

**CITY OF WEST DES MOINES  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT COMMUNICATION**

**Meeting Date:** January 25, 2017

**Item:** Furry Friends Adoption Center, NE corner of S. 41st Street and Mills Civic Parkway – Land use review to allow SIC 0752-02 Animal Specialty Services, Except Veterinary - Highgates Plaza, LLC – PC-003322-2016

**Requested Action:** Approval of a Permitted Conditional Use Permit

**Case Advisor:** Brian S. Portz, AICP *BP*

**Applicant Request:** The applicant, Furry Friends Adoption Center, represented by Britt Gagne, in cooperation with the property owner, Highgates Plaza, Inc. is requesting approval of a Permitted Conditional Use Permit (PC) to allow SIC 0752-02 Animal specialty services, Boarding Services with kennels, no outside runs on that property located at the northeast corner of Mills Civic Parkway and S. 41<sup>st</sup> Street. If the use is granted, the applicant proposes to construct a 5,700 square foot building with outdoor courtyards for the animals to allow potential adoptive families, volunteers and staff to interact with the animals. At this time, the applicant is only requesting land use review of this Permitted Conditional Use to see if the use of the property will be permitted. The site plan will be brought forward to the Board of Adjustment for review at a later date. The applicant has indicated that at some point in the future, a second building or building addition may be constructed on site.

**History:** The subject property was annexed into the City in 1957. The S & F/Karp PUD was approved in 1991 with amendments in 1995, 1999, 2006, 2008 and 2015. The amendments in 2006 and 2008 allowed for the development of the Chapel Ridge Apartments and Vineyard Ridge Townhomes. In 2015, the architectural section of the PUD was amended to allow commercial construction on the property with a more modern look that was not residential in character as the original PUD required.

**City Council Subcommittee:** This item was presented to the Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee on January 9, 2017, as an informational item only. No discussion was had and no disagreement with the proposal was expressed.

**Staff Review and Comment:** This request was distributed to other City departments and other agencies for their review and comment. Staff would summarize the following key point of interest:

- **Site Plan Review:** If the use of the property for an animal adoption center is approved, the applicant proposes to construct a 5,700 square foot building with outdoor courtyards for the animals to allow potential adoptive families, volunteers and staff to interact with the animals. The review of the building architecture and site plan will be conducted separately by City staff at a later date. Once all staff site plan and building design comments have been addressed, the site plan will be brought back to the Board of Adjustment for consideration.
- **Outdoor Courtyards:** The applicant proposes to install fenced courtyards on the north side of the building to allow dogs to be supervised outdoors during the day. Dogs will never be unsupervised and will not be outdoors overnight. City Code does not permit dog runs associated with an animal shelter except in Open Space zoning. The proposed courtyards aren't considered to be dog runs because the dogs will not be outdoors unsupervised. The courtyards are intended to provide playtime and human interaction with the dogs. While the courtyards will be open on one side today, the applicant has indicated that a second building or building addition would totally surround the courtyard.
- **Animal Control:** Furry Friends plans to enter into a contract with WestPet, which is a partnership between Clive, Urbandale and West Des Moines, to provide housing for animals that are acquired by WestPet. Furry Friends has already been partnering with animal control services to house animals and reduce euthanasia for animals in Animal Control's care at its current location at 1209 and 1211 Grand Avenue in West Des Moines.

- **Comment Letters:** Letters in opposition to this request have been received from property owners in the Vineyard Ridge Townhomes to the northwest of the subject property. In addition, letters of support of the request have also been received. . The comment letters are attached for the Board of Adjustment's review.

**Comprehensive Plan Consistency:** The project has been reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Based upon that review, a finding has been made that the proposed store expansion project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in that the project is consistent with all of the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the land use map of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Findings:** The following findings have been made on the proposed permitted conditional use:

1. The proposed development and use is consistent with the West Des Moines Comprehensive Plan in that the project has been reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Based upon that review, a finding has been made that the proposed project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in that the project is consistent with all of the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. *The proposed use of the property for an animal adoption center is consistent with the Support Commercial land use designation as shown on the Comprehensive Plan land use map. Also, the proposed project is consistent with all of the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.*
2. The proposed development and use does assure compatibility of property uses within the zone and general area in that this project was reviewed by various City Departments for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. *Properly mitigated with the use of building and site design, the use of landscape buffers, and screening, the proposed use of the property can be made compatible with the surrounding property.*
3. All applicable standards and conditions have been imposed which protects the public health, safety and welfare in that this project was reviewed by various City Departments and public agencies for compliance with the various state and local regulations. Based upon that review a finding is made that the project has been adequately conditioned to protect the health, welfare, and safety of the community. *Conditions of approval are being proposed to help protect the health, welfare, and safety of the community, including site design and building design requirements, landscape buffers and screening of outdoor areas to reduce the potential impact of the proposed use on the surrounding area.*
4. There is adequate on-site and off-site public infrastructure to support the proposed development in that this project was reviewed by various public agencies and City Departments and public utilities to ensure that either the petitioner will construct or the project has been conditioned to construct adequate public infrastructure to serve the development. *Existing public infrastructure is adequate to serve the proposed project.*
5. The proposed development and use has met the requirements contained in the City Code in that this project was reviewed by various City Departments and public agencies and the project has complied with or has been conditioned to comply with all City Code requirements. *This review of the use of the property for an animal adoption center complies with all City Code requirements in that a proposed SIC 0752-02 Animal Specialty Services, Except Veterinary land use (such as an animal adoption center) can be considered in a Support Commercial district with the review of a Permitted Conditional Use. The actual design of the site will be reviewed separately by the Board of Adjustment to ensure that all City Code requirements pertaining to site development and any conditions of approval placed on the use are adhered to.*
6. The proposed development and use is in keeping with the scale and nature of the surrounding neighborhood in that the proposed project is consistent with the Zoning regulations and the Comprehensive Plan which designates this site as suitable for development such as that proposed by this project. *The Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan designate this property as Support Commercial, which allows animal specialty uses (such as an animal adoption center) with the issuance of a Permitted Conditional Use. With the proper site design, buffering and screening the proposed use can be designed to be compatible with the scale of the surrounding neighborhood.*

**Noticing Information:** On January 13, 2017, notice of the January 25, 2017 Board of Adjustment Public Hearing on this project was published in the Des Moines Register. Notice of this public hearing was also mailed to all surrounding property owners within 370 feet of the subject property on January 5, 2017.

**Staff Recommendations and Conditions of Approval:** Based upon the preceding review and findings, staff recommends the Board of Adjustment adopt a resolution for approval of the Permitted Conditional Use Permit to allow SIC 0752-02 Animal Specialty Services, Except Veterinary, subject to meeting all City Code requirements and the following:

1. This approval is to allow only the use of the property for an Animal Adoption Center, SIC 0752-02 Animal Specialty Services, Except Veterinary. A specific design for the site is not approved at this time. The design of the site and building design will be reviewed by City staff and the Board of Adjustment at a later date once all staff comments regarding the site plan submittal have been addressed by the applicant.
2. The applicant limiting outside activities to only that necessary for playtime and bathroom breaks and agreeing that the dogs shall not be outside unsupervised.
3. The building and site shall be designed such that the outdoor courtyard areas are located on the east and north sides of the building.
4. A 30' landscape buffer with a berm is required along the north property line of the subject property. The buffer shall be enhanced with a minimum of 50% evergreen trees to provide additional screening and buffering. The enhanced buffering shall be required and reviewed with the site plan review for the property.
5. The courtyard areas shall be enclosed with a 6' solid fence on the north and east sides to limit views into and out of the courtyards to attempt to diminish dog barking.
6. The applicant identifying a plan for animal waste elimination and providing a proposed maintenance schedule for the cleaning and removal of animal waste.

**Property Owner:** Highgates Plaza, LLC  
119 Glen Park Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M6B 2C6  
[joseph@highgates.com](mailto:joseph@highgates.com)

**Applicant:** Furry Friends Refuge  
1211 Grand Avenue  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
Attn: Britt Gagne  
[bgagne@furryfriendsrefuge.org](mailto:bgagne@furryfriendsrefuge.org)

**Attachments:**

Attachment A	-	Permitted Conditional Use Resolution
Exhibit A	-	Conditions of Approval
Attachment B	-	Request Letter
Attachment C	-	Location Map
Attachment D	-	Preliminary Site Plan
Attachment E	-	Letters of Opposition
Attachment F	-	Letters of Support

Prepared by: B. Portz, Development Services PO Box 65320 West Des Moines IA 50265-0320 515-222-3620  
When Recorded, Return to: City Clerk, City of West Des Moines PO Box 65320 West Des Moines IA 50265-0320

**RESOLUTION –**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, APPROVING A PERMITTED CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (PC-003322-2016) TO ALLOW SIC 0752-02: ANIMAL SPECIALTY SERVICES, BOARDING SERVICES, WITH KENNELS AND NO OUTSIDE RUNS**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the provisions of Title 9, Zoning, Chapter 1 et seq, of the West Des Moines Municipal Code, the applicant, Britt Gagne, representing Furry Friends Refuge, in cooperation with the property owner, has requested approval of a Permitted Conditional Use Permit (PC-003322-2016) for that property located at the NE corner of S. 41st Street and Mills Civic Parkway and legally described below for the purpose of providing animal specialty services, boarding services, with kennels, no outside runs (SIC 0752-02);

**Legal Description of Property**

**BEGINNING AT THE SE CORNER OF LOT 1, CHAPEL RIDGE ADDITION, THENCE SOUTH 192.04 FEET TO THE NW CORNER OF PARCEL D, BOOK 7446, PAGE 964, EAST 91.06 FEET, SOUTH 100 FEET TO THE NORTHERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF MILLS CIVIC PARKWAY, WEST 91.92 FEET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF PARCEL D, WEST 90.2 FEET, SOUTHWESTERLY 430.33 FEET, NORTHWESTERLY 37.63 FEET, NORTHWESTERLY 77 FEET ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF SOUTH 41<sup>ST</sup> STREET TO THE SOUTHERLY CORNER OF LOT 1, NORTHEAST 655.63 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, NW ¼ NE ¼ AND NE ¼ NE ¼ SECTION 17-78-25, CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA.**

**WHEREAS**, studies and investigations were made, and staff reports and recommendations were submitted which is made a part of this record and herein incorporated by reference;

**WHEREAS**, on, January 25, 2017, this Board of Adjustments held a duly-noticed hearing to consider the application for a Permitted Conditional Use Permit for Furry Friends Adoption Center (PC-003322-2016);

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** The findings, for approval, stated in the staff report, dated January 25, 2017, or as amended orally at the City Council meeting of January 25, 2017, are adopted.

**SECTION 2.** Permitted Conditional Use Permit for Furry Friends Adoption Center (PC-003322-2016) to conduct an animal shelter, boarding services, with kennels, no outside runs (SIC 0752-02) is approved, subject to compliance with all the conditions in the staff report, dated January 25, 2017, including conditions added at the meeting, and attached hereto as Exhibit "A". Violation of any such conditions shall be grounds for revocation of the entitlement,

as well as any other remedy which is available to the City.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** on January 25, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael R. Blaser, Chairperson

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Adjustments of the City of West Des Moines, Iowa, at a regular meeting held on January 25, 2017, by the following vote:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

**EXHIBIT A**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. This approval is to allow only the use of the property for an Animal Adoption Center, SIC 0752-02 Animal Specialty Services, Except Veterinary. A specific design for the site is not approved at this time. The design of the site and building design will be reviewed by City staff and the Board of Adjustment at a later date once all staff comments regarding the site plan submittal have been addressed by the applicant.
2. The applicant limiting outside activities to only that necessary for playtime and bathroom breaks and agreeing that the dogs shall not be outside unsupervised.
3. The building and site shall be designed such that the outdoor courtyard areas are located on the east and north sides of the building.
4. A 30' landscape buffer with a berm is required along the north property line of the subject property. The buffer shall be enhanced with a minimum of 50% evergreen trees to provide additional screening and buffering. The enhanced buffering shall be required and reviewed with the site plan review for the property.
5. The courtyard areas shall be enclosed with a 6' solid fence on the north and east sides to limit views into and out of the courtyards to attempt to diminish dog barking.
6. The applicant identifying a plan for animal waste elimination and providing a proposed maintenance schedule for the cleaning and removal of animal waste.

## Furry Friends Refuge

*An Animal Rescue and Refuge*

1211 Grand Ave.  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
Tel. 515-222-0009  
Fax 515-457-1255

1723 Grand Ave  
DM, IA 50309  
Tel: 515-697-0009



Board of Adjustment,

I am submitting an application for conditional use to approve the use of animal shelter for the Highgates Plaza property at S. 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway and to additionally approve the construction of courtyards to allow adopters, volunteers, and staff to interact with homeless dogs in a safe environment. Furry Friends provides an important service to the community and requires additional space beyond its existing locations to continue to expand the programs it provides to the citizens of West Des Moines and other Westpet partner communities. We believe that the Highgates Plaza property is well suited to be able to house the expanding programs of our organization while maintaining the city's vision of the area.

Furry Friends moved in to the buildings at 1209 and 1211 Grand in West Des Moines at the end of 2010. Utilizing our grassroots volunteer base, the organization was able to take on the very large remodeling project, repairing one building missing half of its front after being driven in to by a car and left open to the elements for months, removing over 50,000 pounds of moldy engineering documents, and redoing the interior of both buildings to create a facility that can house animals in a healthy and clean environment. Since moving in to these buildings, Furry Friends has participated extensively in local animal welfare efforts, partnering with animal control to reduce euthanasia for animals in their care. For cats, euthanasia was reduced from 66% in 2009 to under 5% for all years starting 2012 because of the Furry Friends/Westpet partnership. Where there were no government programs to provide for medically needy strays or any organized program to adopt out those animals that weren't reclaimed, Furry Friends minded the gap to support these important needs at no cost to the taxpayers. The result has been national recognition as a leader in building and maintaining a no-kill community.

As Furry Friends continues to grow and additionally plans to enter in to a contract to provide housing for all animals currently housed at the inadequate animal control facility that currently exists, the organization is in need of additional space for the lifesaving programs we operate. This solution is offered as an alternative to the prior plan for the cities to build a multi-million dollar animal control facility. While animals in our care wait for a forever home, we carefully attend to their quality of life needs during

their stay at the shelter. The proposed facility will help provide better accommodations for animals in need as well as provide additional space to save more lives.

At our existing location off Grand (which we plan to continue to operate), conditional use permits have been approved to allow for two courtyards to be constructed. These courtyards serve a vital everyday role at the shelter as they provide space for our volunteers, adopters, and staff to interact with the dogs at our shelter as well as allow volunteers to conduct dog playgroups. Playgroups offer a vital way for the dogs in our care to burn off steam and enjoy both mental stimulation, but beyond that offer us a way to evaluate how dogs will behave in real life situations. Whenever we can observe more behaviors of the dogs in our care, we can better identify the needs of the animal and ensure we are adopting dogs out to the correct environment. Without these larger spaces to interact with the dogs in a less stressful environment, these types of assessments are highly unreliable and dogs become increasingly stressed as they do not get the daily stimulation needed.

Our volunteer base is extremely large, with thousands having attended orientation and several hundred active volunteers at any point in time. While some of the volunteers would have the ability to responsibly leash walk dogs, we engage and encourage many different types of people in volunteering and when the only opportunity to interact with the dogs is limited to leash walking, it restricts volunteers with disabilities from being able to volunteer with our dogs. At our existing facility, the number of volunteers and potential adopters that are wanting to interact with dogs at one time frequently outnumbers the two courtyards available to allow them do to so. Furry Friends is asking to be allowed to build four courtyards to allow supervised exercise for the dogs during its first phase of construction. The placement of these courtyards have been considered to be placed at the furthest possible distance from any residential area. At the time Furry Friends would request to build two additional courtyards to accompany future construction, the additional construction would complete a fortress-like buffer as the building would surround the courtyards on all sides with exception of the east side which borders the power facility. Given that the exercise will be supervised and that the first phase courtyards will be at least 360 feet from the nearest residence, the courtyards will have very little impact on neighboring property. Arguably, the existence of the courtyard will actually reduce impact on neighboring properties as lacking a fenced in area would mean dogs would need to rely on leash walking in the neighborhood as their sole source of stimulation, increasing foot traffic on neighboring properties and also increasing risk of dogs accidentally escaping from volunteers resulting in loose animals in the neighborhood.

Furry Friends has operated an animal shelter for over 5 years in West Des Moines and for even longer within the Westpet communities and has done so in good standing with both the community as well as all regulating bodies. The proposed new facility will be maintained with similar high standards for



animal care and service to the community. Aside from the supervised activity in the courtyard, all other activities will occur within the building. There has never been an odor discernable to neighboring properties from any Furry Friends property. As the organization performs work that benefits the community and frequently works with area law enforcement, placement near other governmental buildings is in keeping with the general vision of the area. Furry Friends Refuge respectfully requests that you approve a conditional use to allow operation of an animal shelter with supervised courtyard areas for dog interaction at the Highgates Plaza property.

Sincerely,

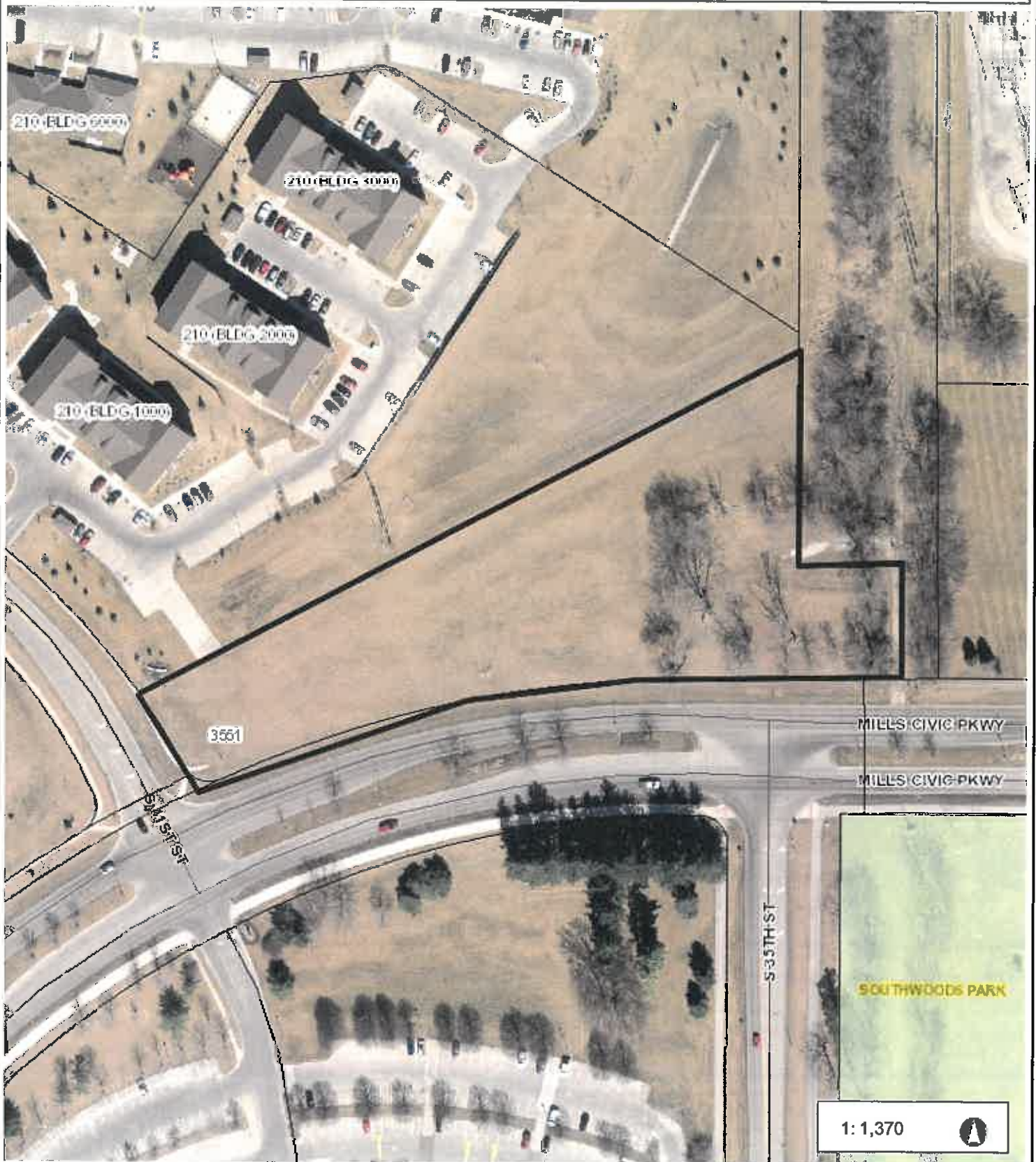
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Britt Gagne".

Britt Gagne

Director, Furry Friends Refuge



# Furry Friends Adoption Center Location Map

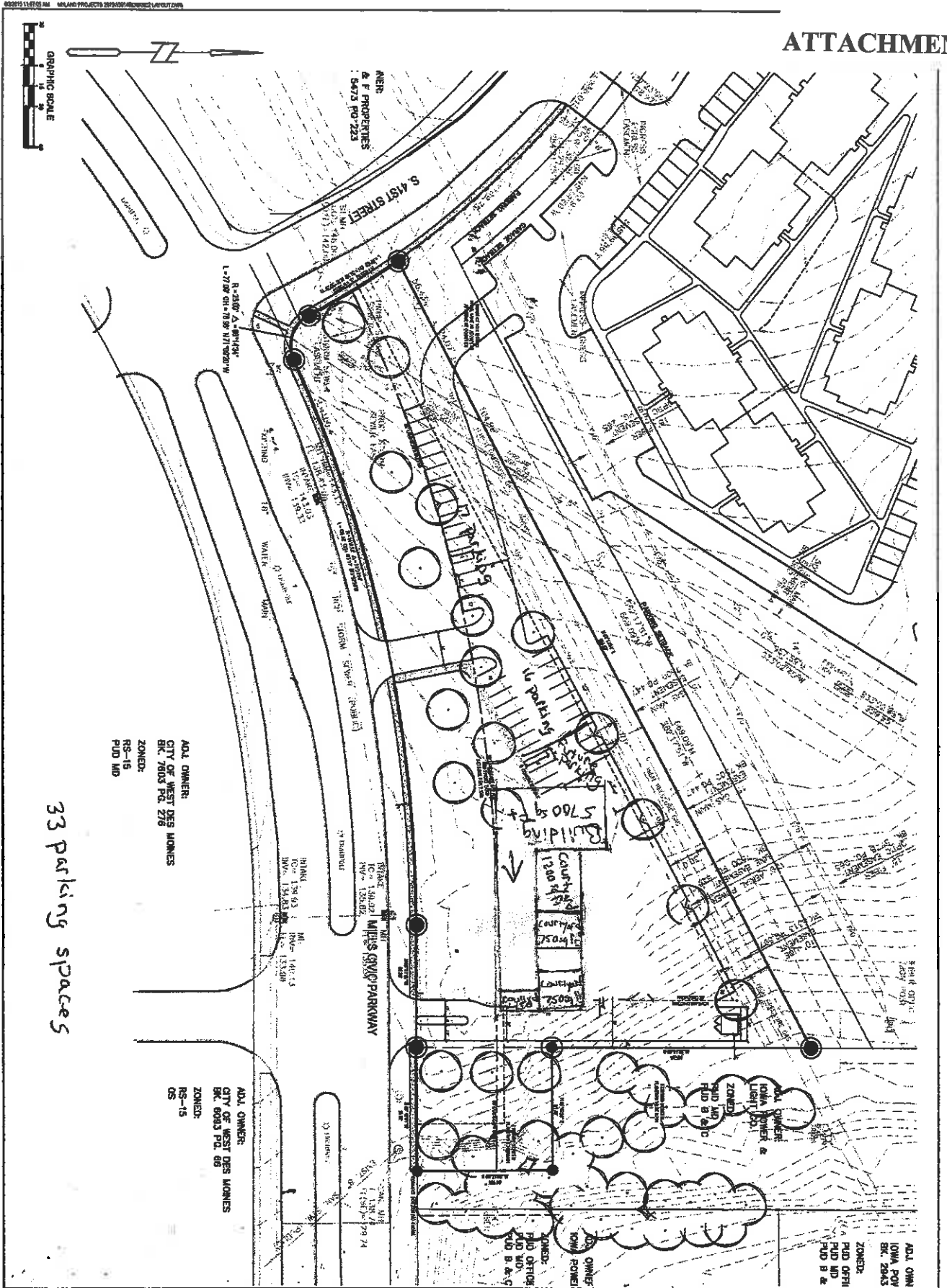


228.3 0 114.14 228.3 Feet

NAD\_1983\_StatePlane\_Iowa\_South\_FIPS\_1402\_Feet  
© City of West Des Moines, Iowa

Disclaimer: The City of West Des Moines makes no warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of the data provided herein.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION



33 parking spaces

ADJ. OWNER:  
CITY OF WEST DES MOINES  
BK. 7603 PG. 276  
ZONED:  
RS-15  
PUD MID

ADJ. OWNER:  
CITY OF WEST DES MOINES  
BK. 6033 PG. 66  
ZONED:  
RS-15  
OS

ADJ. OWN:  
IOWA POW  
BK. 2943  
ZONED:  
PUD OFFI  
PUD MID  
PUD B & C

January 15, 2017

Brian Portz, Case Planner  
Development Services Department  
4200 Mills Civic Parkway, Suite 2D  
P.O. Box 65320  
West Des Moines, IA 50265-0320

Dear Sir:



Recently, I received a "Notice of Public Hearing" regarding the possible construction of "Furry Friends Refuge" on the northeast corner of Mills Civic Parkway and South 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

I live in Vineyard Ridge townhome development, Unit #101, 255 South 41<sup>st</sup> Street. Because of my townhome being in close proximity to the proposed site, I am opposed to the use of this land for this purpose, for the following reasons:

- Noise from an animal refuge may be detrimental to our residential neighborhood.
- Chapel Hill Apartments are located just north of this proposed site. Many children live in this location and enjoy playing outdoors. The animals will be an attraction for these children to wander close, causing a possible safety risk and liability concern.
- Odor from the facility may become a factor, which would be detrimental to the neighborhood and the environment.
- This facility is in the watershed to the pond located behind the West Des Moines library. Animal waste runoff would be detrimental to this community asset.

I am not opposed to "Furry Friends Refuge," and the mission they are serving. Locating this facility in a residential neighborhood is not wise. I feel that my property value will be adversely affected, based on the above concerns.

A concerned citizen,

  
Mike Schinzel  
  
Deb Schinzel

Cc: file

January 12, 2017

Brian Portz, Case Planner  
Development Services Department  
4200 Mills Civic Parkway, Suite 2D  
P.O. Box 65320  
West Des Moines, IA 50265-0320

Dear Sir,

I understand that "Furry Friends" has petitioned the city of West Des Moines to build a pet rescue center on Mills Civic Expressway across the street from the Resource Center and the West Des Moines Library.

While I support the efforts of the Furry Friends foundation, I don't feel that this is a good location for this facility. I find that after viewing their website, that their future goal is to build an additional facility in the area. A facility with enough land to enable them to have a large exercise area for their dogs. I feel that a large dog park would be associated with a lot of noise from barking dogs.

This isn't a good location for this. There is high density housing complex directly behind this lot, as well as the West Des Moines campus across the street, all of which could be impacted by this nuisance noise.

I live only a few hundred feet from this lot at the Vineyard Ridge Community. I feel that this is not the type of business that would be best suited for this area. I also have concerns that the noise from this facility would have a detrimental effect on the property values for those of us living in the Vineyard Ridge Community.

Concerned Citizen

Jim Fuegen  
255 S 41<sup>st</sup> St., #178  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

**Todd W. Beuse**

**122 S 62<sup>nd</sup> St.**

**West Des Moines, IA 50266**

**To Whom it May Concern:**

I am writing this letter in support of Furry Friends Refuge's potential new location at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway. I have been a supporter of Furry Friends Refuge for the last four years and I am thankful for the work they do. I believe that as a community we should be supportive of the no kill mission that they have brought to West Des Moines. Furry Friends Refuge works directly with the city's police department to provide services that citizens deem as necessary. I have been to their facility numerous times and have witnessed the hard work that the employees and volunteers do to ensure the animals are well taken care of and that they do not allow animals under their care to disturb neighboring residents. As a citizen of West Des Moines, I believe this centralized location would be ideal for Furry Friends Refuge's new facility.



**Todd W. Beuse**

**Director – Corporate Taxes  
Meredith Corporation**




To the Board of Adjustments:

My name is Nancy Mills and I live in West Des Moines and have been volunteering with Furry Friends working with the dogs for several years. I have seen firsthand the great work that this organization does for the community and that they are always there to help animals and pet owners in need in our city. We are in great need of more space to accommodate all of the animals that are helped through Furry Friends and the new facility will make it much easier for volunteers like me to interact with the animals. Frequently, we have more volunteers who come in wanting to work with the dogs than we can accommodate with our one courtyard in West Des Moines. Without multiple secure fenced in areas to work with the dogs at our existing location, I constantly see volunteers needing to wait for potential adopters to be done looking at animals to be able to get a dog out and spend time with him or her. While some of the volunteers are able to walk the dogs instead of use the courtyard, we have many different kinds of volunteers including some with injuries or physical challenges that prevent them from being able to walk the dogs.

The proposed facility will greatly expand the ability for volunteers like me to be able to work with the homeless animals in our city. Furry Friends does a very good job keeping up the two facilities they currently have and are a huge asset to the community. I am grateful that they have stepped up to provide no-kill services to our community as well as saved the taxpayers a great deal of money by assisting with services when the city was looking at a \$4 million dollar option for building a municipal animal shelter. Please approve the conditional use to allow Furry Friends to build an additional facility to meet the community's needs.

Sincerely,




Nancy Mills

641 5<sup>th</sup> St

West Des Moines, IA 50265

City of West Des Moines,

My name is Celeste Goodrich and I am asking you to support the proposed new Furry Friends adoption center at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway. Furry Friends created a no-kill community within our city and has drastically improved conditions for homeless pets in our area. I feel that the proposed location is ideal as it is located next to a number of other community support and community service facilities and Furry Friends provides many services for community pet owners in need. Please support their proposed facility – it will be able to help many more pets and pet owners who need assistance!



Celeste Goodrich

2801 E True Hwy #703  
WDM IA 50265



Dear Board,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed new adoption center at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway. As a resident and dog lover, I feel the work the Furry Friends Refuge does for the community is very important. I am pleased to be living in a no-kill community and believe that the city should do everything it can to support the efforts and the programs at Furry Friends that made West Des Moines no-kill. I believe that the location would be convenient to the residents who need the services that the offer as well as makes the homeless animals accessible to the volunteers and adopters who wish to help them. Being located next to the police department will also help the two entities to coordinate efforts, something they have already been doing to help in animal cruelty and neglect cases, large scale hoarding cases, and other animal welfare concerns in our city. Please approve this location to allow Furry Friends to continue to do great things for animals in our city.

 .1-19-17

Allyson Masters  
3509 Stonebridge Rd  
WDM, IA 50265

Brian Esser  
3401 Scenic Valley  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the Furry Friends Refuge conditional use application. I have family who volunteers with this organization and believe in the work that they do for our city. They have transformed the city in to a no-kill community and have provided tons of extra services for the citizens at no cost to us. They have helped thousand of pets and pet owners from their existing location but simply cannot continue to do more work for the community without extra space. The proposed location would be ideal to attract volunteers and adopters as it is near many other city services. Additionally, their volunteers that work with the dogs always take care to minimize barking and anything that could impact neighboring areas. I am happy that there is an organization providing these services in our city and ask that you support their application so they can continue to do more work helping animals in need.

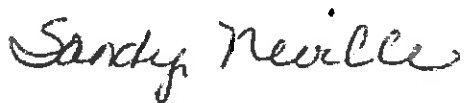
Sincerely,



Brian Esser

Board of Adjustments of the City of West Des Moines,

I am asking you to support the Furry Friends request to build a new adoption facility at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway. This organization has been a great asset to the city for years and having an additional facility will allow them to be able to do much more for our community. I am proud to be living in place where the entire city and its neighbors are a no-kill community and ask that you support and reward those efforts by approving the request to build the adoption center at the proposed location.



Sandy Neville

5705 Woodland Ave

West Des Moines, IA 50266

Dear WDM board of adjustment members,

As a longtime Furry Friends volunteer, I encourage you to approve our shelter's request for a conditional use permit.

I've seen so many animals find forever homes through our shelter who would have otherwise been euthanized, and I am incredibly proud of the work we've done in building Iowa's only no-kill community. I am also proud that our organization has not only saved thousands of animal lives, but also taxpayer money, by taking in unclaimed strays and reducing the need for WDM to build a municipal shelter.

My fellow volunteers and I could help these animals even more if we are able to build a third shelter with dog-centric features like the multiple enclosed courtyards. This would allow more volunteers, and a wider variety of volunteer skill levels, to interact with our dogs at once. Currently we only have one courtyard, so if it's occupied and you are not trained on walking dogs or physically capable of it, then you essentially cannot work with dogs. On busy adoption days, this lack of space also affects our ability to find the dogs their perfect home.

I understand that there's some concern about the proposed location. In my experience, dogs who are out with humans, which is the case at Furry Friends, are not disruptive to others. I also notice that there is a vet clinic/boarding facility just across the intersection from our proposed site; if that has not bothered the nearby neighborhoods, I would think that bodes well for Furry Friends at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway.

I am also proud of our elected officials and local animal control for their help building a no-kill community, and I sincerely hope that you will continue this support by approving Furry Friends's conditional use permit request.

Jessica Evans



709 Grand Avenue

West Des Moines, IA 50265

Dear board of adjustments,

I am asking you to support Furry Friends Refuge's request for a conditional-use permit for a third shelter near 35th/Mills Civic Parkway. It's close to other big roads like EP True and I-35, plus the police department, so it will be very convenient for anyone who uses the shelter. Also, volunteers are always out with the dogs to supervise them and make sure they don't make too much noise. We would do the same at the new shelter, so neighbors shouldn't worry about anything disturbing them.

I have volunteered several days a week at the current shelter for over 3 years, so I see how much a new shelter is needed. It can get very crowded, especially when volunteers are trying to help exercise the dogs and staffers are trying to show dogs to adopters.

We only have one courtyard in the main building so dogs have to go out one at a time. If we had several courtyards, volunteers would have a much easier time working with the dogs and even just getting them outside in the first place. The same would be true for adopters, and they could also get to know the dogs much better and then hopefully find the right dog for them faster.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.



Piersen Sato

3000 University Ave., Apt. 98

West Des Moines, IA 50266

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Board of Adjustments,

I am writing in support of the proposed new location for an additional Furry Friends adoption center at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway. My wife and I have volunteered with Furry Friends for many years, particularly with the dogs and helping keep the property in good order. This small organization does tons with very little and has played a very large part in our lives. Many of our friends have come from meeting other volunteers who share our interests and desire to help animals. We have become much more involved in our community as a result of our volunteering with the organization.

We have watched the organization struggle to make do with what space is available at their existing Grand Avenue location and recognize how much this new facility will assist the dedicated staff and volunteers in being able to help more animals as well as improve the quality of lives for animals waiting for adoption. Frequently we encounter times where the volunteers that are wanting to exercise dogs, provide training, or just give some additional attention to a dog have to wait because there is only one fenced in area to interact with dogs. While some of the volunteers are able to leash walk the dogs, there are a number of volunteers who have injuries or physical limitations that prevent them from being able to do this. My wife has brought groups from her work at Easter Seals to volunteer that were limited in the amount of time they were able to interact with the dogs due to the high demand for the one courtyard at the existing facility. A new facility with several courtyards would mean that there would be enough space to accommodate all of the people wanting to assist as well as provide enrichment for the dogs at the facility.

As someone who is frequently involved in doing repairs and improvements to the property, I know that the organization works very hard to keep a clean and tidy facility. They put very significant effort in turning the existing facility from a nuisance property with a giant hole in the front and countless hazards in to a property that is in good condition and consistently maintained. I frequently remind people at the shelter how happy my wife and I are that they came to West Des Moines and feel lucky that we have people who care so deeply for animals in our community. They have done a great deal for the city and I believe the city should do whatever it can to support them in continuing their valuable and important work. Approving the conditional use permit for this location will allow them to address their most pressing needs for additional space and better layouts for dog interactions. Please support this request.



Chuck Ross

609 18<sup>th</sup> St

West Des Moines, IA 50265

Dear Board,

I am writing to ask you to support the conditional use permit requested by Furry Friends Refuge for their proposed new adoption facility at 35<sup>th</sup> & Mills Civic. As a resident, I am proud that I live in a no-kill community and feel that Furry Friends has been a great asset to our community. In order for them to continue their important work helping homeless animals and pet owners in need, they need additional space. Given the community service nature of their programs, the location near the police station and other city services is an ideal area. Please approve this conditional use so more animals can be helped and more volunteers can engage with this great nonprofit organization.

Cece Moore

Cece Moore  
5100 Walnut St  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

**Brian Portz.**

I am writing you in support of the new facility that Furry Friends is proposing at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway. My daughter is involved as a volunteer with the organization and I support their no-kill mission and all of the work they do for the community saving homeless animals. They do a lot with very little and really need another facility to offer them additional space to work with the animals. The location they are proposing will be very accessible by a number of volunteers and adopters and is a particularly good location as much of what they do in serving the community is in keeping with the various other city services that are located within that area. Please support their request to operate an adoption center with courtyards for the dogs at that location.

Thank you for your consideration

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Trudy Esser".

Trudy Esser

800 28<sup>th</sup> St

West Des Moines



**Portz, Brian**

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**From:** Nancy <nancy.boyd@mchsi.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2017 7:22 PM  
**To:** Portz, Brian

Hello Brian, My name is Nancy and I am a West Des Moines resident and also a Furry Friends Refuge Volunteer. I am in full support of the new shelter just down the street from our house. I think it would be a win win for both FFR and the West Des Moines animal lovers and taxpayers. I know some people have expressed concern about the noise but the layout of the new building and the set up is not going to be an issue. I hope you will take everything into consideration and see how valuable FFR would be to our community!!! Tx for your consideration. Nancy Boyd

Sent from my iPhone

January 19, 2017

Dear Board of Adjustment Members,

Furry Friends Refuge has done amazing things for animals in West Des Moines, and I believe you should grant them their conditional use permit.

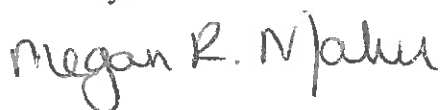
I have fostered for FFR for over 2 ½ years and have seen this life-saving success firsthand. FFR is able to save animals like orphaned kittens, cats with FIV or feline leukemia, older animals, dogs with anxiety, animals with behavior challenges, and animals with treatable medical conditions, instead of simply euthanizing them.

Unfortunately, there seems to always be more animals like these who need help, in addition to less dramatic cases like owner surrenders. I am proud to support a charity like FFR that has stepped up to help these animals for years, which is why I am asking you to allow them to build their third shelter.

Mills Civic Parkway and 35th Street would be a great location for this shelter. There is plenty of space and also great access. It makes sense to me to have it near the police department and right off two main roads, so that residents, staff, animal control officers, and volunteers can all get there easily. As someone who has been involved with FFR, I can also vouch that volunteers always supervise our dogs, even when they are in fenced-in areas, and would nip any noise issues in the bud.

I hope I have convinced you to grant this permit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan R. Maher".

Megan R. Maher, MPA, CSSBB  
4712 Colt Drive  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

January 19, 2017

Dear Board of Adjustment Members,

Please support Furry Friends Refuge's conditional use application for their third shelter. The shelter has managed to save thousands of animal lives thanks to volunteers and donors, and it also saves taxpayers money by not having to make the city hold stray animals and try to adopt them out. Local animal lovers, including myself, are so very grateful that Furry Friends exists as an alternative to a "kill" shelter and will take in all animals from West Des Moines.

Furry Friends definitely needs a third shelter, and putting it along Mills Civic Parkway is a great idea. The proposed site has plenty of space to hold several fenced-in courtyards for the dogs waiting for adoption, and it will be easy for adopters to head out there and meet them.

I am proud to live in such a pro-animal city, and I once again wish to state my support for Furry Friends to build a third shelter, so that we can become even more animal-friendly.

Sincerely,



Gretchen Scott  
4724 Brookview Drive  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

January 19, 2017

Dear Board of Adjustment Members,

I support Furry Friends Refuge's request for a conditional use permit. Furry Friends has served our community well since being founded by taking in unclaimed strays from animal control, at no cost to taxpayers like me. They have also saved the lives of 90+ percent of homeless animals in West Des Moines. In my opinion, they have earned the right to expand and do even more of this work.

Furry Friends has done all of this with a fairly limited facility. They only have one outdoor dog play area per building, while caring for several dogs at a time in these facilities. This means volunteers and adopters have to take turns bringing dogs outside to get exercise, which then obviously limits the amount of time they can play. Having several separate areas, all with fencing and latched gates, would reduce that problem.

Please allow them to build their third facility at 35th and Mills Civic. This site is centrally located, located off several main roads, and in an area that also has a fair number of businesses. All of that means that anyone served by Furry Friends (adopters, volunteers, etc.) should have no problem getting there.

Thank you for your consideration.



Thomas Patrick Maher  
4712 Colt Drive  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

To the Board of Adjustments,

Furry Friends Refuge is a no-kill shelter that serves my community of West Des Moines and surrounding areas. The building of a third shelter will allow Furry Friends Refuge to better serve the community and the animals within the community.

I previously volunteered at two different animal shelters before I started volunteering with Furry Friends Refuge in August 2014. My experience at the other shelters gives me some insight on how a third adoption facility with multiple courtyards will help better serve the public and the animals.

Our current shelter only has one courtyard for dogs to get exercise, work on training, and be seen by adopters. If we had multiple courtyards, the dogs could get more exercise and training. It would also allow for us to serve multiple potential adopters at the same time. With only one courtyard, potential adopters sometimes have to wait a very long time to be able to interact with a dog. With multiple courtyards, multiple potential adopters can spend as much time with a dog as they need.

Furry Friends Refuge has a strong set of procedures in place for their existing courtyard that would also apply to the proposed new shelter. They have implemented rules that dogs in the courtyard are always supervised. Since the dogs are not left alone, there is no excessive barking or behavior that would bother citizens close to the shelter.

An animal shelter is not able to be successful if they do not have the support of the community. Furry Friends Refuge has a record of supporting the community and the animals that live in the community. I hope you will make the decision to support Furry Friends Refuge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colby Goetsch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Colby Goetsch

4601 Pleasant Street #234  
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266

Dear Board of Adjustments,

I recently moved to West Des Moines from out of state and have just begun to volunteer with Furry Friends Refuge, but the shelter's accomplishments have already impressed me. Of all the shelters in Iowa, only Furry Friends has agreed to take in all unwanted animals from a city, from owner surrenders to unclaimed strays, and released more than 90% of them alive. That is why I am writing to you to ask that you approve their request for a conditional use permit for a third shelter at 35th Street and Mills Civic Parkway.

As a dog lover, I look forward to this proposed third shelter, because it would allow so many more volunteers to work with the dogs at the same time. I suspect that our current setup frustrates some of our volunteers and potential adopters when they have to wait for the courtyard to be freed up. Having more courtyards in addition to more space in general would be a huge asset to both of those groups. And as a dog owner and rescuer myself, I certainly appreciate that these dogs have the chance to move about freely outside in fenced-in areas (with supervision), instead of having to be on a leash to get exercise.

Finally, the eastern side of West Des Moines is currently well-served by Furry Friends' location at 1211 Grand, so putting this new facility on the western side, where growth has occurred and will keep occurring makes perfect sense in terms of accessibility for the people it serves. Being just off EP True, a major thoroughfare for the area, will also improve accessibility and means that it will fit in with the general development of the area, i.e., businesses including a vet clinic, and community services like the police department and library.

For these reasons, please consider approving the conditional use permit for a new animal shelter.

Melissa Roth

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Melissa Roth".

225 Prairie View Drive  
Apt. 8220  
West Des Moines, IA 50266

**Portz, Brian**

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**From:** Randle Boyd <randle.boyd@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 18, 2017 9:01 PM  
**To:** Portz, Brian  
**Subject:** Furry Friends-41st and George Mills

I am writing to support Furry Friends' effort to build a shelter around 41st and George Mills. I am both a West Des Moines resident and a Furry Friends volunteer. I believe those two things give me good perspective on the benefits of having a shelter at thi location. Furry Friends provides much needed services to the Western Suburbs, including a no-kill shelter, low cost spay and neuter clinic, and community education. By operating such a facility, Furry Friends saves the tax payers of West Des Moines hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

I understand that there is some concern about noise from the animals and diminished property values. I think both of those concerns are unfounded. A visit to either of the current shelters will show that animal noise is minimal. As for property values, I don't see how the shelter would have any impact on property values.

Thanks,  
Randle Boyd

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your time and attention. I am writing to passionately show my support for Furry Friends Refuge and the incredible work they have done for our community over the past nine years. Please consider this letter as evidence of my 100 percent support for the new facility Furry Friends is proposing at 35th and Mills Civic Parkway.

This location will allow Furry Friends to expand on the life-saving work they already do and the location is ideal in keeping with the other services the City offers in this area. Furry Friends has been a great neighbor at their current West Des Moines location and will continue to operate with the highest standards at the proposed new location.

As a resident of West Des Moines for many years, we have an opportunity to do something very special and to be an integral part of further creating and fostering a No-Kill Community. Furry Friends has implemented numerous strategies over the years that have saved the lives of hundreds of healthy pets. The work they do is progressive and in alignment with the values of our West Des Moines Community. Additionally, a few years ago, they took on the task of providing no-kill services to West Des Moines Animal Control. With their help, the city stopped plans which involved a \$4 million option for building a municipal animal shelter.

Based on the proposed location and knowing firsthand how Furry Friends operates, this is a perfect location for the perfect new neighbor. Please approve the grounds for the new facility and allow Furry Friends to continue the amazing work they do.

Best Regards,

Lori Teel  
5717 Aspen Drive  
West Des Moines, IA 50266



To the Board of Adjustments:

We would like to express our support for the new Furry Friends Refuge adoption center at 35th and Mills Civic Parkway. Furry Friends has been able to implement several program at no cost to the taxpayers to make the city a no-kill community and have made the city a much better place for animals and pet owners to live, work and play. The new facility will help them continue their important work and save more animals. Please support allowing the outdoor areas for volunteers and potential adopters interact with the dogs.

Sincerely,

Colin & Raylee Melton  
2501 Ridgewood Dr.  
WDM, Iowa

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for your time and consideration. My name is Robert Chonka and I'm writing in support of the new facility that Furry Friends is proposing at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway.

I've been familiar with the work of Furry Friends for many years and in fact, as a business owner within this community, I have chosen Furry Friends as the facility in which I donate to yearly. This organization operates with complete transparency and the highest ethical standards. Their no-kill philosophy and compassion for animals is second to none. I believe we are very fortunate to have this organization in our community as their positive impact has been amazing.

Furry Friends currently operates a first-class facility and the No-Kill Philosophy says a lot about the Community of West Des Moines. The proposed location for a new facility fits in well with the surrounding business and will be much more accessible for potential adoptees. It is my hope that this letter shows support for the new location and I respectfully thank you.

Best Regards,

Robert Chonka  
West Des Moines, IA

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

To Whom it May Concern:

My husband and I are asking you to support the proposed new Furry Friends adoption center at 35<sup>th</sup> and Mills Civic Parkway. We have been animals lovers for years and want the community and it's animals to continue to benefit from this new shelter. We are aware that the community supports the no-kill mission because the conditions have drastically improved for these homeless pets. Furry Friends has created several programs, which help them and were created at no costs to the taxpayers. Please support the new facility with the outdoor areas for the volunteers and potential adopters to interact with the dogs.

Thank you,

Jeff and DeVonne Jardine  
5622 Ponderosa  
West Des Moines, Iowa