



Corporate Report

NO: R305

COUNCIL DATE: December 13,

2004

REGULAR

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: December 8,
2004

FROM: City Solicitor FILE: 2320-20-02/#2

SUBJECT: New Policy for Animal Protection, Care, Control
and Licensing

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report as information.
2. Approve Option 1 as outlined in this report and authorize staff to enter into a new agreement with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the "SPCA"), in the amount of \$824,000 for 2005.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the provision of animal protection, care and control services in the City under a new contract with the SPCA.

BACKGROUND

Since 1996, the City has contracted with the SPCA for animal protection and control services. The cost to the City for 2003 was \$730,101, which included the revenue from shared dog licensing under the contract. The existing SPCA contract with the City will expire on December 31, 2004 at an estimated cost of \$730,000, which included revenue from the shared dog licensing under contract.

DISCUSSION

Staff have been in discussions with the SPCA, private contractors, private kennel groups, and has reviewed other delivery models to provide animal control services within the City. From these discussions staff have considered three options which are outlined as follows:

Option 1 – Status Quo Approach

The SPCA will continue to provide all animal control services within the City in a manner similar to the existing contract. There would no longer be a 60% split in licensing fees to the SPCA as we have done in the past years. The SPCA will also continue to provide their provincial mandate of animal care and protection from this current location within the City.

Initial discussions with the SPCA indicated that their costs were unacceptable to the City and no longer a viable option for them to provide animal control. Continued discussions have now resolved issues and the increased cost for their services. These costs are now comparable to any costs the City would incur by providing their own animal control services.

Option 2 – City Provides Animal Control, Enforcement and License Services – SPCA Manages the Animal Shelter Services

Under this option the SPCA would continue to manage and operate the shelter and the City would provide animal control enforcement and licensing services. The shelter provides veterinary care and pound services. The SPCA would also continue its provincial mandate of animal care and protection from this location. The SPCA would be responsible for all shelter operational costs, maintenance and repair. The cost projections under this scenario were comparable to Option 1, however, there were initial capital costs that the City would incur in the first year and additional costs were also included to cover unforeseen expenses in the initial stages of any changeover.

Option 3 – City Provides All Animal Control, Enforcement, Licensing and Shelter Services

The initial start up costs for this option were found to be significantly higher than Options 1 and 2 because the current shelter would require significant capital expenditures for computers and equipment. The City's shelter will require additional capital expenses over the next five years should this site remain as the City animal control shelter. Any major expenditures at this time will not be cost effective should the City decide on an alternate location.

For the City to provide all services has been considered, but not included in the proposal because of the cost and issues surrounding the care of animals and the experience required to successfully operate and maintain a shelter. The SPCA have a background in this role and can make informed decisions about the health of the animals, the assessment of the animals for adoption and maintenance of the facility.

Option 4 – City Contracts with Alternative Service Providers

These options were explored with once again the costs being higher than Options 1 or 2. Initial start up costs would have been a major factor under this option.

Any contracting out of animal control services would include provisions that any enforcement revenue would remain with the City to prevent animal cruelty. This would ensure that a service provider would not become dependant on these revenues to the extent that they are enforcement orientated and that any changes in the City by laws would undoubtedly impact on their services and revenues. Any changes in policy initiated by the City would impact on these revenue sources and the City would have to be prepared to renegotiate any of these changes with a private contractor and therefore a private contractor was not a viable option for animal control services within the City.

Preferred Option

Option 1 above is staff's preferred recommendation to Council. The SPCA is flexible with respect to the term of a new contract to operate the shelter and have agreed to a one year contract for 2005 for a fixed contract price of \$824,000.

The SPCA has estimated that approximately 45% of their work is under their provincial mandate and their presence in the City would continue regardless of any partnership with the City. If the partnership with the SPCA were to be discontinued, the SPCA would have to make alternate arrangements to provide this type of service to the City, either acquiring office space locally or serving the City from a remote location. There are major benefits to having the SPCA in our community and often what might initially be a by law complaint could turn out to be a cruelty investigation, which would be best handled through the SPCA, or partnership options. Under Option 1 space would continue to be made available to the SPCA to carry on their provincial requirements within the City.

We currently have 21 By law Officers providing coverage to the City seven days per week. The coverage for

animal control would be enhanced through the combination of our Officers working in conjunction with the SPCA in various zones within the City. The vast majority of animal control complaints relate to barking dogs and dogs off leash within our parks. These complaints can now be handled initially by all By law Officers and our parks program during the months of May September. This procedure will undoubtedly reduce the call load on all units allowing more time for proactive controls throughout the City.

Barking dog complaints will be directed through the By law & Licensing call centre for our Officers to attend the initial complaint thereby allowing more investigative and patrol time to the SPCA animal control officers in dealing with dangerous dogs and complaints of a more serious nature.

The educational programs currently in place by the SPCA and the City will continue to be promoted as well as educating the public in the care and handling of their pets.

In 2004, 22,000 dogs were licensed through our proactive licensing program. We will continue to educate the public through this program with the ultimate objective of having all dogs licensed within the City.

The City will retain all licensing fees and revenues related to animal control within the City. The 2004 revenue estimate is \$457,855 thereby offsetting the net expenditure of animal control within the City. Our revenue estimate for 2005 is approximately \$485,000.

Appendix "A" contains a comparison of animal control services in other Lower Mainland Municipalities.

CONCLUSION

This proposal extends the good working relationship the City has had with the SPCA. Our dealings with the SPCA have always been most cordial and cooperative and would be expected that this would continue with a new agreement.

This arrangement will now provide additional coverage through existing resources in providing animal control throughout the City. These changes, however, will place additional responsibility on management and supervisors of both the SPCA and By law & Licensing to ensure that animal control enforcement is enhanced throughout the City.

It is recommended that Council adopt Option 1. This option will enable the City to gain from the recent different approaches of other municipalities in the region relating to animal control to better position the City in determining other alternatives during 2005. In discussions with senior management of the SPCA they have agreed to work with management of By law & Licensing on improving our service to the public throughout the City. With the SPCA no longer handling dog licensing this alone will free up resources to provide a service to the public in other areas of animal control.

CRAIG MacFARLANE
City Solicitor

CM:mlg
Attachment – Appendix "A"

c.c. John Sherstone, Manager, By laws & Licensing

APPENDIX "A"**ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICE DELIVERY IN OTHER
LOWER MAINLAND MUNICIPALITIES**

Municipality	Service Provider	Type of Service	Service Delivery Information
Abbotsford	Mainland Animal Control Services	Full	Provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services
City of Langley	Township of Langley	Full	The contractor for the Township of Langley provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services. Township of Langley By-law Enforcement provide services relating to barking dogs
Coquitlam	City Staff	Full	Provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services
Delta (effective Jan. 1/05)	Delta Humane Society	Full	Provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services
District of North Vancouver	City Staff	Full	Provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services
New Westminster	City Staff	Full	Provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services
Pitt Meadows	SPCA	Full	Provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services
Port Coquitlam	SPCA	Full	Provides animal control, enforcement, impound and shelter services
Port Moody	City Staff and City of Coquitlam Staff	Split	City of Coquitlam staff responds to all animal complaints when Port Moody staff are unavailable. Animals are impounded and adopted out from the Coquitlam Animal Shelter
Richmond	City Staff and SPCA	Split	City Staff provide animal control and enforcement. SPCA under contract provides shelter services
Township of Langley	Langley Animal Protection Society & City Staff	Split	The contractor provides animal control enforcement, impound and shelter services. City of Langley enforce barking dog by law
Vancouver	City Staff	Partial	Vancouver only has a dog related by law, which City staff enforce. There are no other animal related by laws. City staff provide dog by law enforcement, impound and sheltering services. The SPCA, not contracted by Vancouver, responds to all other animal related issues