



Date: September 10, 2010

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Closure of the Children's Farmyard in Stanley Park

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Children's Farmyard in Stanley Park close on January 2, 2011, following the end of the annual Bright Nights Christmas event.*
- B. THAT all the animals are relocated to approved organizations that have expressed interest in giving them safe and secure homes.*

BACKGROUND

In 2009 the Board initiated a Core Services Review as part of its 2010 Budget process to better align its programs and services with the Park Board's mandate. The Children's Farmyard was identified as not being part of the Park Board's Core Services.

The Board approved, on November 25, 2009, to close the Children's Farmyard to assist in meeting the Park Board's 2010 fiscal challenges and support its core services.

After public feedback, on December 11, 2009, the Board stated that it recognized the potential educational value of the Children's Farmyard and directed staff to issue a Request for Expressions of Interest inviting interested applicants to submit written business cases/concept plans and other relevant information for the use (in a similar or new capacity) for the Children's Farmyard facility by April 30, 2010

DISCUSSION

In the past three years (2007-2009) the annual deficit has averaged \$166,500 and for 2010, despite having the summer attraction of the Klahowya Village adjacent to the Farmyard, the deficit is projected to be similar to previous years. In addition to the deficit, approximately \$82,000 has been spent annually on regular maintenance and scheduled capital improvements (roofing, painting etc.)

The accumulated annual deficit of \$248,000 plus additional capital improvements that will be required in the future has made the continuation of the Farmyard an unattractive business venture for potential proponents.

Two Expressions of Interest were received by the Board by the due date of April 30, 2010. Since that time one was withdrawn and the other one has been unable to meet the financial obligations that are required at the Farmyard.

Staff Impact

CUPE 1004 have been advised of this recommendation and the impact on their members in the Farmyard.

Our Human Resource consultants will work with the one full-time employee to try and find her a comparable job within the organization. In addition, they are presently working with the union to convert three senior auxiliary employees who all work close to full-time hours at the Farmyard to full-time status.

There are another seven employees who have worked part-time at the Farmyard during the past year and will be considered for any future work provided that they are capable of performing the work which may be available.

Finding new homes for the animals

The inventory of animals at present is as follows:

- 30 Sheep (18 Barbados, 4 Jacobs, 4 Cotswold, 4 Cross)
- 24 Goats
- 2 Pot Bellied pigs
- 2 Dexter Cows
- 2 Donkeys
- 1 Llama
- 1 Pony
- 3 Alpacas (on loan – will be returned to their farm)
- 18 Small mammals (12 Rabbits, 4 Guinea pigs, 2 Hamsters)
- 30 Poultry (28 Chickens, 2 Turkeys)
- 9 Domestic waterfowl (6 Geese, 3 Ducks)

- **TOTAL: 122**

To date 12 organizations (farms, petting zoos) have expressed interest in taking all or some of the animals.

When relocating the animals they will be kept in family and species groups as much as possible. There will be no monetary value placed on the animals but the organizations will be expected to provide appropriate transportation from the Farmyard to their destination.

Secure, safe homes with experienced care-givers will be the main criteria in the relocation process. All potential homes will be inspected and approved by a representative from our Farmyard staff if we are not already familiar with the organization.

On September 9, 2010, the Board's Planning and Environment Committee unanimously approved the staff recommendations outlined in this report.

SUMMARY

The Request for Expressions of Interest failed to produce any proposal that would reduce the significant annual operating deficit at the Children's Farmyard.

Human Resource consultants will work with existing staff to try and place them in appropriate jobs according to their skills and seniority.

The Farmyard will close after the 2010 Bright Nights in Stanley Park Christmas event and our staff will relocate all the animals to approved organizations.

Prepared by:
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PJ