

INFORMATION for RESIDENTS

PROPOSED NEW REGIONAL DISTRICT SERVICE for REGIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER FUNDING

The Powell River Regional District (PRRD) is considering establishing a new, region-wide service to help pay for the operating costs of an animal shelter that the SPCA will build, own and operate. The purpose of this flyer is to inform residents about this proposed new service.

BACKGROUND

The local SPCA provides various animal welfare services in the region, including public education, spay/neuter programs and animal adoptions. Chief among these services is the care of stray, abandoned and abused animals. SPCA statistics show that volunteers dealt with a total 320 dogs and cats in 2009 and 404 in 2008. They also handled various other types of animals, generally in smaller numbers.

Many of these animals require shelter until existing owners can be contacted or new owners found. Presently, the SPCA relies on volunteers to take the animals into their homes. Finding people who are willing and properly set up to care for unfamiliar animals at home is an on-going challenge for the SPCA.

To relieve the demand on volunteers, the SPCA wants to build a shelter to temporarily house abused or stray dogs and cats. The Society would pay the construction costs but it needs on-going financial support to operate the shelter. The PRRD proposes to adopt a new regional service to provide this support. Costs of the service would be shared among taxpayers in the City and Electoral Areas A, B, C and D.

ABOUT THE SHELTER

The SPCA has purchased suitably zoned property east of the airport on upper Duncan Street for the shelter. The building will be approximately 2,000 sq. feet and will include areas for public reception, office, storage, staff room and washrooms as well as space for the animals. Three cat rooms and three dog kennels are planned. Each kennel may accommodate 2 dogs, provided they are compatible.

The building will be constructed to minimize noise that can be heard from the outside. An outdoor dog exercise area will face the airport property. Dogs will be taken outside only when someone is at the building to supervise. The shelter will have some part-time employees but the SPCA will continue to encourage volunteer help to care for the animals.

The shelter would not replace the City pound service, which the City will continue to provide.

SHELTER COSTS

The SPCA will pay 100% of the building construction costs which are estimated at \$400,000. Some construction funds are already in place or committed. The Society plans further fundraising once they are certain operating funds will be available through the new PRRD Service.

The first year, the annual operating costs for the shelter portion of the facility are estimated at \$75,000. This would cover wages, utilities and supplies related to caring for the sheltered animals (food, bedding etc.) The SPCA would cover the remaining 56% of costs to operate and maintain the building using funds from other revenue sources, including a subsidy from the BC SPCA.

The PRRD would collect taxes to pay the shelter costs through the approved animal shelter service. Annual shelter costs are not expected to increase by more than the cost of living, and the animal shelter service bylaw would include provisions to avoid increases exceeding that amount.

TAX IMPLICATIONS

The annual contribution to the shelter operating costs would be shared among the service participants (City and Areas A, B, C, D) based on their relative share of the total tax base for the service. The City would pay approximately 53% of the total; the four electoral areas would pay the balance.

Based on 2010 assessments, residential taxes to cover the \$75,000 first year contribution would be approximately as shown below:

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY VALUE	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
ESTIMATED SHELTER TAX	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$8.00

Tax rates will be higher on Commercial and Industrial class properties. Further details on tax impacts will be available on the PRRD website at www.powellriverrd.bc.ca

ELECTOR APPROVAL

Under the *Local Government Act* (LGA), regional districts must seek elector approval on bylaws to establish new services, and the *Act* sets options and requirements for obtaining this approval. Different options are available to the City (a municipality under the LGA) and the electoral areas.

City of Powell River

The City Council is prepared to consent to the animal shelter service establishment bylaw on behalf of City electors, provided City taxpayers appear generally to support the service. Their decision is based on the relatively low cost of the service to individual taxpayers and a desire to avoid the high cost of a City-wide vote (\$25,000+).

Electoral Areas A, B, C & D

The LGA does not give electoral area directors the option of consenting to a bylaw for this proposed service. Instead, the PRRD must obtain electoral area approval either by voting (referendum) or the Alternate Approval Process (AAP). The AAP requires people who object to a bylaw to submit a form registering their objection to the Regional District. Many people dislike this process, so directors have decided to hold a vote on the service establishment bylaw in the electoral areas. The majority of voters in each participating electoral area must approve the bylaw before it can be adopted by the Regional Board.

ELECTORAL AREA VOTING INFORMATION

General Voting Day is tentatively set for Saturday, July 17. Advance Voting would be on July 7. Mail ballots will be available for voters who will be away on these dates. Persons eligible to vote are those who, on General Voting Day, are Canadian citizens, at least 18 years of age, residents of BC for 6 months; and a resident or property owner in the service area for 30 days.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Regional Board plans to start reading the bylaw at its regular meeting on Thursday, May 27, 2010. To comment on the proposed service, contact a Council member (city residents) or your area director. For information on the bylaw or voting procedures, please consult the PRRD:

Website: www.powellriverrd.bc.ca
Email: administration@powellriverrd.bc.ca
Phone: 604-483-3231