

Animal Care Committee
September 19, 2012
Ontario Room
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Attendance: Councillor Valerie Burke, Chair, Chris Alexander, Janet Andrews, Esther Attard, Kathy Clark, Terri Daniels, Denielle Duncan, Jody Greenlaw, Caroline Lane, Mi Ly and Rhiannon Lane.
Regrets: Furhait Kashmiri, Jeannie Kavanagh and Bill Wiles

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Item
1. Call to Order	The Animal Care Committee convened at 5:41 p.m. with Councillor Valerie Burke presiding as Chair.	
2.	Brad Gate, AAA Gates Wildlife Control, provided a presentation on why wildlife specialist should be regulated. Some of the reason to regulate Wildlife Control included the following: • Lack of customer satisfaction; • High turnover in industry; • Wildlife control companies are operating illegally; • Many wildlife control companies are using inhumane methods of removing the wildlife from the home, which can lead to injury or even death of the wildlife (e.g. exposing the wildlife to extreme weather, failure to monitor traps, removal of the mother from the home but not the babies, using devices that can cause pain and suffering to the wildlife); • Small companies taking on more work than they can handle placing the wildlife at risk; • Lack of caring companies; • Lack of expertise (e.g. not taking the proper precautions to prevent the spread of disease); • Wildlife rehabilitators are being overly burdened due to an influx of babies being left in attics by wildlife control companies.	

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	It was recommended that to improve wildlife control in Ontario the following criteria could be used to regulate the industry: • Completion of a course on wildlife behaviour; • Completion of an apprenticeship program with an experienced wildlife specialist; • Mandatory use of devices that do not cause harm and suffering to wildlife; • Adherence to a code of conduct; • Proven ability to ensure the health and safety of wildlife and people; • Adherence of existing legal requirements. Markham can help protect residents through educating them on what type of criteria they should consider when looking to hire a wildlife control specialist and through establishing a referral system. It was noted that the Markham cannot recommend a preferred wildlife specialist. <u>Discussion</u> The Committee wanted to ensure that residents were being directed to qualified wildlife control specialist, as currently residents are being referred to the OSPCA who then refers them to the yellow pages. It was questioned if the City could refer resident to the Toronto Wildlife Website, which has a directory of qualified wildlife specialist on its website. Chris Alexander will look into this matter. It was also recommended that a list of questions that can be asked to wildlife control companies be placed on the website. The questions can be used as a tool to screen out unqualified wildlife control companies. It was noted that it would be challenging to license wildlife specialist in Markham as staff currently do not have the expertise. On the other hand, it could be an E3 initiative and it is consistent with Markham Council's strategic priority of living in harmony with wildlife.	See if residents can be referred to the Toronto Wildlife's website, which has a directory of qualified wildlife specialist rather than to the yellow pages - Christopher Alexander Place a list of questions that can be asked to wildlife control companies on the website – Christopher Alexander

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	It was suggested that the City could have a short term goal of promoting humane wildlife control and a long term goal of licensing wildlife specialist in Markham. In the short-term, a brochure could be created with information on both humane wildlife control and on how to prevent wildlife from entering your home. Brad Gates advised that he would be willing to work with staff to provide them with any information they may need with respect to making improvements to wildlife control in Ontario. He was also willing to help make a brochure on wildlife control for Markham residents. It was thought that all of Council would benefit from Brad Gates presentation on why wildlife control specialist should be regulated. The possibility of Brad Gates coming back to future Animal Care Committee meeting was discussed. Janet Andrew, Kathy Clark, Caroline Lane and Terri Daniels will work with information that has been presented to the Committee on wildlife control and come back to the committee with recommendations as to what its next steps should be on this matter. It was advised that on September 28 the Living with Wildlife Conference is being held in Toronto	Creation of a brochure - TBD Work with the information that has been presented on the Wildlife Specialist and bring back recommendations to the Committee - Janet Andrew, Kathy Clark, Caroline Lane, Rhiannon Lane and Terri Daniels
3. Minutes of the August 15, 2012 Animal Care Committee Meeting	Moved by Cathy Clark Seconded by Danielle Duncan That the Minutes from the August 15, 2012 Animal Care Committee be adopted as presented. CARRIED.	

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4. Business Arising From the Minutes	A. <u>Discussion on Shrine Circus</u> A letter prepared by the Animal Care Committee to the Shrine Circus was circulated to the committee for it to review. Moved by Janet Andrews Seconded by Caroline Lane That the Animal Care Committee request that Council endorse the letter to the Shriners International Headquarters regarding eliminating animal acts at its circus events presented as Appendix A ; and, That the letter be signed by Mayor Frank Scarpitti and forwarded to the Shriners International Headquarters. CARRIED. B. <u>Information on Having a no cat Limit</u> Ester Attard will provide Chris Alexander with more information on having a no cat limit once the staff report has been finalized at the City of Toronto. This matter can then be investigated further. The Committee questioned why the funds from animal licenses do not go directly towards animal control. As it would be more of an incentive for residents to obtain a license for their pet if the funds went directly toward animal control in Markham. Staff questioned what the Committee thought about charging the same for cat and dog licenses. The Committee thought it would be difficult to charge the same for a cat license as a dog license.	Bring motion regarding Shrine Circus forward to General Committee for Council's endorsement – Laura Gold Provide Christopher Alexander with more information on having a no cat limit – Ester Attard

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	C. <u>Review of Business Plan</u> The Committee briefly reviewed the 2012 business plan. It was suggested that the term high, medium and low priority be changed to short, medium and long-term objectives on a going forward basis.	
5. Animal Control Program Update	A. <u>Trap Neuter & Return</u> Chris Alexander advised that the City has not been able to trap neuter and return (TNR) the feral cats from the IBM site, as a result to a lack of space at the OSPCA. The Committee advised that the City is running out of time to TNR the feral cats from the IBM site, as winter is coming. Denielle Duncan was going to see if any rescue groups could house the cats while they recovery to speed up the process. The City could then cover the rescue groups' cost of housing and caring for the cats. It was noted that the City is also dealing with a house on Greenlane that has about half a dozen cats living in the house. The owner has advised that all of the cats have been neutered. B. <u>Adoption Update</u> Chris Alexander disappointedly reported that the last adoption day at the Stiver Mill Farmers Market was held in July. This was due to staffing issues at the OSPCA. C. <u>OSPCA</u> The Committee discussed some areas where the OSPCA has room for improvement. Staff advised that there are plans to add more detail to any future contracts with the OSPCA or any other animal control providers. This is to ensure transparency and accountability.	See if rescue groups can house the cats being TNR from the IBM site during their recovery –Denielle Duncan

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	The Committee recommended that the City consider having an exit interview with OSPCA staff leaving the organization. Chris Alexander reported that the consultant report on animal control options for Markham will be presented at the Monday, September 24, 2012 General Committee. The document will not be available prior to the meeting.	
6. Events	<u>Thornhill Festival</u> It was noted that Committee's participation in the Thornhill Festival went very well. <u>Markham Fair</u> The Committee confirmed that the Culture Department could share the booth with the Animal Care Committee provided they do not bring a large stand. The Committee wanted to ensure that it had two tables and three chairs.	Ensure there are two tables and three chairs at the booth at Markham Fair – Laura Gold
7. New Business	There was no new business.	
8. Date of the Next Meeting	September 19, 2012, 5:30 p.m., Ontario Room	
9. Adjournment	The Animal Care Committee adjourned at 7:40 p.m.	