

Animal shelter gets nod from supervisors

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SANTA CRUZ — The animal shelter run by the Animal Welfare Association will continue serving the unincorporated area of the county least through June.

Despite their dissatisfaction with the shelter on Seventh Avenue, county supervisors Tuesday agreed to continue their agreement for services with the Animal Welfare Association through the end of the fiscal year.

The city of Santa Cruz also OK'd a contract with the association Tuesday. The city of Capitola will consider the issue Thursday and Scotts Valley has not set a date for a decision on the contract.

During budget discussions this summer, supervisors agreed to temporarily extend the agreement with the Animal Welfare Association and asked for proposals from other groups interested in providing patrol and shelter services.

Three proposals were submitted: one from the Animal Welfare Association, one

from the University Services Agency and one from the Humane Society of Santa Cruz County & SPCA.

Supervisors Tuesday were scheduled to decide which group would get the contract for patrol and shelter services, but decided none of the three proposals were adequate. They gave all three groups until Jan. 27 to submit revised proposals.

County Administrative Officer George Newell is then to report March 6 on what organization he thinks should get the contract beginning in fiscal year 1984-85.

Newell recommended Tuesday that the Humane Society be dropped from consideration, saying its proposal was too costly, didn't include any evidence the group could provide the necessary administration and staff and didn't include any feasible site for a shelter.

Since all three proposals are inadequate, Supervisors' Chairman Joe Cucchiara said, then all three should be given a chance to come back with revisions.

The Humane Society originally proposed using county-owned land at the

three dump sites for three shelters. The county Public Works Department has said this land isn't available for buildings, according to Newell.

Humane Society spokesman Rod Lundquist said his group had been misunderstood. They didn't mean to limit their proposal to these three sites, he said.

The group, however, still believes the only way the county can get control of the situation is by leasing a shelter, Lundquist said. Under the group's original proposal, the county would have eventually owned the three shelters through a lease-purchase plan.

One Humane Society member, Dorothy Welch, fueled the controversy over the current operation last year by bringing a complaint to the Sheriff's Department alleging mistreatment of animals.

The sheriff recommended the shelter be cited on one county of mistreatment, but the district attorney did not press charges.

Eric Brooks, a local business consultant who plans to help the Humane Society with its revised proposal, said he became

concerned upon hearing the county wanted to drop the Humane Society out of the race because of bad feelings over Welch's complaints.

Newell said this wasn't true, citing the economic, administrative and land availability issues for wanting to drop the Humane Society proposal.

In agreeing to allow the Animal Welfare Association to continue operating the shelter and patrol services through June, supervisors want to make sure the county, the cities of Scotts Valley, Capitola and Santa Cruz and the public have a say in the operation.

They directed Newell to pursue the possibility of public agency and community involvement in the upcoming selection of a new shelter general manager, of more community participation on the Animal Welfare Association board and of better ways to insure adequate patrol services are being provided.

Supervisor Gary Patton was the sole dissenter in the vote to continue with the Animal Welfare Association for the time being.