

# Controversy swirls over euthanasia at humane shelter

## Each side telling a different story

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Controversy continued last week and into this week between the City of Forrest City and the Forrest City Humane Society.

Several e-mails, some from out of state but not all, have been received by this newspaper and other individuals. Although the e-mails touch on several subjects, the bottom line is this:

The Humane Society charges that the city's animal control officers were going to have dogs euthanized before they had been held at the animal shelter the required length of time.

Meanwhile, Mayor Gordon McCoy denied the accusation vehemently.

Janie Hicks, president of the local Humane Society, said Monday that some members

were at the shelter last week, and there was a puppy that seemed to be extremely ill. She said the members requested that the puppy be euthanized.

The Humane Society members claim that the animal control director (Roy Hamilton) said he didn't want to take just one dog in to be euthanized. He said he wanted to take six more.

"There is a five-day period," said Hicks. "Some of the dogs he was wanting to take in had not been at the shelter that long."

Several e-mails provided names of the dogs who were supposedly going to be euthanized, along with dates when the Humane Society says the dogs arrived at the shelter.

Hicks and another Humane Society member, Gay Schwartz (in an e-mail), said the mayor was called, and the mayor told the men just to take the puppy in. Then they claimed that the animal control director said he was going to have all the dogs euthanized on Monday.

Hicks did call from the shelter on Monday afternoon to say that no euthanasia had taken place Monday. However, Schwartz said the animals may still be euthanized.

When contacted Monday, McCoy was adamant.

"They lie so much it's a crime," he said. "I don't know what that's (the euthanasia accusations) all about. If there are some dogs out there due to be euthanized, Roy will do his

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job. But he has not been ordered by me to euthanize all the dogs in the shelter. The sick dogs and the dogs that are past due, they will be taken care of."

McCoy continued, "If the Humane Society wants these dogs, they need to create a place for them. It seems that if he has dogs euthanized, they say he's killing the dogs. But if he's not, they say there are too many sick dogs. I cannot wait for this to be over with."

McCoy was referring to a lawsuit filed by the city against the Humane Society, over ownership of the property. The building was constructed on land owned by the Humane

Society, and there was supposedly an agreement between the two parties that if the land was ever annexed into the city, ownership of the land would go over to the city.

However, the Humane Society claims that there was never a signed lease, and that the Humane Society not only still owns the land, but the building as well.

All of the dogs mentioned in the e-mails will have been in the shelter the required number of days by now, but Schwartz said in her e-mail the Humane Society is trying hard to get them adopted. Schwartz also claimed that there is no crowding at the shelter at this time.