



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Curran

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Improving BARCS Facilities

FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore City Health Department, the Department of General Services, and the Department of Finance to report to the City Council on the needs assessment, feasibility, and building program study for a new or renovated facility for the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) located at 301 Stockholm Street in Baltimore.

Recitals

The Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) is a nonprofit shelter that accepts and cares for all animals in need and promotes responsible pet ownership for a more humane community in Baltimore City. BARCS serves over 620,000 residents with more than 350,000 companion animals. BARCS is now the largest companion animal shelter in Maryland, taking in over 12,000 dogs and cats and approximately 1,000 exotic, wildlife, and other small mammals each year.

As Maryland's largest open admission shelter, BARCS does not turn away any animal in need of shelter, food, and a loving touch. BARCS grants refuge to every abandoned, lost, or surrendered animal that comes through its doors. However, the antiquated facility is no longer suitable for the citizens and the homeless, neglected, and abused animals it serves. To best serve the citizens of Baltimore City and its animal population, BARCS desperately needs to build a new facility or renovate the existing one.

The current 22,000 sq. ft. facility was built in the early 1980's and the outdated Heating, Ventilation, Air Condition (HVAC) system proliferates disease, causing increased euthanasia and decreased adoptions since the number of healthy and treatable animals is minimized. In spite of the deplorable conditions, the reality is BARCS has outgrown space for both the insurmountable numbers of animals surrendered by the community and brought by Animal Control, as well as needing additional office space for employees and storage space for supplies like the 25 tons of animal food and 35 tons of litter, plus countless other items needed to humanely care for 12,000 animals annually.

The kennels were built with no provision for noise control, have little natural window light, and are not properly designed for ease of cleaning or maintaining the animals in a healthy state. There is also no room to support the surgical operations, quarantine, or medical treatment of the animals. The unpleasant industrial warehouse look, combined with noxious odors, is not conducive to having the public visit and feel comfortable about adopting pets.

When the animal shelter was built, it did not have the advantage of using the new and innovative materials and equipment available only in recent years. Animal shelters of today are no longer “warehouse structures” with small cages lined down the walls; instead shelters of today are very specialized buildings with more efficient designs, similar to hospitals in construction, and keep animals healthy, as well as hold up under heavy wear. It should be important to the Mayor’s “Grow Baltimore” initiative that BARCS present an attractive and welcoming image to the public.

A new BARCS shelter would allow for a public reception area and sales of pet supplies; an administrative area with private offices; public education provisions such as classrooms and meeting space; an animal receiving area including room for examinations and grooming; an increased number of enhanced animal kennels; additional animal kennels for quarantine and observation; support areas such as laundry, kitchens, food storage, grooming, and cleaning equipment; and a full clinic for shelter animal care, emergencies, and spay/neuter space. Animal areas should provide abundant health protection, safety, and comfort. This would be a facility that Baltimore City can be proud of.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council requests that the Baltimore City Health Department, the Department of General Services, and the Department of Finance report to it on the needs assessment, feasibility, and building program study for a new or renovated facility for the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) located at 301 Stockholm Street in Baltimore.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Health Commissioner, the Director of Finance, the Director of General Services, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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