

Capistrano 
CARE 
Animal Rescue Effort
MEDIA RELEASE

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COUNCIL VOTES TO TERMINATE LEASE AGREEMENT WITH CARE

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO — The City Council on Tuesday voted to terminate the lease with Capistrano Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) for a three-quarter acre site north of the intersection of Camino Capistrano and Junipero Serra, where the organization had planned to build an Animal Adoption & Rescue Center.

In consideration for canceling the agreement, the City will reimburse CARE for between \$25,000 and \$35,000 in costs for work undertaken to improve the site and prepare it for construction.

In 2001, the City Council leased to CARE for \$1 per year a small portion of excess property that was acquired as part of the Open Space land purchase in the early 1990s. CARE began site preparation and fundraising to build a facility on the site to further its mission to rescue and adopt homeless San Juan Capistrano animals and has since raised approximately half of the projected \$1 million cost. CARE, at its expense, processed the required land development permits, had more than \$130,000 in site grading and geotechnical analysis and work donated, and fenced and “hydro-seeded” the property to prevent erosion.

COUNCIL VOTES TO RESCIND CARE LEASE

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In February, the City proposed a Creekside Buffer Ordinance that would have rendered the site unusable for the current plan. The ordinance is still pending, although the Council advised CARE it should consider other options.

Commenting on the Council's vote, CARE President Matt Gaffney said: "According to our lease, the City has the right to rescind the lease agreement with 12 months' notice. While we are disappointed that we will not be able to fulfill our dream to build a local facility for the animals, the city is within its rights to terminate.

"We appreciate the work that has been done to move the project forward, but we are exploring other options. Of course our goal remains to serve the animal community in San Juan Capistrano."

Rather than the animal rescue/adoption center, Mayor Mark Nielsen has suggested putting a dog park on the site.

CARE was formed in 2000 and has since rescued and adopted more than 1,150 abandoned cats and dogs from San Juan Capistrano that are picked up by Orange County Animal Services. For more information, visit www.capoanimalrescue.com, or phone (949) 240-1735.

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