

Castoff Pet Rescue...from Page 1A

couldn't be here this time, so we had someone do it for us."

For Hoth, such events are about protecting local animals, with Castoff forwarding this mission by utilizing funds raised through the Thrift Store and community donations.

"I just want to make sure all the animals in the community are safe," Hoth said. "If they get lost, we want them to find their home. It is sad to see those animals go into animal control or in the shelter, and almost every week we have two or three dogs. They are lost, and we want to help them."

Volunteer Jeanne Strack distributed the microchips to pets that day because caring for animals is her passion, so she volunteers when she can.

"I've worked with ... Castoff for probably 13 years or so, and they needed help doing microchips, and I have done

thousands," Strack said. "It gave me chance to visit people and love on their dogs."

"A lot of people just can't do things like this because of the money, and it is great to see so many people come through and care for their animals like they are. It is heartwarming and a great thing that Castoff is doing."

Another volunteer, Tammy Vaughn, made free tags for the animals, which was also popular with the community Jan. 30.

"I have made a lot of them," Vaughn said. "I think we have done more tags than we have chips, but we have done a lot of both. It is a great thing that we are doing, and it is good that people are coming in to get tags for their animals."

The tags were something that Hoth and Castoff decided to do since they were already



Tammy Vaughn was happy to volunteer her time creating nametags for pets during Castoff Pet Rescue's Safe Pet Project Saturday at the Thrift Store on Cobalt Street.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

doing microchipping for free.

"We hope to continue doing this if we have enough support in the community to

help pay for the microchip, because it is expensive," Hoth said.

Those interested in supporting the group can make donations at the Thrift Store or by shopping there. For more information, visit <https://castoffpetrescue.org>.

Downtown...from Page 1A

parcel for Arby's development, but COVID-19 pretty much halted the efforts of the DDA – and everyone else, for that matter – until recently.

DDA Program Manager Darren Harper has been trying to restore momentum to the project, aiming to keep pace with growth in the region, which has risen right alongside COVID-19, as homebuyers flock from urban areas and travelers head for closer-to-home locales.

In the Jan. 26 meeting, Harper presented a proposed plan including a welcome center attached to bathrooms immediately behind City Hall, a location that would cut down on building costs by tying into existing utility lines there.

Harper's thought behind a welcome center was to partner with the Chamber of Commerce to provide downtown visitors a central, easy-to-locate information site, especially since the county's current Community Center welcome area has proven hard for many people to find.

Between council and board members, however, the group consensus was that a downtown welcome center was not needed at this time, and that what they really wanted to focus on was getting the parking lot paved and public bathrooms installed.

DDA Board Member Robert Rogers suggested using

Henson, who also serves as county surveyor, to draw up plans for the project, and everyone agreed that this was the direction they needed to go.

Rogers actually reached out to Henson about potentially working the project close to a year ago before everything got waylaid because of the virus, so this is simply a continuation of those efforts.

"What we're looking for from him is engineering and design as far as laying out the parking lot, grading it, where to put the bathrooms, all that kind of stuff," Rogers said.

Henson will be drawing up different possible locations for the bathrooms, as several participants in the Tuesday meeting felt they should stick with their original plan of installing them closer to the square for greater visibility and ease of access, instead of right behind City Hall.

As far as a timeline, Rogers said the plans may take 30 days or so to complete, after which they will be able to pick a path and come up with construction costs. He's hopeful that grading can occur soon, followed by construction of the actual project pending the weather.

"I think we'll have asphalt there by the summer," Rogers said. "It can move fast once it starts."

The DDA still holds two



DDA Program Manager Darren Harper will be glad to finally see progress on the city's paved parking lot and bathrooms downtown, projects that have stalled for various reasons over the years.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard
pieces of the Haralson Property Development, the lots on either side of the intersection of Bob Head Street and Pat Haralson Memorial Drive. Board members currently have no plans for these lots and are holding them for future consideration.

Older parking lot plans exist, but newer plans are necessary because the current gravel parking lot has been shored up with about 200 truckloads of Arby's dirt, and the DDA also wants to ensure grading accounts for future two-story development on the adjacent Haralson lot there.

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