

Jones rejects animal shelter land request

By Adam Belz
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ANAMOSA — Jones County supervisors have denied a request from a local animal shelter for land, forcing shelter volunteers to choose between buying land of their own or pursuing a change in county zoning ordinances.

Supervisors say no county-owned land is right for an animal shelter because zoning ordinances require dog kennels to be at least a half-mile from any home in Jones County, and all available countyowned land is closer to homes than that.

“We did all we could,” Supervisor Keith Dirks of Anamosa said. “These people work very hard, and . . . they provide a good service, so they’re probably very disappointed.” They are. Nancy Crist, who co-founded the Animal Welfare Foundation of Iowa in 1993 when she and her husband realized almost all stray dogs in Jones County were being euthanized, said in a statement Tuesday she thinks supervisors never took the animal shelter’s request seriously.

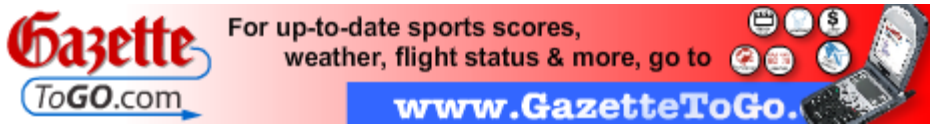
She said supervisors decided to reject the request because of complaints from farmers who live near the landfill where the foundation asked to build the animal shelter.


“Of one thing I am certain,” she said in the statement. “If ... supervisors were receiving calls seven days a week, night and day, about stray animals, they would have already found land for the shelter.” According to Dirks, the zoning ordinance is clear, and supervisors aren’t going to pursue a change in county land-use rules — as the foundation requested — because “that’s really not the channel to do that,” he said.

In May 2006, the foundation announced a \$265,000 fundraising campaign to build the 3,000-square-foot animal shelter for 16 dogs and 32 cats and operate it for one year.

So far the foundation has raised \$46,000, Crist said.

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