

FW: Encino Contact Form

From: info@encinonc.org <info@encinonc.org>

Sent: Thu, Aug 13, 2020 at 2:21 pm

To: president@encinonc.org

-----Original Message-----

From: artshapeslife@gmail.com

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 1:34am

To: info@encinonc.org

Subject: Encino Contact Form

**Encino
Neighborhood Council****First Name:** Michelle**Last Name:** Cornelius**Email:** artshapeslife@gmail.com

Message: While I am not a resident in your area, I wanted to bring this to your attention as it affects everyone in the Valley. Brenda Barnette, the general manager of LA Animal Services, has proposed closing West Valley as a municipal animal shelter and allowing private rescue organizations to utilize it as a "Community Resource Center" for pet owners which may include services such as low cost veterinary services and dog training in addition to adoptions. Ms. Barnette claims that this change is necessary due to budget cuts. It is important to note that the services being highlighted in the proposal can be offered without giving away cage space at West Valley. In fact, Heaven on Earth already provides residents with low cost veterinary services at the West Valley shelter and Rescue Train does intervention work there. If dog training is offered by a group, then the logistics can probably be worked out. Giving away cage space at West Valley is deeply concerning because the shelter is typically used to house most of the animals seized in hoarder cases, they often take in animals from other overcrowded city shelters, and it is the only shelter which can house equine and livestock. West Valley is also a place where displaced residents can temporarily board their pets during a disaster like a wildfire or an earthquake. Below are some questions the community needs answers to: 1. What measures were used to deal with budget cuts during the last recession? Furloughs? An agreement with the union to delay a cost of living increase? Can any of those be implemented again? 2. How many shelter staff employees did the department have during the last recession compared to now? What was the annual intake rate of animals then compared to now? How many employees are taking advantage of the separation incentive plan? 3. What models were run in order to determine that the shelter could not be re-opened as a municipal shelter? Regarding question 2 above, in the agenda posted for the April 23, 2013 Board of Animal Commissioners meeting they wrote that "Staffing fell from 327 to 318, a drop of 3% since 2010." The total intakes for dogs, cats and kittens in 2013 was 49,533. In the recently held community meetings, they presented a slide which said that there were 341 filled positions. According to the statistics on their website, the total intake for dogs, cats, and kittens in 2019 was 46,825. The department has not released the number of people who taking advantage of the separation incentive, but as of right now they have more staff and lower intakes than they did in 2013 but we are being told that department does not have enough staff to keep West Valley open as a municipal shelter. It is worth noting that when voters passed Prop F in 2000 to renovate, expand, and build new animal shelters, we were promised we would have 8 shelters but we currently have 6 – the same number we had 20 years ago. While all 8 shelters have been built, renovated and/or expanded, under Ms. Barnette's tenure 2 city-owned shelters – Mission Hills and Jefferson Park – have already been converted into private adoption centers. The Valley was promised 3 shelters under Prop F and if this proposal is approved, we will only have one: East Valley in Van Nuys. Property owners are still paying higher taxes to service the debt on the 2 facilities which no do not provide city services to residents. I am asking that you oppose any proposal which gives cage space at West Valley to private rescue organizations. I have been a volunteer at the West Valley shelter since 2007 so I understand the potential implications of these proposed changes. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you have. Thank you, Michelle Cornelius