no fault of their own but mostly because of people who do not spay/neuter and/or because people dump them like trash and sadly the south is notorious for that. Education and shelters are needed along with low cost spay/neuter clinics and a lot of outreach. I have seen the effects of such programs and they are wonderful.



Brenda Mills

1 month ago

All animals deserve to be protected, especially the ones that are dumped by heartless people and left to suffer! We need an animal rescue for the County!!;



Judy Hope

3 weeks ago

All animals need to be taken care of in city and county . People in county need protection as the animals do . The city has done a terrible job for years . It's time to come together . Hire people who truly care and KNOW what the job truly is .



Elisabeth Alexander

3 weeks ago

The city and county needs to step up for the animals or STEP DOWN from their positions.



Teresa Barnes

1 month ago

I live in Lafayette County and I am currently fostering a stray dog that is wounded. Homeless animals need a shelter!



Desirae Teske

2 weeks ago

I'm signing because I have seen what this community can do, and that's move oceans for these animals. We love animals and they deserve help!