

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) MAY 25, 2009

ANIMAL SERVICES SHELTER

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services and City Solicitor, and the Director of Enforcement Services, recommend:

1. That staff proceed with a search for a property to lease, suitable for an animal shelter; and,
2. That staff report back to a Working Session in fall 2009 with the results and next steps for the creation of an animal shelter in the City of Vaughan.

Economic Impact

The economic impact has yet to be determined.

Communications Plan

None at this time.

Purpose

This report is to provide an update on the status of the animal shelter progress and to discuss next steps in the process.

Background - Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan, along with other adjacent municipalities, has been looking for alternatives for animal services given known constraints and limited time horizon of the City's current service provider.

Municipalities have worked together in ad hoc committees, independently, and in focus groups. A consultant was retained by the Town of Richmond Hill to study and report on the preferred next steps in creating a joint animal shelter facility. The Town of Aurora, Township of King and the City of Vaughan were contributors to that study.

Options explored included establishing a joint facility. Following the presentation of that report, it appeared that Richmond Hill preferred building their own animal shelter, and on October 22, 2007, Council directed that staff provide Richmond Hill with an Expression of Interest to purchase animal shelter services from them.

Ultimately, Richmond Hill backed away from their intention to create an animal shelter, opting for a service contract with the OSPCA.

Staff then began to review sites already owned by the City for a location to build a shelter. No suitable sites were identified.

Staff were also directed to contact the Township of King to review opportunities to provide animal sheltering services for both municipalities.

As reported by staff to Council on February 3, 2009, two options were explored:

1. Joint Venture with Seneca College at the King Campus. This option would have seen a facility constructed in conjunction with the Veterinary Technicians Course facility.

This option was not ultimately pursued due to restrictions on construction given its location within the Oakridges Moraine.

2. The location of 7th Concession and 18th Sideroad, Pottageville was identified. The property at this intersection includes a building on site. The building is owned by King and is used by a community group as a dance/community hall.

King Township and Vaughan had discussions surrounding funding and operating an animal shelter at this location. Recently King Township advised that, due to public opposition, this location could no longer be considered.

At this time there are no other proposals on the table. There remains a sense of urgency in identifying an alternative to the existing arrangement as the current service provider advises that their lease has only been extended until August 2010.

Next Steps

As site locations in King have not materialized, staff issued a request for Expression of Interest for a lease/build solution in Vaughan. This was circulated by the Purchasing Department on May 1, 2009. There was only one reply, but it did not meet the criteria as it was dependant on the City providing the land on which to construct the animal shelter.

It was envisioned that the City would lease the property, contracting out the operation and animal control function to the private sector.

The current projected contract cost to the City of Vaughan for animal control services in 2010 is \$700,000.

In order to meet an August 2010 occupancy date (should the current provider not be able to provide further extensions of service), staff are recommending that the Real Estate Department commence a search for a property meeting the criteria defined in the Expression of Interest.

Staff will report the results of the search to a meeting in fall 2009, recommending next steps.

In developing an animal shelter solution for its own use, the City would be "over-sizing" for growth. There will be capacity, at least initially, to sell service, or lease space to other municipalities which would help offset the impact to Vaughan. The option of contracting out the operation of the proposed facility still exists.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously approved by Council.

Regional Implications

Not applicable.

Conclusion

Staff have canvassed numerous options without success and are recommending going public for a design/build/lease solution for occupancy in August 2010.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services
and City Solicitor

Tony Thompson
Director of Enforcement Services