

## SULTAN CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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ITEM NO: D - 3

DATE: March 22, 2007

SUBJECT: Animal Control Program

CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Knight, City Administrator *D. Knight*

### SUMMARY:

In 2006, the City Council discussed the need to develop and fund an animal control program to address a growing need in the Sultan community to license and control domestic animals. The 2007 budget includes \$20,000 to fund an animal control program. The intent of the City Council is to review its animal control program and adopt a work plan for 2007.

The issue for the Council is to discuss and provide direction to staff on the remaining pieces of a proposed animal control program for 2007. These issues include:

1. Contracting or hiring an individual to perform the daily tasks of an animal control officer including enforcing animal related ordinances fairly and equitably; identifying and licensing as many pets as possible through an aggressive pet licensing program; educating the public regarding responsible pet ownership; and caring for stray animals until they are released to the Everett shelter.
2. Contracting with Snohomish County to collect animals from Sultan once they have been contained.

According to Vicki Lubrin, License Manager for the Licensing Division and Animal Control Services, Snohomish County only has the capability of transporting animals from Sultan to the Everett Shelter. The County is not able to provide contract services for animal control at this time.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Hire an individual on a part-time temporary basis to perform the daily tasks of an animal control officer. Review the program during the 2008 budget discussions and determine if funding should continue for the program
2. Contract with Snohomish County to collect animals from Sultan once they have been contained.

Following Council direction, City staff will return with the necessary contracts, interlocal agreements, and work plan for 2007 to implement the Council's desired goals and objectives. The scope and tasks outlined in the work plan are contingent upon the type of animal control program the City Council adopts.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Sultan has funded an animal control program in the past. The program was discontinued in 2002 due to budget constraints.

There are resources in place to renew the program. These resources include:

- City Ordinances for Animal Control in SMC 6.04 (Attachment A)
- A dog licensing program and fee
- A \$20,000 budget approved by the City Council for 2007
- A 1994 Ford cargo van to make period sweeps of the City to pick up stray, surrendered, vicious and dead animals, investigate animal bites, nuisance animals and other animal related complaints.
- A kennel at the public works yard for short-term sheltering prior to transporting the animal to the Everett facility.
- An Interlocal Agreement with the City of Everett for animal shelter services approved by the City Council in January 2007.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

#### Contract or Hiring an Animal Control Officer

Salary: 20 hours/week x 36 weeks (April-December) x \$15.00/hour =	\$10,800
Benefits (if employee): Public Employees Retirement System	\$1,780
Operating supplies: shelter support, marketing, advertising, etc.	\$1,020
Other services and charges: vehicle operating costs, etc.	\$1,700
Intergovernmental: Everett Shelter and Snohomish Co. transport	<u>\$ 5,500</u>
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

Intergovernmental services include:

Everett Shelter (\$97/animal x 36 animals) = \$3,492

Snohomish County Transport Services (\$55/services call x 36 animals) = \$1,980

The 2007 budget includes \$300 in anticipated revenues from licensing fees. Revenues are anticipated to increase slightly as a result of an aggressive campaign to license pets beginning in the third quarter of 2007.

### Snohomish County Transport Services

36 animals transported to Everett Shelter (\$55 x 36 trips) = \$1,980

Snohomish County has interlocal agreements in place with the cities of Monroe, Stanwood, Arlington, Darrington, and Index for transport services. Under the interlocal agreement Snohomish charges \$55 per trip to transport animals from the city to the local contracting shelters. The cities are required to maintain a separate current contract for animal sheltering services. Additionally, the cities must maintain a contractual relationship with SNOPAC for the provision of 911 radio-dispatching services.

The City of Sultan has contracts with both the Everett Shelter and SNOPAC as required by Snohomish County to enter into a transport services agreement.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The City of Sultan Animal Control program is a vital City service since many Sultan residents are pet owners and lovers.

The mission of animal control is to provide protection and service to all members of the community, both animal and human.

Through proactive public education and interaction, the City of Sultan can increase citizen's knowledge of responsible pet ownership, and animal behavior; and decrease potential cases of diseases; reduce the number of lost and abandoned animals; eliminate incidents of animal aggression and animal abuse, and reunite lost animals with their human families.

In order to achieve these goals, the City must approve the resources necessary to support an animal control program. These resources include: animal control services, transportation from short-term care to the Everett Animal Shelter, and sheltering services.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

There are three parts to an animal control program:

1. Animal control services - Responding to complaints, impounding animals, issuing citations, licensing pets, educating the public, and providing short term care.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The staff recommendation is to hire a part-time temporary employee from April 2007-December 2007 and then review the program during the 2008 budget process.

The recommendation to fund the position for 20 hours per week is to provide enough time to develop and implement a license awareness program. Staff will return to Council with a work plan following Council direction.

**Alternative:**

In lieu of hiring a part-time temporary employee, the City council could choose to contract for animal control services. The City had explored contracting for animal control services with Snohomish County. This alternative is currently not available.

The City could also look to contract for services with a neighboring city such as Monroe. Monroe recently increased their animal control staffing to address a growing need for services in the Monroe community. Negotiating a contract for service is likely to take some time. The Council would want to direct staff to begin seeking contract services immediately.

It is unclear whether there are contract services available. Contracting with an individual is complicated due to the insurance costs and indemnification requirements. Staff has explored this option and early indications is that it may be unfeasible and/or difficult to find an individual or entity to contract for services at this time.

2. Transport services – Transporting animals from Sultan's short-term holding facility to the Everett Shelter.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The staff recommendation is to contract with Snohomish County to transport animals. Snohomish County already has contracts in place with the surrounding cities of Monroe and Index. Snohomish County staff is familiar with the Everett Shelter.

The cost of the service (\$55 per trip fee) equates to approximately 4 hours of time at \$15/hour. This is approximately the same cost of service if the City's animal control officer were to transport animals from Sultan to Everett. Contracting with the County will free up the officer for other services such as education and outreach.

Even if the Council decides not to proceed with hiring or contracting for animal control services, a transport agreement with Snohomish County would be beneficial in those instances where animals are detained in Sultan and need to go to the shelter for long-term care.

**Alternative:**

Transport animals to the Everett Shelter using the City animal control van. The cost difference between in-house transport and contract transport is minimal. The one benefit to in-house services is that animals might be transported more quickly. However, in those instances where transport to the Shelter is time sensitive, the animal control officer could take the animal without having to contact the County for transport services.

3. Shelter animals – animal shelter services once a dog or cat is detained and transported from the City's short-term holding facility.

The City Council approved an interlocal agreement with Everett in January 2007 for sheltering services.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Discuss the staff recommendations and provide direction to staff.

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**COUNCIL ACTION:**

**DATE:**