

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 11, 2007

Item 1, Report No. 31, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 11, 2007.

1 ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services & City Solicitor, and the Senior Manager of Enforcement Services, dated May 29, 2007, be approved; and
- 2) That a plan for animal control services be prepared at the earliest opportunity, to include but not limited to:
 - i) achieving the maximizing of licensing revenues, and
 - ii) providing temporary services on 90 days notice should Kennel Inn cease operations.

Recommendation

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

That a Vaughan task force be struck immediately to examine all aspects of building and operating our own animal shelter in Vaughan and that their findings be brought back to Council in October 2007.

Economic Impact

The economic impact in 2007 is nil. The costs in subsequent years is yet to be determined.

Communications Plan

Not applicable

Purpose

This report is to provide information relating to the future of Animal Services in Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

Council, at its meeting of April 10, 2006 (Item 1, Report 17) directed:

“...the terms of reference for a joint site selection, costing, and feasibility study be brought back to Council when available.”

Subsequent to that direction, the Town of Richmond Hill published a Request for Proposal for a study to be conducted into the feasibility of either building a shelter for its own use, or to be shared by the municipalities. The City of Vaughan, Town of Aurora, and the Township of King, also participated in the process. The Pathwise Group was the successful proponent in the process.

It should be noted that Richmond Hill has now determined to develop its own animal shelter, not as a joint facility.

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The Pathwise Group work included examining animal services in other municipalities to identify suitable comparisons and then evaluate potential sites supplied by each municipality.

The report is geared towards Richmond Hill and does recommend a facility built in Richmond Hill, which is of suitable size to manage the animal sheltering needs of the four participating municipalities for the next 20 years.

The preliminary information indicates little or no benefit to participate in a joint venture. Regardless of the cost sharing model Vaughan would be paying for construction and annual operating costs over a 20-25 year agreement. These costs would be in addition to enforcement costs.

It was proposed by the Pathwise Group that a 14,000 sq. ft. shelter would be required to manage the four municipalities and the projected growth over the next 20 years. Pathwise uses Mississauga as a benchmark comparator as the population and number of households currently in that city, are the same as the four municipalities by 2026.

For background only, the Pathwise report has been attached. The report provides data with respect to projected demand over the next 20 years, which is useful.

The estimated construction costs for a facility are \$200. per sq. ft. This relates to a construction cost of \$2.8 Million for a 14,000 sq. ft. facility, not including the potential cost of land. Due to its size, the City of Vaughan would likely be required to pay at least 1/3 of that cost, albeit amortized over 20-25 years.

Given that Richmond Hill has now determined to proceed independently, Vaughan should pursue the option to build their own shelter of 3,000 – 4,000 sq. ft., resulting in an estimated construction cost of \$800,000.

The operating costs for the shared shelter facility were in excess of \$1.5 Million. This equates to a cost of \$500,000. per year for the City of Vaughan. The operating costs for an independent Vaughan-only shelter would be similar.

Finally, the cost of enforcing the Animal Control By-law would be approximately \$250,000. per year. This cost would be the same regardless of the option.

These costs, whether shared or borne solely by the City of Vaughan, represent a significant cost increase for the provision of animal services. For the past 25 years the private company, Kennel Inn Inc., has provided sheltering and enforcement services to most municipalities in York Region.

It appears as though there is no future in the services with Kennel Inn. The location of their facility is within the boundaries of the Oak Ridges Moraine, therefore preventing them from expanding or rebuilding. The company has indicated financial concerns. They indicated in 2006 that if one more municipality were to withdraw from using their services, they would have no alternative but to close down. It would be a reasonable conclusion to draw that one or more municipalities will be withdrawing, making any possibility of a renewable contract unlikely.

The City of Vaughan is now into year two of a three year contract with Kennel Inn. This year's costs are \$375,000., rising to \$400,000. in 2008.

Staff have canvassed other animal shelter providers such as the Humane Society, S.P.C.A., etc. No other provider will provide the service for Vaughan currently provided by Kennel Inn or accommodate the population of stray animals retrieved in Vaughan. Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga have all indicated they are at or near capacity and are unable to accommodate Vaughan's needs on a fee-for-service basis.

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Options

There appears now to be only 1 option available to Vaughan – build a facility primarily for Vaughan use (and potentially provide service to an adjacent municipality on a fee-for-service basis until such time as we reach capacity). For Vaughan to build the facility there would be an estimated upfront capital cost of approximately \$1.0 Million.

There would be some opportunity to recoup some of the capital cost through the leasing of space to another municipality until the space is required for Vaughan-only operations.

Due to the time spent waiting for the recommendation of the consultant, and the extremely tight timelines in establishing a new facility, it is recommended that a Vaughan task force be struck immediately to examine all aspects of building and operating an animal shelter in Vaughan. This task force should be made up of staff from Purchasing, Facilities, Real Estate, and Enforcement. This group should examine:

- the cost of building and operating a shelter
- the size requirements of the shelter
- location of shelter
- timelines for the project
- potential revenue offset possibilities

The group should report back to Council in October 2007 in order to move the project forward expeditiously.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

Not applicable

Regional Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan requires a long term animal control service solution to be in place by June 2009. There is no longer a viable opportunity to develop a joint facility with other municipalities. Therefore, the City of Vaughan should immediately commence work on a City of Vaughan animal shelter project.

Attachments

Pathwise Group Report

Report prepared by:

Tony Thompson
Senior Manager of Enforcement Services

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

