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Item #	1
Report No.	4 (WS)
Council - January 28/14	

DATE: January 27, 2014

TO: Honourable Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: MaryLee Farrugia, Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services/City Solicitor
Gus Michaels, Director of By-law & Compliance

RE: COMMUNICATION
Council Meeting January 28, 2014

Item/Report #4 – Committee of the Whole (Working Session) – January 21, 2014 – Vaughan Animal Services By-law Review and Communication Strategy

Communication from Reptilia Inc. Reptile Zoo & Education Facility

A recent communication from Dr. Andre Ngo, PH.D, Director of Research and Curriculum, Reptilia Inc. received on January 27, 2014 identified concerns with the proposed inclusion of constrictors (snakes) as a prohibited species, instead supporting the existing size restrictions of not larger than an adult length of 3 metres as contained within Vaughan's current Animal Control By-law.

In response, staff believe that the consideration of including constrictor snakes in the proposed improved Prohibited Species Schedule 'B' of the Vaughan Animal Control By-law # 53-2002 be deferred, maintaining the existing size restriction of not larger than 3 metres pending further review and consultation with Reptilia Inc., and other pet industry stakeholders as required.

On November 20, 2013, in order to solicit input from the public and industry stakeholders, staff from the By-law & Compliance Department held a public consultation presenting the highlights of proposed amendments, including staff's intent to include constrictors (snakes) within the prohibited species schedule of the Animal Control By-law. Although Public Notice was provided through media publications and the City's Website, Reptilia Inc. and other industry stakeholders were not represented at the Public Consultation Meeting. There was no opposition provided to the proposed amendment, until receipt of the communication from Reptilia Inc. on January 27, 2014.

At its meeting of January 21, 2014, the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommended that the recommendations contained within the Vaughan Animal Services By-law Review and Communication Strategy Report from the Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services/City Solicitor and the Director of By-law & Compliance, dated January 21, 2014, be approved.

Included within this recommendation, as identified in Recommendation #1 Subsection (e) of the Report, was the approval of an improved schedule of prohibited species. One of the proposed improvements intended to be included was the prohibition of constrictors (snakes).

The existing Animal Control By-law 53-2002, Schedule B – Prohibited Animals, prohibits the keeping of constrictors which reach an adult length of larger than 3 metres. Part 11- Prohibited Species, Section 3, exempts institutions such as Reptilia, premises of the OSPCA, facilities

registered pursuant to the Animals for Research Act, among others from the Prohibited Species Schedule 'B' of the By-law. Although these facilities would continue to be exempt from keeping of prohibited species identified within the proposed schedule, Reptilia Inc., like other pet industry retailers, are engaged in the sale of various constrictor species. Adopting a prohibition of all constrictors would somewhat restrict their available market, since Vaughan residents would be prohibited from keeping of such reptiles.

Although the existing prohibitions regarding constrictors contained with By-law #53-2002 prohibits the keeping of snakes which reach an adult length of larger than 3 metres, staff maintain, in the interest of public safety, that the current length restriction does not adequately protect against harm to the public, namely children. Staff believe that further research and consultation with industry stakeholders is warranted to ensure that any future proposed restrictions (including a reduction in permitted size) more adequately reflects the interests of public safety.

Staff believes that an improved prohibited species list can be approved without including the previously proposed amendments for constrictors (snakes) at this time, pending further consideration to identify a solution that more equitably addresses public safety, and community and stakeholder interests through the appropriate consultative process, followed by a report to a future Committee of the Whole for further consideration.



Gus Michaels, Director
By-law & Compliance Department



MaryLee Farrugia, Commissioner/City Solicitor
Legal & Administrative Services