

Countywide Animal Management Services for Rockland County: A Tail to be Told

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Rockland County Animal Shelter

- ▶ Hi-Tor Animal Care Center, Inc. was founded in 1973
- ▶ Rockland County owns the animal shelter
- ▶ Hi-Tor has been operating the shelter since 1973
- ▶ Funded by
 - Donations for Hi-Tor
 - Rockland County contribution
 - Town annual payments
- ▶ Issues during operation

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

- ▶ Article 7: Licensing, Identification and Control of Dogs (§§ 106-126)
 - Section 106: Purpose
 - To regulate the licensing and identification of dogs, control and protection of the dog population and the protection of people, property, domestic animals and deer from dog attacks and damage
 - Section 114: Pounds and Shelters
 - Grants municipalities, who issue licenses for dogs, the authority to maintain a pound or shelter
 - Municipalities may also contract with other municipalities or public benefit corporations, or subsidiaries thereof, who provide animal management service
 - Section 117: Seizure of Dogs; Redemption Periods; Impoundment Fees; Adoption
 - Outlines when a dog may be seized by any dog control office or local police officer
 - Establishes redemption periods for seized dogs, but allows municipalities to enact longer periods
 - Establishes impoundment fees, but allows municipalities to enact higher fees. Also limits what the collected fees may be used for

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

▶ Article 16-C: Regulations of Animal Shelters (Licensing, Identification and Control of Dogs) (§§ 420-434)

General Information

- Department of Agriculture and Markets wanted to establish responsible, uniform and effective standards for the care of animals in animal shelters
- Passed in 2022 and takes effect in December 2025
- Applies to all public or not-for-profit entities owning, operating or maintaining a shelter (§ 420)
- Includes requirements relating to: record keeping; personnel training; sanitation; general facility standards and veterinary care, among others

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

- ▶ Article 26-C: Regulations of Animal Shelters (§§ 420-434)
 - Licenses and Regulation of Shelters
 - Requires any municipal pound or shelter or duly incorporated society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, to obtain a license to operate
 - License requirements does not apply to any public authority providing shelter services or its subsidiary created for the sole purpose of providing such services
 - Public authorities providing shelter services are required to register with Department (§ 408)
 - Yearly registration and license renewal required

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

► Article 26-C: Regulations of Animal Shelters (§§ 420-434)

Summary of the Sections of the Act

- Record Keeping and Protocols: sets forth minimum requirements for all shelters to create and maintain records for each animal in their custody (§ 423)
- General Facility Standards: outlines the requirements for the interior of all shelter facilities, including electrical, plumbing, temperature, and noise levels (§ 424)
- Animal Housing: minimum requirements relating to the size of the enclosures, materials used, and appropriate signage (§ 425)
- Sanitation: minimum requirements and protocols outlining cleaning and disinfecting enclosures, including what must be done daily, weekly, etc.
- Shelter Management Protocols: requires all shelters to have a clear, written, management structure to establish a hierarchy of responsibilities. This section also dictates the minimum number of animals allowed in a shelter per enclosures numbers (§ 427)
- Animal Husbandry: dictates requirements related to water and food (§ 428)

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

- ▶ Article 26-C: Regulations of Animal Shelters (§§ 420-434)
 - Veterinary Care: requires an assessment for all incoming animals and vaccination requirements in accordance with national standards, as well as documentation of all care given (§ 429)
 - Behavior: ensures that all behavioral issues are recorded and monitored, as well as requires proper exercise and social interaction (§ 430)
 - Transportation: outlines general requirements for vehicles and responsibilities for operators who are transporting animals to and from the shelter (§ 431)
 - Foster Care Provider Requirements: foster care providers must sign a written agreement with the shelter and this section outlines the rights and responsibilities of all foster care providers (§ 432)
 - Violations: violators are subject to licensure denial, revocation or suspension, as well as civil offenses resulting in penalties for any violation of the law (§ 433)
 - Waiving of Requirements Authorized: allows the Commissioner to waive the requirements of the article during a disaster emergency, provided there was an official declaration of an emergency by the Governor (§ 434)

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Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority (aka) Rockland Green

- ▶ Title 13M of Article 8 of the Public Authorities Law
- ▶ Established in 1994
- ▶ Provides solid waste management services to Rockland County
- ▶ 17 Member Board
 - 5 Town Supervisors
 - 8 County Legislature (5 from majority and 3 from minority)
 - 2 County Executive appointments
 - 2 Mayors

Solid Waste Management

- ▶ 3 Transfer Stations
- ▶ Materials Recovery Facility
- ▶ Biosolids Composting Facility
- ▶ Concrete and Asphalt Crushing Facility
- ▶ Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Facility
- ▶ Yard Waste Composting Facility
- ▶ Countywide Flow Control
- ▶ Long-haul Municipal Solid Waste
- ▶ Fuel Replenishment Program
- ▶ Handles over 400,000 tons of municipal solid waste per year
- ▶ Paid for by combination of tip fees and user fees on tax bill
- ▶ User fee may be imposed for use of facilities and services, including the availability thereof

Rockland Green

- ▶ Very well operated solid waste system
- ▶ State-of-the-art facilities
 - MRF
 - Biosolids
 - HHW
- ▶ Assessing Alternatives to Landfill Disposal
- ▶ Food Waste Pilot Program
- ▶ Utilizes Countywide flow control to enforce waste delivery
- ▶ Fuel replenishment program

Rockland Green Animal Shelter Legal Authority

- ▶ Chairman called early in 2021
- ▶ Rockland Green Board passed resolutions to undertake Countywide animal management services
- ▶ Required Title 13M Amendments
- ▶ Approved by County Legislature on May 3, 2022
- ▶ Approved by New York State Assembly on June 1, 2022
- ▶ Approved by New York State Senate on June 3, 2022
- ▶ Signed by Governor on August 17, 2022

Amendments to Title 13M

- ▶ 2022 N.Y. SB 9434
 - “Animal Shelter” shall mean any facility, building or structure, where temporary or permanent housing and care is provided to stray, abandoned, abused, seized, impounded, owner-surrendered or otherwise unwanted animals.
 - “Animal management services” shall mean any and all services provided to promote animal care and to protect public health and safety, including, but not limited to the following services: providing housing and care for stray, abandoned, abused, seized, impounded, owner-surrendered or otherwise unwanted animals in an animal shelter; the processing and disposal of animal waste; the disposal of dead wildlife removed from roadways following wildlife-vehicle collisions; providing animal control; and any other similar service related thereto.

Amendments to Title 13M

- Allows for Rockland Green to own, lease and construct an animal shelter for temporary and permanent housing to stray, unwanted and abused animals.
- Provides for the creation of a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rockland Green for the sole purpose of operating an animal shelter and to provide animal management services on behalf of one or more municipalities in the County pursuant to the Agriculture and Markets Law.
- Subsidiary to be deemed a shelter for purposes of registration, inspection or oversight required by law or regulation by the Department of Agriculture and Markets.
- The directors of Rockland Green will serve as the directors of the subsidiary.
- The subsidiary, its property, functions and activities will have the same privileges, immunities, tax exemptions and other exemptions as Rockland Green.
- Rockland Green may transfer to or from such subsidiary any monies, property or the services of any officers, employees or consultant for animal management services.
- The subsidiary will be subject to the same restrictions as Rockland Green.
- The employees of the subsidiary shall not be deemed employees of Rockland Green, except those who are also employees of Rockland Green.
- Allows for the imposition of an animal management charge user fee.

Amendments to Agriculture and Markets Law

- ▶ Section 114
 - Public authority or its wholly-owned subsidiary shall maintain an animal shelter
- ▶ Section 400
 - Exempts a public authority or its wholly-owned subsidiary providing shelter services to unwanted animals from the definition of Pet Dealer

Implementation of the Animal Management Services

- ▶ Lease of existing animal shelter from County effective January 1, 2023
- ▶ Rockland Green entered into Agreement with Hi-Tor to operate the shelter effective January 1, 2023
- ▶ Incorporation of the Rockland Green Center for Animal Rescue and Education Services (RG CARES)
 - Secretary of State's Office
 - Rockland Green and RG CARES Agreement

Implementation of the Animal Management Services

- ▶ Animal Shelter Management and Operation Services
 - Agreement was to be a partnership between Rockland Green and Hi-Tor
 - Hi-Tor had operational responsibility for the shelter
 - Rockland Green funded full contract cost
 - Rockland Green funded necessary equipment and supplies
 - Rockland Green provided for increased insurance coverage
- ▶ Hi-Tor failure to perform

Implementation of the Animal Management Services

- ▶ Termination of Hi-Tor Agreement
 - Failure to provide policies and procedures for the operation of the shelter
 - Failure to provide a staffing plan for the shelter
 - Failure to maintain sufficient resources and failure to ensure the proper care of the animals at the shelter
 - Failure to operate the shelter in accordance with Best Practices
 - Feline Panleukopenia Virus outbreak occurred, which resulted in the death of 35 cats
 - Notice and Cure

Implementation of the Animal Management Services

- ▶ Entered into Consulting Agreement for Animal Shelter Management and Operation Services with Four Legs Good, Inc.
 - Accept and impound all dogs brought to the shelter by dog wardens employed by the Towns within the County
 - Accept dogs and any other animals brought to the shelter by persons other than dog wardens and provide proper care, food and shelter until redeemed
 - Schedule regular adoption events, monthly adoption specials and training and behavior modification of animals as necessary
 - Schedule low-cost spay/neuter clinics for members of the public
 - Comply with applicable law
 - Provide all personnel, equipment and materials necessary to provide the contract services
 - Prepare and maintain financial records, as well as all records regarding the intake, care and disposition of all animals at the shelter
 - Open to the public 6 days per week

New Shelter

- ▶ Rockland Green acquired a 28,457 square foot warehouse, situated on 3.69 acres, located at 427 Beach Road, West Haverstraw, NY in January 2024
- ▶ Rockland Green will transform the warehouse into a state-of-the-art animal shelter pursuant to a request for proposals conducted under its procurement policy, to be issued in the second quarter 2024
- ▶ Rockland Green consulted with the New York State Animal Protection Federation on the new animal shelter design
- ▶ Rockland Green engaged BDA Architecture, P.C., Building Design for Animals, LLC, to draft drawings and specifications for the new animal shelter
- ▶ The new animal shelter will have space for approximately 98 dogs, 193 cats and 213 exotics (including 60 guinea pigs, 108 rabbits and 45 avian/reptiles)
- ▶ The new animal shelter is expected to be operational in the second quarter 2025

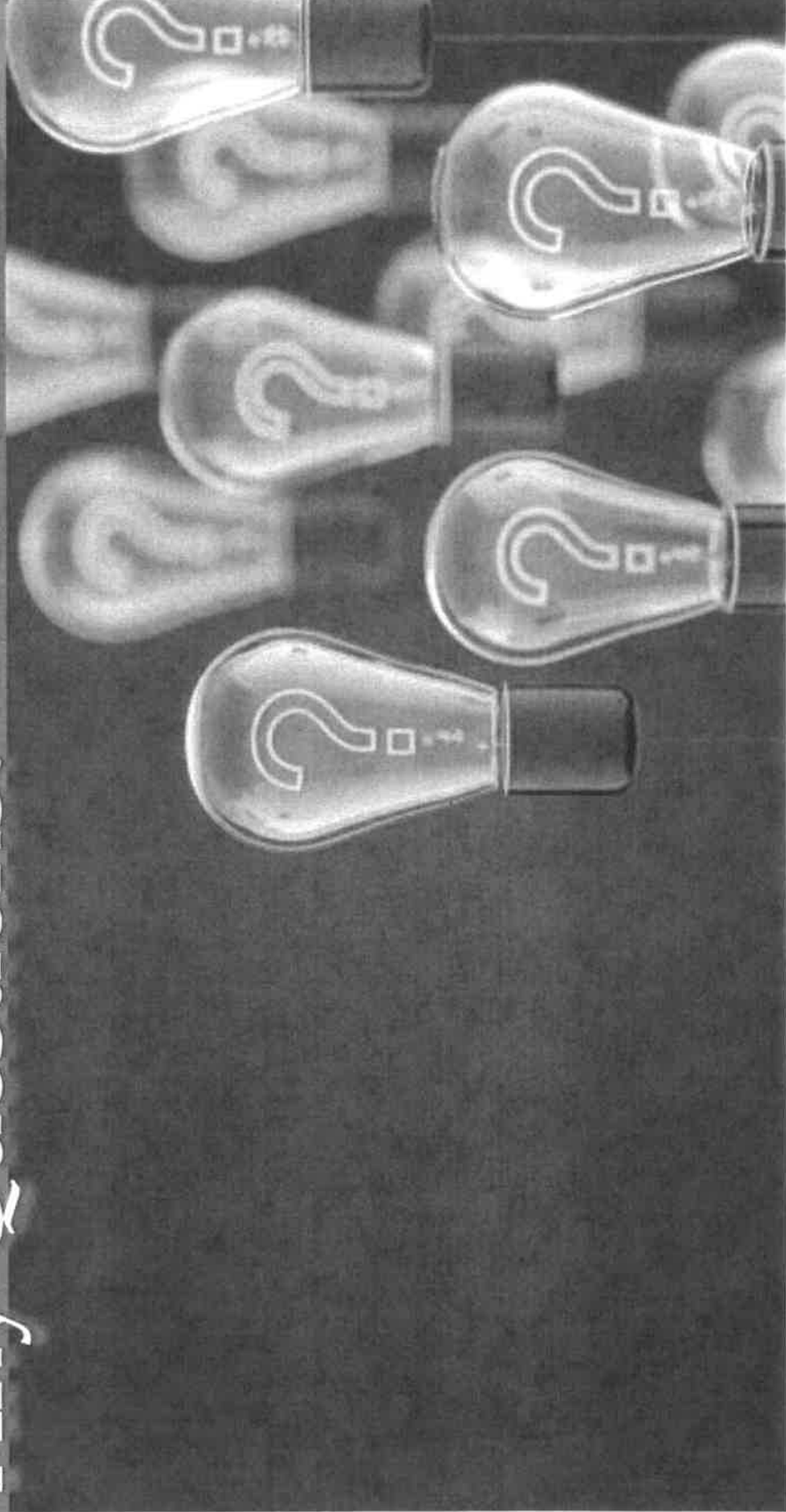
Project Financing

- ▶ Solid Waste Management System Master Bond Resolution
- ▶ No solid waste funds are allowed to be used for the animal shelter
- ▶ Rockland Green adopted Animal Management Bond Resolution
- ▶ Credit – Animal Management charge
- ▶ BANS were issued to purchase land and warehouse to be retro-fitted for the new shelter
- ▶ Full financing anticipated in late Summer 2024
- ▶ Long-term agreements with each of the Towns for the provision of animal management services
 - Similar to long-term solid waste agreements
- ▶ Host Community Agreement with Town of Haverstraw

Future Plans

- ▶ New Operating Agreement
 - Operation of New Shelter
- ▶ Continue feral cat program
- ▶ Education related to animal care and owner responsibilities
- ▶ Active foster and adoption programs

Any Questions?



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