

Comments by Carole Hyde
Executive Director, Palo Alto Humane Society

To the Palo Alto Mayor and City Council
June 28, 2010

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Council,

I'm Carole Hyde, resident of Menlo Park and director of the Palo Alto Humane Society. I have been in touch with each of you regarding PAHS' concern about proposed fee increases at the Animal Services shelter.

I would like to advocate for a moment for the animals at the shelter and then make a proposal. The animal services budget is probably the only part of the city budget that involves the granting of life and death. The animals waiting in their cages have been entrusted to the city with their lives and their welfare. At the same time, the city shelter is not a no-kill facility. Animals are euthanized there. The public has a great variety of choice in where they adopt an animal—including not only other municipal and county shelters but many private shelters and animal rescue groups, as well. Many of these have made themselves highly visible in Palo Alto and surrounding communities, providing competition for the adoption dollar. Increased fees will make adoption at the Palo Alto shelter more expensive than at many of these other more visible groups. In sum, we believe that increased adoption fees could put Palo Alto's animals at risk.

I would like to offer to the council that the Palo Alto Humane Society work with Animal Services to develop alternatives to raising fees. We already have a close and ongoing working relationship with Animal Services through our spay-neuter voucher program, and we are probably the largest client at the city's spay-neuter clinic. We could explore options within that program that would address shortfalls in the Animal Services budget—this is to suggest just one possible idea. There are others that could be discussed and developed, and we would appreciate and welcome the opportunity to do this.

I hope you will find this helpful. Thank you for your consideration.