
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 3, 2009
File No.: 6130-07
To: City Manager
From: Park Services Manager
Subject: Feral Rabbit Update

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve up to \$20,000 for maintenance of the feral rabbit control program in 2009 and for public education on this issue, with funding from the 2008 City Manager's Contingency carry-over;

AND THAT these funds be allocated as per the proposed budget allocation outlined in the March 3, 2009 report of the Park Services Manager.

BACKGROUND:

The EBB feral rabbit contract will be finished as of March 4, 2009. The remaining feral rabbit population appears to be quite low based on on-going surveys, with only about 22 known rabbits at a variety of locations. Although only 22 animals have been observed there are likely more, possibly as many as 75-100. Recent surveys in the Enterprise Avenue area were conducted, and no rabbits were observed on public property although we are aware of some rabbits still on private property. EBB and the community should be commended for their efforts as it is apparent that the population has been brought under control.

Recently, EBB has found that trapping efficiency is quite low and there is still some interference from individuals and property owners in capturing the remaining animals. Staff's concern is that unless there is an on-going maintenance program in place, the remaining animals will begin multiplying again as the weather improves. Staff will extend the EBB contract temporarily for the next 1-2 weeks while new arrangements are being made.

Therefore staff are requesting Council's approval for additional funding of \$20,000 for on-going work, including public education and communication, in 2009.

PROPOSED BUDGET ALLOCATION:

New quotes would be solicited as per the following specifications:



- On-going feral rabbit control (e.g. live trapping and/or culling) with the goal of eliminating Kelowna's feral rabbit population;
- The requested city funding would be primarily for removal of rabbits on public lands only, although the contractor would be encouraged to assist private properties, i.e. by charging property owners for services or soliciting donations. Private properties will be encouraged by Bylaw Services staff to work with the city contractor to eliminate feral rabbits on private land, or property owners may face penalties under the "Animal and poultry regulation and animal pound bylaw".
- The contractor requires liability insurance and WorkSafe coverage as per City Purchasing rules, and is responsible for any necessary permits and compliance with applicable laws or bylaws;
- Work must begin immediately and focus on removal of remaining rabbits as quickly as possible to prevent rabbit breeding;
- The contractor will supply documentation (e.g. spay/neuter certificates from a veterinarian) to demonstrate that the rabbit has been spayed and neutered and the contractor will provide details for each feral rabbit captured, location of capture in Kelowna (address if applicable) plus date and time;
- The contractor will need to be able to accept public complaints about feral rabbits in the City of Kelowna by phone or email and follow up in problem areas;
- The contractor would be responsible for any on-going care and feeding costs of trapped rabbits, if applicable;
- Staff will monitor rabbit populations to ensure that control efforts are effective. If populations begin to increase in any areas, the contractor will be notified in writing that they have 7 days to step up their efforts and decrease the number of rabbits. If the contractor fails to address these areas then the City reserves the right to hire an additional contractor to remove rabbits who will employ whatever means are necessary (e.g. culling animals if necessary), and the City may at its sole discretion cancel the contract;
- Payment of the contractor will be on a monthly basis, if as and when required. The contractor will quote a basic monthly rate, as well as a cost per animal captured, and the City reserves the right to extend or terminate the contract (with sufficient notice) according to the performance of the contractor and the need for additional services.

The necessary funding for the contractor (as well as any additional contractor who is required to augment the control work) would be drawn from the \$20,000 budget.

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION #1:

THAT Council approve up to \$20,000 for maintenance of the feral rabbit control program in 2009 and for public education on this issue, with funding from a carry-over of 2008 City Manager's Contingency;

AND THAT the current contract to EBB Environmental Consulting Inc. be extended in order to achieve complete control of the feral rabbit population, through live trapping.

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION #2:

THAT Council approve up to \$11,500 for maintenance of the feral rabbit control program in 2009 and for public education on this issue, with funding from a carry-over of 2008 City Manager's Contingency;

AND THAT the current contract to EBB Environmental Consulting Inc. be extended in order to achieve complete control of the feral rabbit population, through culling.

LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

Community Charter section 8, 9 and 59; and Spheres of Concurrent Jurisdiction – Environment and Wildlife Regulation B.C. Reg. 144/2004.

CONSIDERATIONS THAT WERE NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS REPORT:

INTERNAL CIRCULATION TO:

EXISTING POLICY:

LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:

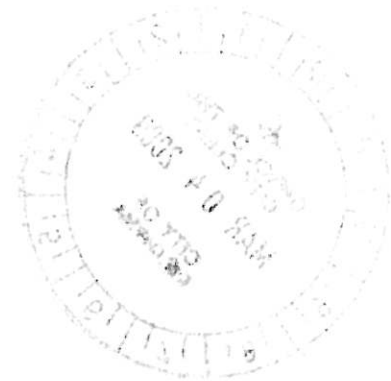
LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS:

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS:



Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Wilson'.

I. Wilson, Park Services Manager

Approved for Inclusion:

A small square box containing handwritten initials, likely 'JC'.

[the department director initials here]

Cc: Joe Creron, Director of Civic Operations
John Vos, General Manager of Community Services
Maureen MacGillivray, Purchasing Manager
Keith Grayston, Director of Financial Services
Carla Stephens, Director of Community and Media Relations
Stephen Fleming, City Clerk