



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

Calling for independent investigation of Niagara County SPCA; move toward "no kill" methods for sheltering animals

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ January 17, 2012

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“Since my press release of January 3, I have spoken at length with local government leaders and representatives of both local and national animal welfare organizations. These individuals have further convinced me that a truly independent and transparent investigation of the allegations concerning the Niagara County SPCA (NC SPCA) is absolutely necessary.

“Although the NC SPCA has selected the Erie County SPCA (EC SPCA) to conduct an investigation, there are undisputed, documented links between the two organizations which put the objectivity of the EC SPCA as an investigative entity in doubt. For example, the EC SPCA and NC SPCA admittedly share staff members. The EC SPCA also admits transferring animals to the Niagara facility. At least one board member of the NC SPCA is employed by a board member of the EC SPCA. The NC SPCA has also retained an attorney to assist in the investigation being conducted by the EC SPCA. Although there is a dispute as to whether he has been hired to conduct an investigation or has been hired to represent the NC SPCA board, the NC SPCA simply cannot satisfy community concerns by choosing its own inquisitors.

“Since these allegations came to light, numerous individuals and groups concerned with the welfare of companion animals have contacted my office. I have been able to gain a great deal of information about more modern and humane methods for dealing with what was once thought to be an unsolvable problem of dog and cat overpopulation. More particularly, I had an opportunity to share an hour long phone conference call with Wheatfield Supervisor Robert Cliffe; the leader of Animal Allies of Western New York, Morgan Dunbar; and Nathan J. Winograd, a world expert, author, lecturer, advocate and spokesperson for the “No Kill” movement. Mr. Winograd is the Director of the national No Kill Advocacy Center. He is a graduate of Stanford Law School, a former criminal prosecutor and attorney, and held a variety of leadership positions including director of operations and executive director of two of the most successful shelters in the nation. He has spoken nationally and internationally on animal sheltering issues, has written animal protection legislation at the state and national level, has created successful No Kill programs in both urban and rural communities, and has consulted with a wide range of animal protection groups including some of the largest and best known in the world.

“As a result of these conversations, there appear to be many innovative ideas and methods which could drastically reduce and perhaps even eliminate the need for healthy or treatable animals to be killed at local shelters. It is now time for the NC SPCA to begin to incorporate these up to date ideas into their operations. This would be greatly facilitated by the appointment of local No Kill advocates to their board of directors. There is no shortage of such talent in Western New York. I am willing to offer my support to such efforts and urge all the citizens of Niagara County to join me in this worthy community endeavor.”