



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: October 1, 2012

SUBJECT: Long-Term Provision of Animal Services for Markham
PREPARED BY: W. Wiles, Manager, By-law Enforcement & Licensing, ext. 4851

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT the Report from DPRA Canada Inc. be received for information purposes; and further,
- 2) THAT Option 2 of the DPRA Report, the "*Enhanced Status Quo*" be adopted and implemented; and further,
- 3) THAT staff be directed to enter into negotiations with the OSPCA on a contract for the provision of animal services for the City of Markham pursuant to the City of Markham *Purchasing By-law*; and further,
- 4) THAT the implementation of a "Customer Loyalty Card Program" for Markham pet owners be introduced for 2013 pet licence sales; and further,
- 5) THAT the recommendations included in the "*Enhanced Status Quo*" from the DPRA Report be included for consideration in the Animal Services 2013 Business Plan and in negotiations as part of the animal services contract; and further,
- 6) THAT an upset limit of \$150,000.00 with offset in additional By-law revenues of \$150,000.00 be allocated through the 2013 budget process for funding of the initial implementation of identified opportunities identified in Option 2, "*Enhanced Status Quo*" and further,
- 7) THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

To obtain Council's direction on:

1. A long-term service model for the provision of animal services in Markham.
2. The implementation of a "Customer Loyalty Card Program" for Markham pet owners.
3. The implementation and funding of the recommendations included in the "*Enhanced Status Quo*" from the DPRA Report.

BACKGROUND:

The Ontario Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) currently provides animal services, including wildlife services for the City of Markham. They are responsible for the enforcement of the City's *Animal Control By-law* as well as the sheltering and care of animals impounded from and surrendered by Markham residents. The OSPCA has been providing animal services in Markham since April 2008. The current contract has expired, leaving the City on a month-to-month contract for animal services.

As part of a comprehensive review of how animal services are provided in Markham, staff retained the consulting firm DPRA Canada Inc. to study the various service models currently in place in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada. The goal of this study was to review the “*best practices*” in the industry, evaluate Markham’s current service framework and make recommendations on possible changes and improvements.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

DPRA Report on Animal Service Models

The DPRA Report reviewed a number of municipalities and the models that are in place to provide animal services. In Ontario, some municipalities operate animal shelters (i.e., Toronto, Mississauga, Vaughan), while others contract out services to the OSPCA or its affiliates (i.e., Markham, Richmond Hill and Oshawa). The Report revealed that in comparison to other municipalities, Markham has the lowest cost for the provision of animal services (at \$1.33 per resident); while Calgary has the highest cost (\$10.58 per resident) for comparable services.

Overall, Markham’s animal services program is efficient and cost-effective, while offering many comparable services and programs as Calgary (the accepted benchmark) including:

- A spacious purpose built OSPCA shelter;
- Operational efficiency and levels of care for animals have improved with the OSPCA compared to the previous service provider;
- The only Animal Services Advisory Committee in the Region of York;
- A progressive and proactive approach to managing animal services, including Pet Adoption Days and a Trap Neuter and Return Program for feral cats; and
- A dedicated municipal staff position - Licensing & Animal Services Supervisor

Markham’s lower cost for sheltering and animal patrol services will allow the City to invest more funding into public education and local animal/ wildlife quality of life programs. Markham will be able to do this while maintaining a comparable level of spending on animal services programs with other municipalities. The programs will focus on reducing the number of animals ending up in shelters and to enhance the quality of life for domestic animals and wildlife within the community.

Leader in Wildlife Services within the GTA

As noted by the Consultant, Markham is the municipal leader in responding to the needs of wildlife within the GTA. Through the OSPCA and its network of wildlife rehabilitators, the City responds to calls for wildlife that are injured and in distress six days a week, 12 hours a day, with emergency coverage on Sundays. To further enhance wildlife services, and the quality of life for animals within Markham, there are a number of short-term opportunities available. These opportunities include the implementation of development standards for parks and open spaces, plans of subdivisions, and site plan agreements to include wildlife and greenway corridors, green roofs and spaces, and upgrading of vacant spaces to attract and support wildlife.

The following table outlines the response levels to wildlife in the other jurisdictions studied in the DPRA Report.

Municipality	Level of Response to Wildlife
Toronto	Pick-up of dead or injured wildlife.
Richmond Hill	The same level of service as Markham from the OSPCA. No wildlife rehabilitation initiatives
Mississauga, Oshawa, Pickering, Whitchurch- Stouffville and Vaughan	No wildlife services are provided

Recommended Option: Enhanced Status Quo

As with any efficient and effective program, there are always opportunities to strengthen weaknesses and build on best practices in the industry. The Report recognizes that the existing animal services model is efficient and cost effective. The Report recommends that Markham build on the current model and enhance it to provide the residents of Markham with a sustainable and cost effective service. The Report contains seven recommendations as part of Option 2, as the “*Enhanced Status Quo*” to strengthen the existing model for animal services. These are:

No.	Recommendation	Comments
1.	Enhanced Status Quo –strengthen contract language and requirements	Ensure that the contract reflects the expectations of the City of Markham
2.	Create an Oversight Committee for OSPCA municipal clients	The committee to meet quarterly with OSPCA to assess progress, contract management and QA/QC
3.	Improve the communications function currently delivered by OSPCA	Markham to leverage its communications expertise to deliver future communication plans on services
4.	Establish a Community Store Front for Animal Services, Programs/ Education and Outreach	To further enhance community satisfaction, the City could establish a store-front-type facility for education/outreach/awareness
5.	Strengthen Human Resources at the OSPCA	Recruitment and retention at OSPCA could be improved by leveraging Markham expertise
6.	Increase fine for non-compliance with pet licensing.	Markham could increase fines for non-compliance as incentive to increase licensing.
7.	Request municipal representative on OSPCA Board of Directors.	This would further facilitate openness and transparency between the OSPCA and its clients

Animal Care Committee Comments

General Committee asked staff to meet with the Animal Care Committee to review the report and obtain Committee feedback. A special meeting of the Animal Care Committee was held on October 1, 2102. The following table highlights the Committee’s comments regarding the recommendations.

No.	Recommendation	Comments
1.	Enhanced Status Quo with strengthened contract language and requirements	Ensure contract incorporates high service expectations and performance-based measures
2.	Create an Oversight Committee for OSPCA municipal clients	Establish a meaningful role in OSPCA service delivery decisions
3.	Improve the communications function currently delivered by OSPCA	If the communication function is taken out of the contract adjust contract value to reflect
4.	Establish a Store Front for Animal Services, Programs and Outreach	That the storefront be accessible, on transit, open weekends and evenings
5.	Strengthen Human Resources at the OSPCA	Interested in recruitment and retention of staff, increasing volunteer participation
6.	Increase fine for non-compliance with pet licensing.	Agree with increased fines for not licensing with focus on why residents should license their pets
7.	Municipal representative on Provincial OSPCA Board of Directors.	Agrees that it is a good idea but not confident that it is attainable

Other Options Considered:

The report considered 3 options in detail, before recommending the preferred Option. The other two options considered were: Option1- Status Quo and Option 3- Operating City Owned Facility.

The Report examined the municipally owned and operated shelter model employed by municipalities such as Vaughan and found that their annual operating costs are approximately \$900,000.00 which does not include the provision of wildlife services or the capital costs of the shelter. The Town of Richmond Hill (Population of 185,541), evaluated an option of building a 12,000 square foot animal facility that would meet the Town's needs to 2026. It was concluded that the facility could be built in thirty- six months at the capital cost of \$5.2 million. Annual operating costs were estimated to range from \$1.16 million to \$1.62 million. Richmond Hill decided not to pursue building their own shelter and opted to continue having the OSPCA provide animal services on their behalf.

The following table provides an overview of a selection of the municipalities reviewed in the Report and the cost per capita for the provision of animal services in the municipality.

Municipality	Municipal Shelter	Population	Budget	Cost/Resident
Markham	No	301,709	\$400,000	\$1.33
Calgary	Yes	1,096,833	\$13.6 M	\$10.58
Toronto	Yes	2,615,060	\$7.9 M	\$3.02
Richmond Hill	No	185,541	\$508,797	\$2.74
Mississauga	Yes	713,443	\$1.976 M	\$2.77
Vaughan	Yes	288,301	\$652,888	\$2.26

Based on the capital and annual operating costs for a municipally owned shelter, staff are not in a position at this time to recommend this option for the long-term provision of animal services in Markham.

Customer Loyalty Card Program

To increase the number of animal licences issued annually and revenues to offset animal services program costs, the introduction of a customer loyalty card program is recommended. Under the program, pet owners will receive a loyalty card as part of their annual animal pet licence fee entitling the owner to savings at a variety of animal related and non-animal retailers in Markham. Research has shown pet owners spend considerable sums of money annually on their pets and retailers are willing participants in the program. Municipalities implementing similar programs have found residents more willing to purchase licences with this value added feature. The loyalty card component is administered by a third party who receives a portion of the annual licence fee. Staff will monitor the animal licence revenue and make any necessary adjustments in 2014.

Alignment with Markham's Greenprint Sustainability Plan

Implementation of the recommendations in the DPRA Report aligns well with Markham's Greenprint Sustainability Plan. To ensure alignment with the Greenprint, all future annual animal services business plans should contain and identify specific activities linked with the Greenprint. Identified opportunities include: adoption of development standards to support wildlife habitat; creation of wildlife corridors and measures to minimize the impact new developments have on wildlife.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE:

The DPRA Report identified opportunities for enhanced services for the animal services program at an estimated cost of \$155,000. Staff is recommending that \$150,000 in expenditures be approved in the 2013 Operating Budget for the storefront operation and for enhanced animal services included the new Animal Service contract. As well, Staff are recommending \$150,000 additional By-law revenues to be allocated through the 2013 budget process. Funding for the Storefront Operation is for the selection of a location and the construction/ set-up in 2103 only, with a public opening in 2014.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The proposed report recommendations align with providing excellence in municipal service to ensure that services are cost-effective and responsive to the needs of residents.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Finance

RECOMMENDED BY:

10/19/2012

18/10/2012

X



Martha Pettit
Acting City Clerk

X



Trinela Cane
Commissioner, Corporate Services

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment 'A' – DPRA Report – “Study of Animal Service Delivery Models”](#)