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**Present:**

Councillor Elford – Chairperson  
Councillor Annis  
Councillor Guerra  
A. Heinrich  
K. Macdonald  
R. Prasad

**Absent:****Staff:**

R. Costanzo, General Manager, Corporate Services  
T. Waterhouse, General Manager, Policing Transition  
L. Thomas, Fire Chief  
M. Griffieon, Deputy Fire Chief  
K. Marosevich, Manager, Bylaw Services  
L. Blake, Legislative Services

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**A. ADOPTIONS****1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was Moved by Councillor Guerra  
Seconded by A. Heinrichs  
That the Community Services Committee  
meeting agenda of June 30, 2021, be adopted.  
Carried

**2. Adoption of the Minutes**

It was Moved by Councillor Guerra  
Seconded by Councillor Annis  
That:

1. The Community Services Committee meeting minutes of May 26, 2021, be amended to reflect K. Macdonald as the seconder for Item A.2; and
2. The minutes be adopted as amended.  
Carried

**B. NEW BUSINESS/DELEGATIONS****1. Mark Griffioen, Deputy Fire Chief and Larry Thomas, Fire Chief**

Mark Griffioen, Deputy Fire Chief and Larry Thomas, Fire Chief, provided a PowerPoint presentation explaining the City of Surrey's approach to dealing with Distressed Properties. The following information was highlighted:

- Surrey Fire Services noted an increase in fires at vacant properties and through research determined a main cause was the lack of affordable rental units that can force individuals into taking shelter in vacant properties despite the associated safety risks. As abandoned properties usually do not have utility services, unauthorized occupants often introduce ignition sources and engage in high fire risk activities. At the peak of this issue in 2016, one fire was occurring every one and a half weeks for a total of 33 fires. Vacant properties usually do not have smoke alarms and do not have occupants willing or able to alert authorities when a fire starts, so Fire Services must wait until a neighbour or passerby calls it in, which increases the risk of the fire spreading.

- Firefighters are trained to safely fight fires; however, if a neighbour indicates that they have seen individuals living in a property that is on fire, the fire fighters have to determine if they can try to rescue those individuals. Firefighters are four times more likely to be injured at a vacant property. There are also increased health risks, such as cancer exposure due to the burning material.
- Investment property owners have little incentive to maintain an investment property as the increased costs are generally not equal to increased profits. It is understood that prevention is the best solution fire issues, therefore effective intervention methods are needed. The Distressed Property Model puts the maintenance responsibility on the property owner with administrative support provided by Fire Services.
- The Distressed Property Model operation guidelines were developed in 2017 and were based on the Electrical Safety Guidelines. The guidelines included City standards for boarding and fencing, tools, training and administrative support and the creation of an Order to Remedy Conditions. The model has been refined over the subsequent years and resulted in a decrease of fires per year. For example, in 2020, Surrey Fire Services applied new progressive patrol requirements that enabled the team to identify patterns and develop tracking methods for future fire outbreaks. In 2021, a business intelligence tool was developed that allowed Fire Services to focus on properties that have previously experienced break-ins or were at a higher risk for a break-in. There have been no fires at vacant properties to date in 2021.
- For 2022, it is anticipated that the predictive elements of the Model will be refined to better prioritize the highest risk properties and incorporate City data to focus on prevention and encourage voluntary compliance.

In response to questions from the Committee, Chief Thomas and Deputy Chief Griffioen provided the following information:

- A property owner is responsible for initiating the removal of occupants from their property. If the property owner does not provide support to the individuals once they vacate the property, the RCMP will follow-up; however, unpermitted occupants usually avoid contact with the RCMP so it can be difficult to connect with these individuals to discuss the support that is available.
- The Electrical Safety Program was restarted in January 2021 to accommodate changes to federal legislation that permits the legal growing of cannabis. Surrey Fire Services does not enforce any laws related to cannabis but does ensure that cannabis growers have proper electrical and ventilation and that the property is not contaminated.

- There is provincial legislation that allows BC Hydro to provide public safety providers with a list of electricity use. If a property is using three times the regular consumption of electricity, Surrey Fire Services can investigate to determine if there is an improper electrical hook-up or rerouting of power that could be associated with illegal activity.
- Residential fires due to cannabis growing operations have significantly decreased. Surrey Fire Services will do a geospatial analysis regarding cannabis grow operations once enough data is available.
- Surrey Fire Services does not have a mechanism to identify or seek out clandestine grow operations. Commercial properties that are regulated by a business license, are subject to fire and safety inspections; however, these inspections can take two to three months for access to be granted. Fire Services will respond to issues related to clandestine grow operations, such as a fire, the release of noxious gas or an injury. This model is more responsive as opposed to preventative.

**2. Kim Marosevich, Manager, Bylaw Services**

Kim Marosevich, Manager, Bylaw Services, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the City of Surrey's approach to Animal Control. The following information was highlighted:

- Animal enforcement works seven days a week, 364 days a year with extended hours during the summer. Enforcement responds to complaints, assistance requests from other departments and proactive identification of contraventions. Most complaints are resolved through voluntary compliance; however, escalation can result in enforcement through a bylaw ticket being issued. Very rarely does the City seek a warrant for the seizure and destruction of a dog.
- There has been a noted decreased in complaints and investigations during the COVID-19 pandemic, likely as pet owners have been home more often and are able to provide better management to their pets.
- In 2017, the City implemented the Animal Responsibility Bylaw that allows for a tiered licensing approach for dogs: aggressive, vicious and dangerous. If there is a minor incident involving a dog with no biting or contact, Bylaws can issue a warning and monitor the dog to ensure it is microchipped, trained and not aggressive for a one-year period. This is an intervention piece of enforcement that allows Bylaws to build a relationship with the pet owner.
- Typical calls for an Animal Control services include a dog being at-large, an aggressive incident involving a dog (a bite or attack), owners not picking up animal waste, dogs being off-leash in unpermitted areas and the removal of a deceased animal from public spaces.

- Less typical calls for Animal Control services include livestock at large and seasonable issues such as a pet left in a hot car, inadequate shelter in cold temperatures and other welfare concerns. Surrey Animal Control works in partnership with the BC SPCA on animal welfare issues, as the SPCA has more tools available to address these issues through the BC Animal Cruelty Act.
- The Surrey Animal Resource Centre provides intake and care for lost or unwanted animals, adoption services and education programs for animal ownership and care. The Centre is open seven days a week from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. In 2020, 1180 animals came through the Centre. There is an average of 600 adoptions per year.
- The Centre hosts events to help spread awareness and promote education. For example, June was adopt-a-rabbit month, as staff have noted there are an increasing number of rabbits being surrendered to the Centre each year. The event is intended to help these pets be adopted, as well as provide education on the care required for them.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Marosevich provided the following information:

- Animal Control has limited space at the SPCA Farm Animal in Surrey for stray livestock, as this is where animals seized from cruel conditions are located. It is rare for livestock owners not to claim their animals and Officers can usually connect with the animal owner or neighbour to return the animal in a timely manner.
- All advertisements regarding lost pets and adoptable pets are posted on the Animal Resource Centre's Facebook page.
- The pandemic really limited what type of events the Centre could host. While staff pivoted to provide virtual services, in general, people want a tactile experience and engagement with animals. For example, the Paw Play event takes place at off-lease dog parks and staff provide educational material, agility equipment and microchip scanning services. This event, and many others like it, help build relationships with pet owners and promote awareness for the Centre. Staff also participate in large trade show events, such as Scentopia and other creative ways to bring attention to the Centre.
- Wildlife, such as coyotes, are a provincial responsibility. The City can provide emergency transportation or habitation until provincial authorities can assume responsibility. The Ecology Centre in Stanley Park provides population and abnormal behavior tracking. Since coyotes are generally not a problem for humans, they get less attention than other, bigger wildlife threats such as bears and cougars. Animal Enforcement provides education for wildlife, such as how to address composting and garbage and keeping livestock and domestic pets safe. If there are reports of really aggressive wildlife activity or behavior, Animal Control can pass that information onto the provincial authorities.

- Animal Control and the SPCA have concurrent interest and activities. While Animal Control can enforce actions related to the Animal Control Bylaw, the SPCA has more legal means available to address pet owners. The Animal Control will often work with the SPCA on problem properties or individuals.

**3. Rob Costanzo, General Manager, Corporate Services**

Rob Costanzo, General Manager, Corporate Services, provided the following update regarding the Diversity & Inclusion workplan:

- Diversity and inclusion are topics that the Committee will address as part of its workplan and received a presentation from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture regarding the initiatives and programs that City has to address diversity and inclusion at the April 28, 2021 meeting.
- The City is an industry leader with respect to its diversity and inclusion policies and continues to look for ways to improve. Examples of the City's diversity and inclusion policies include: the Respectful Workplace Policy, Human Rights' Policy, inclusion calendar, participation in Anti-Bullying Day and Indigenous Peoples Day, mental health programs, autism awareness training, an interpretive language team that represents 34 languages, multi-faith rooms at all civic facilities and ongoing staff education. These policies and initiatives have led the City to being named one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers three years in a row in 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- While it is apparent that the City's staff are reflective of Surrey's community as a whole, the City will implement a voluntary, anonymous survey to confirm this by seeking information regarding staff's ethnic backgrounds. Following the survey, staff focus groups will be formed to provide feedback regarding the City's diversity and inclusion programs. Based on this information, the City will develop a Diversity and Inclusion Policy that will be reviewed every three years.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Costanzo provided the following information:

- The City does not currently have any information regarding staff who self-identify as disabled or as LGBTQ+ The City is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any job applicants.
- About 2% of staff complaints that are received have to do with racism. Depending on the severity of the complaint, it can be addressed with a warning, suspension or termination. Most racism-based complaints are minor and do not require severe action.
- City surveys such as this are always voluntary. With over 5000 staff, the goal is usually about 450 responses to provide statistical representation.

**C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**

This section had no items to consider.

**D. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL**

This section had no items to consider.

**E. CORRESPONDENCE**

This section had no items to consider.

**H. INFORMATION ITEMS**

This section had no items to consider.

**I. OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. Extreme Weather Response**

File: N/A (Verbal Report)

Rob Costanzo, General Manager, Corporate Services, provided the following information regarding the City's response to the heatwave:

- While BC Housing has no specific extreme heat response plan, the City, in partnership with BC Housing, will act as necessary in response to extreme weather events, including heatwaves.
- On June 24, the Homelessness Service Association of BC contacted all agencies they fund to encourage them to keep shelters cool and guests hydrated. Various City departments met in anticipation of the heatwave to ensure that libraries were open for extended hours to provide a cool location or to hand out water and that spray parks were in operation. Donations of water were also provided to the Surrey Urban Mission (SUMS) and the Emergency Response Centre.
- Feedback received indicates that the communication plan worked well and there did not appear to be major issues for unhoused residents. The issues that did arise were for individuals in homes without air conditioning units.
- Suggested improvements to the extreme weather response include activating earlier and having information ready in advanced and promoting it prominently on the City's website and arranging for portable water and misting stations at locations where priority populations frequent.

The Committee noted that extreme weather events and poor air quality will likely become more frequent due to climate change. While providing more housing to priority populations will hopefully help, the City should discuss how to better plan for and manage extreme weather. The following suggestions were provided:

- Seniors housing should be required to have air conditioning and proper ventilation, as senior populations may not have the mobility to go out to a cooling centre.
- First responders could be provided with information cards containing information on cooling and hydrating stations to pass out to residents.
- Information regarding additional resources available, such as extended hours at community centres providing cooling stations, could be communicated better to the public.

**J. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Community Services Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, September 29, 2021.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

It was  
  
meeting do now adjourn.

Moved by Councillor Guerra  
Seconded by Councillor Annis  
That the Community Services Committee

Carried

The Community Services Committee meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

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Councillor Elford, Chairperson