

Feral Cat Rescue secures new temporary site

By Mike Pickford

Sharon Morden's Feral Cat Rescue has been provided some temporary respite in the shape of a private barn, just on the outskirts of Orangeville.

The organization has been struggling to find appropriate shelter for the 12 or so cats that remain in its care after Shelburne Council decided Ms. Morden could no longer operate the service from her home, located on Second Avenue West in the community. The felines had effectively been homeless since the cat rescue was officially closed on Oct. 10.

Speaking to the Free Press this week, Ms. Morden said she was delighted to secure a temporary facility in a rural location as she works to nail down a more permanent location, expected to be in Melancthon.

"We're happy to have a place once again that these cats can call home, albeit temporarily," Ms. Morden said. "It's a big space, so plenty big enough. We have 12 or 14 cats right now. Once the rescue shut down a lot of the cats went into foster care, so we've been fortunate there. I still have some of the really sick cats with me? We're dealing with what we have right now."

That feeling of displacement has lingered ever since Shelburne Council first informed Ms. Morden back in June that her rescue would be shut down for violating the municipality's zoning and property bylaws. Sharon had asked for an eight-month extension to tie the organization over until it could establish its new permanent location in Melancthon. The Town denied that request.

With the world seemingly against her, Ms. Morden never once considered giving up, saying she couldn't turn her back on the cats that so desperately need her care. Since launching the organization several years ago she has helped more than 1,000 cats.

"I will not give up, that is an absolute fact. I'm not going to leave the cats that need this program. If I did, they'd die," Ms. Morden said. "That's one of the things missing in human society, SPCA, townships? Cats are born into a life they didn't choose to be born into. I don't think it's right that the world turns their back on these animals."

As well as getting a permanent location fixed up in the near future, Sharon has also been working to establish Feral Cat Rescue as a recognized charity. As of this week she says all the paperwork has been submitted, which would officially incorporate the organization as a non-profit. That will help as Ms. Morden chases funds for her cats.

Still, she has many cats in her care that require a foster family. She's looking for people in the community to step up and provide a home for the cats in need.

"Ideally we wouldn't have these cats packed up into a barn, we'd have them in homes, where people can look after them until we can give them a permanent place to live," Ms. Morden said. She is hoping to have permission to move into the new facility in Melancthon by this coming Spring.