

August 19, 2019

RE: Community & Protective Services Report - Agenda Item 2.10 (RFP 19-14 Animal Services)

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

We are very concerned that the Community and Protective Services (CAPS) Committee approved a bid for a contract that includes both animal services (by-law enforcement and pound services) AND the operation of the city-owned cat adoption centre known as the *Catty Shack*.

We did not raise this issue earlier as we were unaware that there was a change of direction and the services were being bundled until we saw it on the CAPS agenda. The process through which the operation of the *Catty Shack* was combined with animal services lacked transparency. No notice was given to local animal rescue groups or the City of London's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

We believe these services were bundled without adequate input, review, or consideration of the ramifications of this decision. The reasons offered by staff at the CAPS meeting for bundling the services were (a) cost savings, and (b) potential increase in adoptions. How were these conclusions reached? There is no report. The contract to operate *Catty Shack* was not put out for bid, so there are no comparisons either for cost or strategies to increase adoptions.

We request that you separate the two items, and re-tender the portion of the contract that covers operation of the *Catty Shack*. Please consider the following reasons:

- 1) The *Catty Shack* is an essential part of a policy adopted by city council back in 2011, when Jay Stanford managed animal services. That policy shifted animal services from a one service for-profit provider model to a multi-service provider model that includes charitable organizations, or, as Jay said, from animal control to animal welfare. This decision by council was made after significant input from the public and animal rescue groups, as well as research by city staff.
- 2) The concept behind the *Catty Shack* was to have a city owned adoption centre which would partner with the cat rescue groups in London. A "key finding" in a report submitted to council by Jay Stanford on October 24, 2011 stated:

“Collaborations and relationships with the local government, the humane society, animal rescue groups, veterinarians and other community partners is vital to high performing animal services programs. Calgary represents an excellent model in this regard.” (p.5)

- 3) If this bundled contract is accepted, London will regress back to an outdated one service provider model, and a community partnership that took many years to develop will be abolished. The opportunity to leverage their network of volunteers and foster homes will be lost. Animal rescue groups in London are, generally, charitable organizations that are uninterested and/or unable to take on full responsibility for by-law enforcement and pound services. However, operation of an adoption centre fits well within their mission.
- 4) Re-tendering the portion of the contract that covers the *Catty Shack* would not affect the contract for by-law enforcement and pound services. The bid for *Catty Shack* was a completely separate item. Bidders were instructed to bid on either animal services only, or animal services plus the *Catty Shack*. There was no opportunity to bid on *Catty Shack* only.
- 5) Correcting this error now will keep London on a forward thinking approach toward animal welfare and community partnership. If a change in direction is to be made, it should be a decision made by city council. It should not be an unintended consequence of a flawed tender.

Marie Blosch
43 Mayfair Dr.
London

Dianne Fortney
28 Argyle St.
London

Tricia Lystar
1021 Fogerty St.
London