

**Special Animal Care Committee Meeting**  
**December 4, 2012**  
**Ontario Room**  
**5:30 PM – 8:00 PM**

**Attendance:** Councillor Valerie Burke, Esther Attard, Kathy Clark, Terri Daniels, Denielle Duncan, Jody Greenlaw, Rhiannon Lane and Caroline Lane

**Regrets:** Janet Andrews and Furhait Kashmiri

**Guest:** Kathy Wiele, Meeting Facilitator

Agenda Item	Discussion
<b>1. Welcome, Introductions, Today's Meeting Outcomes</b>	Ms. Kathy Wiele, Meeting Facilitator, introduced herself to the committee and reviewed the meeting agenda.
<b>2. Review of Council Approval and Direction from October 30, 2012</b>	<p>The Committee reviewed the Council resolution from the October 30, 2012 Council meeting regarding animal services in Markham. At this meeting Council directed staff to enter into negotiations with the OSPCA for a contract for the provisions of animal services with the City of Markham.</p> <p>It was questioned whether the term of the contract had been decided.</p>
<b>3. Discussion No. 1 – Current State of Markham Animal Services</b>	<p>The Animal Care Committee identified the following strengths and weaknesses of Markham's Animal Control Services:</p> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current model is ineffective;</li> <li>• The City is obtaining poor value for its money;</li> <li>• The euthanasia rate is too high;</li> <li>• The current lack of transparency and accountability (e.g. very difficult to assess information from the OSPCA to measure the effectiveness of the service they are providing);</li> <li>• The current program focuses primarily on costs and fails to consider the animals;</li> <li>• The City is spending the least amount of money on animal control relative to other municipalities rather than spending more money to improve the service;</li> <li>• OSPCA staff not getting back to residents regarding their animal control concerns/question;</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA is an entirely different entity creates communication challenges (note: current communication is very weak);</li> <li>• The lack of accessibility to the OSPCA Shelter, as it is located in New Market and is not accessible by transit;</li> <li>• That the OSPCA has a very weak adoption program (e.g. no photos on</li> </ul>

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	<p>website of animals up for adoption, very few animals being adopted out and not having enough staff to continue with adoption days);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OSPCA's inability to support Markham's new Trap Neuter and Return program (e.g. no room to house cats when they recover from being spayed or neutered).</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA will not take help from rescue groups;</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA does not always have a vet on site, as they currently contract out this service;</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA is currently one of the only service providers of animal control;</li> <li>• The lack of educational programs on animal control in Markham;</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA has no volunteer or foster care program;</li> <li>• The high turnover of the OSPCA staff due to some staff not getting paid enough and others being dismissed is causing service continuity issues;</li> <li>• The lack of cage space for Markham animals at the OSPCA and not knowing how many cages are dedicated to Markham animals;</li> <li>• The conflict of interest that exists with the OSPCA providing animal control, as its mandate is to protect animals, where the focus of animal control is on protecting humans;</li> <li>• Do not know the statistics of the OSPCA as an organization, therefore, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of its programs as an organization;</li> <li>• City staff are more by-law savvy then shelter savvy and may not know what questions they should be asking the OSPCA to evaluate its service effectively;</li> <li>• Failure to reach out to other municipalities that could provide insightful suggestions regarding its animal control services from a shelter perspective (e.g. asking the City of Toronto regarding its animal control services);</li> <li>• Failure to listen to the Animal Care Committee prior to entering into the previous contract (e.g. adding space allocation specifications to the contract and looking at what other municipalities such Clarington are doing with respect to animal control);</li> <li>• The difficulty residents have locating their lost pets (e.g. lack of information on both the OSPCA and Markham website on how to find your lost pet);</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA is not a public shelter, as there was a general feeling that public shelters were more effective;</li> <li>• The lack of expertise of OSPCA staff (e.g. cannot answer simple questions regarding animal control matters);</li> <li>• The belief that Markham has an ineffective and inhumane wildlife rehabilitation program (e.g. most wildlife are euthanized and it currently takes too long to get wildlife the help it needs);</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA is not licensed to provide wildlife rehabilitation;</li> <li>• The current contract with the OSPCA includes no performance measures and no consequences for not meeting contractual obligations;</li> <li>• The fact that Markham has a growing population with no wildlife strategy;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA is be used as both a holding agency and as a animal control provider, as this likely affects the amount of space available for Markham animals being brought to the shelter on a day-to-day basis (e.g. 80 cats were recently brought to the shelter from a hoarders home);</li> <li>• The fact that the City of Markham's by-law limits the number of cats per household even when they are being well cared for, noting that removing the limit on cats per household may free up space at the animal shelter;</li> </ul> <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having an active Animal Care Committee;</li> <li>• Markham Staff providing some assistance to residents who call and ask questions about wildlife (note: not all Committee members supported this point);</li> <li>• Hiring Chris Alexander to supervise Markham's animal control;</li> <li>• Providing a ride home to lost dogs who have been licensed with the City of Markham;</li> <li>• The fact that the OSPCA is a modern shelter;</li> <li>• Markham's new TNR program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Discussion No. 2 – Desired State of Markham Animal Services from 2013 and Beyond</b></p>	<p>The Committee provided its feedback with respect to how it envisioned Markham's animal services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced euthanasia rates;</li> <li>• Implementation of a troubled dogs and cats rehabilitation program;</li> <li>• Increased teamwork amongst all parties;</li> <li>• Improved and effective adoption program thus creating a notable increase in adoption rates (e.g. having more adoption days and placing photos with descriptions of the animals up for adoption on the website within 12 hours);</li> <li>• Having abundant information to show that the right things are happening;</li> <li>• Having the appropriate staff (e.g. need a vet at the OSPCA, more Markham shelter savvy staff and possibly have a Markham staff work at the OSPCA);</li> <li>• Less staff turnover at the OSPCA;</li> <li>• Having a foster care program in place;</li> <li>• Having a system in place to deal with animal overflow at the shelter;</li> <li>• The removal of the cap on the number of cats per household from Markham's animal control by-law;</li> <li>• Having a requirement that the OSPCA must reach out to the community;</li> <li>• Having a collaborative working arrangement where each parties challenges are recognized;</li> <li>• In a position where Markham is moving towards a no kill animal control program;</li> <li>• Having clear measurable objectives included in the OSPCA contract;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having Toronto Wildlife as Markham's wildlife provider;</li> <li>• Increased municipal expenditures on wildlife while providing good value for the funds spent;</li> <li>• Have a successful animal control education program in place;</li> <li>• Have a animal shelter or satellite animal shelter in Markham;</li> <li>• Improved accountability and transparency of Markham's animal control services;</li> <li>• A larger TNR program;</li> <li>• A greater focus on the animal shelter and less of a focus on the by-laws;</li> <li>• Markham being a leader in animal services;</li> <li>• Improved customer service for animal control and wildlife inquires;</li> <li>• Improved education for handling of wildlife;</li> <li>• Putting development charges towards the displacement of wildlife;</li> <li>• Demonstrated constituent support to improve animal control in Markham;</li> <li>• Councillors taking a more proactive stance with respect to Markham's animal control;</li> <li>• Having a program for seniors that includes animals;</li> <li>• The establishment of a court that handles only animal matters;</li> <li>• Increased education on why to license your pet;</li> <li>• Increased fines for not having an animal license;</li> <li>• Establishing greater incentives for licensing your pet;</li> <li>• Having more off leash dog parks.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee identified its priorities for Markham's animal services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Having Toronto Wildlife as Markham's wildlife provider;</li> <li>2. Having a short-term contract with the OSPCA where there are performance standards and consequences for being in contravention with the terms of the contract;</li> <li>3. Having a dog rehabilitation behaviour program;</li> <li>4. Having a strengthened adoption program, which includes performance based measures and placing photos and descriptions of animals up for adoption on the website within 24 hours;</li> <li>5. The OSPCA working with rescue group;</li> <li>6. Having veterinarian staff on site at the OSPCA;</li> <li>7. Amending the Markham animal control by-law to remove the limit on the number of cats per household (note: focus should be on quality versus quantity of care);</li> </ol>

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	<p>8. Having City of Markham shelter savvy staff and a over site committee;</p> <p>9. Having a store front for Markham's animal control program/a permanent small adoption centre where all parties work together;</p> <p>10. Having open communication with the OPSCA ;</p> <p>11. Strengthening the human resources at the OSPCA (benefits/pay);</p> <p>12. Increasing the fines for non compliance with Markham's licensing program and having a better licensing Program;</p> <p>13. Having a municipal representative on the provincial OSPCA Committee;</p> <p>14. Having a volunteer, foster and education program.</p> <p>The Committee agreed on its top (5) five priorities for Markham's animals services and assigned a member to each priority to provide a more detailed description and performance based measures:</p> <p>1. Having Toronto Wildlife as Markham's wildlife provider - Liz White;</p> <p>2. Having a short-term contract with the OSPCA where there are performance standards and consequences for being in contravention with the terms of the contract - Esther Attard;</p> <p>3. Having a strengthened adoption program, which includes performance based measures (e.g. placing photos of animals for adoption on the website within 24 hours) – Rhiannon Lane;</p> <p>4. Having shelter savvy staff and a over site committee – Denielle Duncan;</p> <p>5. Having a store front in Markham/ permanent small adoption centre where all parties work together to make it a successful initiative – Liz White.</p>
<p><b>5. Proposed Customer Loyalty Program</b></p>	<p>The Committee thought Markham should first strengthen its licensing program prior to introducing a customer loyalty card that would be provided to residents when they obtain their pet license. It did not think that having a customer loyalty card would encourage residents to license their pet. However, it was noted that the card may appeal to some residents depending on quality of the stores residents could use the card at.</p>
<p><b>6. Proposed Licensing Fee Increase</b></p>	<p>The Committee did not agree with having a flat fee for pet licenses. It thought that residents should be provided with a discount for neutering their pets. Other suggestions included: selling pet licenses in more places; having money raised from pet licenses go directly toward animal control; requiring pets to be licensed at point of sale; renew pet licenses yearly to ensure continued communication; and increasing education on why residents should license their cat.</p>

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<b>7. Next Steps</b>	<p>The next steps included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email the Facilitator the detailed description and performance measures for the Committees' top 5 priorities for animal control for 2016 by December 12, 2012 – Assigned Committee Members;</li><li>• Provide a Draft Report to the Animal Care Committee by December 19, 2012- Facilitator</li></ul> <p>Provide Animal Care Committee with a second draft of the Report – January 2013</p>
<b>8. Adjournment</b>	<p>The Animal Care Committee adjourned at 8:26 p.m.</p>