



March 12, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting

## Title

Zoning Ordinance Amendment, to Allow Pet Adoptions in the B-1 and B-2 Districts — Nyrma Soffel, Community Development

## Summary

Zoning Ordinance Sections	Amend Sections 10-3-24, 10-3-84, and 10-3-90
Purpose	To add definitions for pet adoption and pet shops, to allow pet adoptions in the B-2 district, and to allow cat adoptions in the B-1 district.
Applicant	Cat’s Cradle of the Shenandoah Valley
Planning Commission	March 12, 2025
City Council	Anticipated April 8 (First Reading/Public Hearing) Anticipated April 22 (Second Reading)

## Recommendation

Option 1. Recommend approval of the Zoning Ordinance amendments.

## Fiscal Impact

N/A

## Context & Analysis

Cat’s Cradle, a local nonprofit cat rescue located at 122 South Main Street, is requesting to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow cat adoptions as a by-right use within the B-1, Central Business District. While the B-1 district allows retail as a by right use, which would allow for businesses such as pet supply stores, it does not permit pet shops, grooming establishments, or animal hospitals. These uses are permitted by right within Section 10-3-90 (9) of the B-2 district, and because the same set of uses are not listed within the uses permitted by right or by special use permit sections of the B-1 district, they are not permitted downtown.

Currently, Cat’s Cradle is unable to complete cat adoption transactions at its downtown office due to restrictions in the B-1 district. Instead, they transport the cats off-site to finalize adoptions. This

process is challenging since they cannot close their business during working hours and rely on volunteers for transportation and transactions, which leads to delays and occasionally discourages potential adopters.

To allow for cat adoptions in the B-1 district, the Zoning Ordinance would be amended by adding definitions for “pet adoptions” and “pet shops,” and then adding the uses within the B-1 and B-2 districts accordingly. If approved, Section 10-3-24 Definitions would be amended by adding the two definitions as follows:

*Pet adoption: The transfer of ownership of a dog or cat, or any other companion animal from a releasing agency to an individual. Such transfer of ownership does not include the purchase, sale, transfer, exchange or bartering of companion animals for compensation or profit.*

*Pet shop: Retail establishment where companion animals are bought, sold, exchanged, or offered for sale or exchange, to the general public.*

At the same time, Section 10-3-84. Uses Permitted by Right in the B-1, Central Business District, would be amended by adding subsection (15) as shown below:

(15) Pet adoptions, limited only to cats.

The final proposed amendment would modify Section 10-3-90. Uses Permitted by Right in the B-2, General Business District, by explicitly including “pet adoption” alongside pet shops and grooming establishment to avoid any ambiguity. Section 10-3-90 (9) would be amended as follows:

(9) Pet adoption, pet shop, ~~or~~ pet grooming establishment, and animal hospitals.

If the Zoning Ordinance is amended as requested by the applicant, it would allow for cat adoptions, like those conducted by Cat’s Cradle, to occur in the B-1 district. Staff recommends approval of the Zoning Ordinance amendments.

## **Options**

1. Recommend approval of the Zoning Ordinance amendments.
2. Recommend approval of the Zoning Ordinance amendments with modifications.
3. Recommend denial of the Zoning Ordinance amendments.

## **Attachments**

- Current Ordinance Reflecting Recommended Amendments
- Application and supporting documents