

Dear Citizens,

I recently conducted a survey to determine the priorities of the citizens I represent. The top two concerns were the condition of the streets and the observation that the tax rate is high. Recently, I was asked to place an item on the City Council agenda that, if passed, would either raise taxes or take funding away from the current street bond program. The request was a proposal to place on the general election ballot on May 12th, a bond issue to allow \$2,000,000 to be spent for the construction of a new animal shelter.

There were many comments made at the council meeting and in emails that the existing shelter was inadequate. In order to get the facts with which to make a decision, I personally inspected the animal shelter. The cages and floors were clean and sufficient for containment. There was only one animal per cage in the smaller cages. Some of the larger kennels had multiple animals and puppies. It is structurally sound and the roof does not leak. It is an old facility and in need of some repairs. The space could be more effectively utilized. It is far from the vision presented at the council meeting.

Last year, the shelter received 2,601 animals. There were 622 or 24% adopted. Sick, injured or aggressive animals accounted for 1,084 or 42% of the animals euthanized. There were 777 animals euthanized due to overcrowding. That is a 30% euthanasia rate of animals that were considered adoptable. The major goal of the city should be to lower the euthanasia rate and find as many homes as possible for the animals in need. My solution is to continue to fund the upkeep of the existing shelter. Make minor improvements to aid in keeping the animals that are housed there healthier. Most importantly, seek alternative shelters to place the animals so that they have better conditions and a greater opportunity to be adopted. We are actively seeking contracts with area shelters to receive adoptable animals to minimize the number housed at our shelter on a day to day basis. I visited the Ellis County SPCA Shelter in Waxahachie this week for this purpose.

One of the selling points on building a new shelter in Corsicana was the tax increase would only cost the homeowner with a \$100,000 home, \$12.40 per year. The problem with that logic is the tax increase would affect all of the businesses by the same percentage and the effect on a business with a \$20 million dollar appraised value would be an increase of \$2,480 per year. Several business owners and industries shared with me the concern over a slight increase in taxes as they are just barely making it now.

After careful consideration, research and comparing our tax rate to other cities, I have arrived at the decision to not place the item on the agenda. City Charter allows for three council members to instruct the city manager to place the item on the agenda. I have asked my fellow council members to contact the city manager to indicate if there is a desire to consider this item. I hope the community will come together to volunteer and help with the needed improvements at the shelter and help with the ongoing care of those animals in need. I continue to be proud to be your Mayor.

Sincerely,

Chuck McClanahan
Mayor