

ITEM	4
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	32
COUNCIL MEETING	92/05/04

TO: ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER

1992 APRIL 29

FROM: DIRECTOR FINANCE

File: A-53

SUBJECT: PERFORMING ANIMALS

PURPOSE: To recommend a policy on performing animals in Burnaby.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the Burnaby Animal Control Bylaw be amended to prohibit public exhibitions, shows and performances involving wild animals; and
2. THAT the Burnaby Animal Control Bylaw be further amended to provide for a certification system which allows events to take place with domestic animals provided the organizers demonstrate that the animals are properly cared for; and
3. THAT a copy of this report be sent to Lifeforce, P.O. Box 3117, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3X6, and to the Vancouver Humane Society, P.O. Box 35421, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 4G8.

SUMMARY

The Finance Department has completed a review of performing animal regulations and proposes changes to our animal control bylaw that would:

- . prohibit public exhibitions, shows and performances involving "wild animals"
- . more closely regulate "domestic animal" events to ensure the animals are properly cared for.

The proposed changes represent a balance between the requests Council has received to ban all animal acts, and the popularity some domestic animal events (e.g. pony rides and petting zoos) have in the community.

In addition, we are continuing to review other animal welfare and control issues including the keeping of exotic animals and reptiles, and the operation of pet stores. These issues will be brought forward for Council's consideration as they are completed.

REPORT

Council has on several occasions been asked to ban circus acts involving animals, animal rides, petting zoos and other forms of entertainment in which animals are used. The concerns raised are that animals are severely mistreated during their training and suffer inhumane treatment in transport and accommodations.

Petting zoos and pony rides are occasionally part of public events in Burnaby. Shows using animals, both wild and domestic, have appeared in the community for many years. These events have provided family entertainment with educational and fund raising benefits to the community.

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The circus which appeared at Lougheed Mall last year used wild and domestic animal acts in the performance. At the request of the Municipality, Burnaby S.P.C.A. inspected the circus and found that the animals were not receiving the kind of proper and humane care that they should.

Several communities have responded to the issue in the past year. Vancouver has prohibited wild animal acts in circuses only. Saanich, Victoria and Delta have prohibited wild animal acts in public shows. This ban does not extend to traditional activities using domestic animals such as dog shows and horse exhibitions. Saanich has extended their ban to aquariums. North Vancouver District has banned all performances involving animals.

105

These responses reflect a growing awareness and higher profile for animal welfare issues in society generally. A common assumption for many years was that animal show operators provided adequately for the needs of their animals. New attitudes toward animal rights have brought these operations under closer scrutiny. This scrutiny has brought to light some situations where animals have been mistreated.

Given that a number of communities in the region have already restricted many activities involving animals, including circus acts, it is less likely that traveling shows will bring animal acts in future. It would not be economical for circuses to carry replacement acts to be used in communities which have banned animal acts.

Based on our experience and the actions in other communities, it seems inevitable that wild animal acts will not be a part of community events in the future, either because they are banned in an increasing number of communities, or because the public has become more aware of animal rights.

We feel there is a need to separate animal acts that use wild animals from those using domestic animals. Also, we feel that banning pony rides and petting zoos would be going too far at this time. The S.P.C.A. is in general agreement with this position and is prepared to continue monitoring events to ensure proper care and treatment is given.

In combination, our conclusions suggest that the municipality should amend the animal control bylaw to prohibit wild animal acts and provide a certification system which allows events to take place with domestic animals provided the organizers demonstrate that the animals are properly cared for. These regulations would prohibit wild animal acts in such things as circuses, zoos or exhibitions, and exotic dance.

The certification system would require that event operators have no prior record of animal abuse, and that event operators produce a letter from a veterinarian stating that the animals are in good condition, and that the operator is knowledgeable of the requirements for the humane treatment of animals.

This approach is recommended because it would actively discourage the mistreatment of animals, while allowing events involving domestic animals (e.g. pony rides, petting zoos) to operate in the community provided the animals are treated properly.

In addition, we are continuing to review other animal welfare and control issues, including the keeping of exotic animals and reptiles, and the operation of pet stores. Recommendations will be brought forward for Council's consideration as they are completed.


Rick Earle
DIRECTOR FINANCE

DE:vm

- cc. Director Administrative & Community Services
- Director Recreation & Cultural Services
- Municipal Solicitor
- B.C.S.P.C.A. - Michael Weeks, Executive Director