

Occasionally in the work of County Government and the management and planning of local needs, issues may come to the forefront that demand a closer look. This is the situation now with the proposed multi-million dollar animal control shelter. The benefits that we in America share, in general, and Habersham County in particular, is that when legitimate concerns arise, where spending projects brush the top end of financial feasibility, the people always have the last word... when it works right.

This idea of government by the people and for the people runs from every small town and city level, through each County to State Government; and all the way to our Federal form of Constitutional governance. It may seem impossible these days to positively impact the craziness we see today at the Federal level. But, when it comes to out of control, contractor-driven projects, at the County level, there is no craziness that can occur without the consent of a relatively small number citizen/voters who care about their homes. We turn over the trust of fiscal responsibility to a small number of our own local citizens who aspire to earn our trust and to represent the will of the majority. Over the last several weeks a group of local folks researching the proposed expenditure by our county commissioners for an animal control facility in Habersham County have noted that the \$1.75 million funding voted on in SPLOST VII for the animal shelter has ***quadrupled to approximately \$8 million. It now appears that the county is considering "borrowing" the funds rather than utilizing SPLOST VII funds.***

At the Board of Commissioner's monthly meeting Monday September 16, we will request a 90-day pause to allow time to open up the discussion and look at reasonable alternatives.

Our group has gained support from some of the strongest animal advocates anywhere in Habersham County. It is also true that our group members are some of the staunchest guardians of conservative fiscal policy. This combination of authentic people is a recipe for great success to come together and take a hard look at the project from "square one".

Since rumors have already been launched that our group wants only to shut down the animal shelter project, allow us to state the guiding principles of our hope for a future Habersham County animal control shelter facility:

1. Our shelter will be considered the finest example of a small county facility anywhere in Georgia.
2. Animals will have a pleasant "home" while they are awaiting family adoption.
3. Volunteers and paid County staff will be proud to work at he finished project.
4. A project plan will accommodate animal overflow needs during the construction period.
5. The facility will be long-term durable, easily expandable and designed for minimal staffing requirements.
6. Construction time will be reduced significantly, allowing for an earlier opening date.

If the commissioners agree to this 90-day pause we invite our Habersham County neighbors to participate with input and discussion on this project.

Concerned Citizens of Habersham County