



# RiverheadPatch



Four-Legged and Furry

By **Ashley Wilbourn** October 13, 2010

GOVERNMENT

## A Conversation with Sean Walter: The Riverhead Animal Shelter

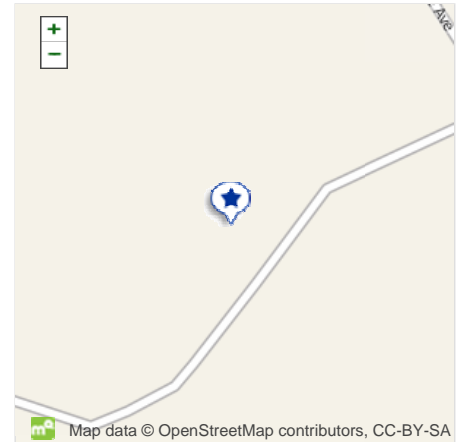
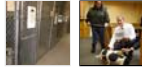
Supervisor Sean Walter addresses his new animal awareness campaign and the issues facing the local shelter. Riverhead Supervisor Sean Walter announced a new animal awareness campaign last week, focusing on getting dogs from the Riverhead Animal Shelter adopted.

The campaign announcement came after Walter made the following statement [two weeks ago](http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/pick-of-the-litter-leaves-pit-bulls-behind) (<http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/pick-of-the-litter-leaves-pit-bulls-behind>): "I don't say this lightly, but my opinion is that the more humane thing is not to leave (unadopted dogs) in a kennel for another six months. I think the Town Code gives us a certain amount of time to hold the dog and after that we euthanize the dog."

On Tuesday, Walter spoke about the town's reenergized efforts to adopt the animals at the Riverhead Animal Shelter.



PHOTOS (2)



He chose not to speak further regarding euthanasia, noting that the hot button issue drew an immediate guttural reaction from many. "I'm not going to speak about that anymore," he said. "I'm just going to keep trying to connect these animals with the right home."

"We want to bring the dogs that are friendly enough in and show them interacting with the supervisor. We will do that each week at the town board meeting," Walter said. "We want to get them on camera, on channel 22 and raise awareness about the dogs."

The animals up for adoption ([http://www.petfinder.com/pet-search?shelter\\_id=NY197](http://www.petfinder.com/pet-search?shelter_id=NY197)) will also be featured on the town website and local news websites to raise awareness.

Walter brought two beagle/terrier dogs into last week's meeting, and both dogs, along with two others, were adopted from the shelter during the week. All four adoptions can be, in part, contributed to the publicity the shelter and dogs received last week.

The supervisor was willing to acknowledge the shortcomings of the Riverhead Animal Shelter. "We have a limited staff," he said.

This staff shortage leaves the shelter dependent on volunteers for rescue events, dog training, dog socializing and more. Walter said that local volunteer group RSVP, Inc., under the previous administration, offered to take control of any dog that had been at the shelter for over 90 days. But, Walter said, "They haven't held up their end of the bargain."

This agreement essentially falling through has left the shelter in an even tighter bind, the supervisor said.

With the new awareness campaign, Walter hopes that more animals will be adopted from the shelter, as they were last week. The increased publicity could also lead to more volunteers, helping out with shelter needs.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Riverhead Animal Shelter, you can contact the town at 631-727-3200 or the animal shelter at 631-369-6189.

**Have you or anybody you know adopted a dog from the animal shelter? [Tell us in the comments.](#)**

Interested in a follow-up to this article?

**About this column:** 'Four-Legged and Furry' will focus on the smaller, cuter animals we interact with - and sometimes overlook - on a daily basis. In addition to showcasing adoptable animals and local rescue organizations, 'Four-Legged and Furry' will post fun and interactive activities you can do with your pets.

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#### COMMENTS (2)

**Diane Barba**

9:18pm on Monday, November 15, 2010

If only the town board would allow RSVP the opportunity to run the shelter, more animals would have a chance at a better life. Our shelter is one of the last "kill" shelters left. If a rescue group would be allowed to opportunity to run the shelter, more donations would come in relieving a financial burden on the town.

I've seen what can be done if a rescue organization takes over and runs a shelter. Take a ride out to Southold, to the North Fork Animal Welfare League. They have an incredible adoption record. They have large numbers of volunteers, even children who come in to hold and socialize the animals. The attention they receive makes them more adoptable.

I hold in my possession an application to volunteer at our shelter, but just can't do it under the circumstances. Until the town recognizes that every creature that has a beating heart deserves a chance, it's too heartbreaking.

And isn't it true that the dogs were brought to the town meeting only once? Hmm...Sean, what's up with that?

**Domingos Cunha**

10:03am on Wednesday, January 5, 2011

To those reading this just Remember Bruno the pitbull... murdered by mistake without further coments from Mr Walter... and the other issue envolving a Gila Monsters and other wildlife.

LET THE VOLUNTIERS RUN THE SHELTER they are moved by their love towards animals not other things