



November 21, 2023

Dear Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission,

I am writing in support of The Little Guild's application relating to our proposed new building at our current site at 285 Sharon Goshen Turnpike.

We currently are housed at the site in a converted house that is both extremely worn and ill-suited to our current work. We plan to raze the current facility and erect on top of the site a building that is more efficiently configured and that is equipped in a manner that will allow us to serve the community more effectively and broadly. The new building will be 8,685 square foot and house up to 16 dogs and approximately 25 cats, the same number of animals that we currently house.

To prepare for the building, the Guild's Building Committee did extensive research, including visiting several animal shelters throughout the region and speaking with a number of Executive Directors at other facilities which had undergone renovation. We hired Silver Petrucelli & Associates, an architectural firm that has worked on more animal shelters in Connecticut than any other, and we hired a well regarded local builder, Burlington Construction.

Our well researched and thoughtfully designed new facility will incorporate noise reduction capabilities; strategic placement of dogs in pods of 4 animals which should decrease the overall amount of noise; a large multipurpose room for animal education, training and socializing; room for adoption meet and greets; and vaccination and wellness clinics we can open to the community. The pod structure also will provide a calmer and healthier environment for the animals and the improved management protocols may allow us to rescue up to 50 percent more animals without substantially increasing the size of our facility or the number of animals we shelter at any one time. Importantly, it also will allow us to more effectively quarantine animals, which will allow us to take in more animals on a short term basis for animals whose families are in crisis.

A large multipurpose room is central to the design and will have many uses. We do not currently have any sort of meeting or training room, and this room will allow us to properly host school, camp and other groups. We currently allow a limited number of groups to visit but students often end up sitting on the floor in the lobby because there is no place to gather or sit. We have to decline requests from many groups because of this limitation. We also expect to hold training and animal play groups that will be open to the public. Group training sessions currently are held in our parking lot and only in good weather.

Our primary regulator is the Department of Agriculture and we will continue to work closely with it. All animal waste on the outside of the building currently will be picked up by the staff and disposed of in a dumpster as is the current practice. We will have two dumpsters in the back of the building enclosed in fencing. Volunteers and staff dog walkers will continue to pick up animal waste on walks. Similarly, cat waste is put in bags and put in the dumpsters. We are currently working with Torrington Area Health on the building's new septic system.

We decided to stay in the current location for many reasons, including its safety features and the other community buildings nearby. We have easy access to the Sharon Goshen Turnpike: this location provides easy access for any fire or safety vehicles that need to get to the site. In addition, we regularly



THE LITTLE GUILD OF ST. FRANCIS

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have large trucks make deliveries of food and supplies. The site and parking lot will be designed to address all traffic and safety issues. We expect to put in a permeable parking surface. In addition, our neighbors at this site consist of CCS, the Child Center, the Fire Department, the Conservation Trust and The Gold Preserve so noise of dogs outside during the day is generally not an issue; we have not had issues with noise of animals at night. Animal outdoor play is supervised.

Our new building will be an excellent addition to Cornwall. Animal shelters across the country are doing more to prevent animal homelessness by engaging in outreach, education and bringing people into the building for visits. Our building will provide that capability. We also will have a food pantry open to the public on site. We look forward to enhancing our services and role in the community. Visually the building will be better too of course!

Our expected start date is April 1, although we hope to commence demolition and site work before then.

We are happy to address any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Doebelin
Board President