

Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo- Acquisition of Zebras

ISSUE

Since July 2023, the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo (SFFPZ), on behalf of the Province of Saskatchewan (Province), has been providing care and boarding for five zebras (*Equus quagga*), under Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums guidelines, pending legal proceedings. The Province has concluded the legal proceedings and has offered to transfer ownership of the zebras to the SFFPZ. This report provides information regarding the transfer of ownership of the zebras to the SFFPZ.

BACKGROUND

On July 13, 2023, the Province confiscated five zebras (*Equus quagga*) and brought them to the SFFPZ for care under Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) guidelines. The zebras are currently under the ownership of the Province, so the daily cost of care and boarding is being reimbursed by the Province to the SFFPZ. The zebras have been housed at the SFFPZ and on display for residents and patrons to view.

In October 2023, City Council approved a [report](#) for a post budget capital project, fully funded by the Province, to construct a suitable winter habitat which would meet CAZA requirements for size and space to allow for the safe care and handling of the zebras. The construction of the habitat is being project managed by the Saskatoon Zoo Foundation. In addition, the Province agreed to reimburse the SFFPZ for the care and husbandry costs of the five zebras. The terms of the agreement with the Province for the care of the zebras expired March 31, 2024.

CURRENT STATUS

Administration has been in regular contact with the Province regarding the future of the zebras, pending conclusion of the legal proceedings. The Province has informed the City of Saskatoon (City) that the legal proceedings have concluded and the Province has offered to transfer ownership of the zebras to the SFFPZ.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Administration has reviewed the request from the Province to accept ownership of the five zebras and agreed to the transfer, effective March 31, 2024. The terms and conditions of the transfer are as follows:

- Ownership and all property rights, title and interest in the Zebras are hereby disposed of by the Crown to the City of Saskatoon.
- The City of Saskatoon accepts ownership of the Zebras and absolves the Crown from any future liability for the Zebras.
- Disposition is by donation.

- The SFFPZ confirms it is accredited through Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) at the time of the transfer of ownership of the Zebras.
- The transfer of ownership of the Zebras will take place effective March 31, 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The SFFPZ regularly adjusts its collections of animals through transfers to and from other CAZA accredited facilities across Canada and North America. This process of adding new attractions supports the SFFPZ's continued popularity as one of the most visited tourist destinations in the province, as well as its role in species protection and conservation. Since arriving at the SFFPZ, the zebras have been extremely popular with visitors and although assigning a quantitative value impact on admissions to the zebras is impossible, attendance at the SFFPZ increased when the zebras were displayed.

Administration has reviewed the current approved operating budget for 2024 and there are no incremental financial implications to the City with accepting ownership of the zebras. Administration, in anticipation of the potential opportunity to acquire the zebras, has made changes to the animal collections in late 2023 and in 2024. These changes include transfer of six Mouflon sheep in exchange for one Markhor goat, as well as plans to reduce the current deer herd. The feed, care and staff cost attributable to these reductions will offset the costs for care and husbandry of the zebras.

The agreement between the City and the Province on the construction of the new shelter included transfer of ownership of the shelter to the City when complete. The new shelter is a seasonal facility that is only utilized in the winter months as required. Administration is confident that the operational costs for 2024-2025 can be managed inside the existing operating budget through minor reprioritization of the existing budget. The full year operating implications for the seasonal facility are estimated at \$3,000 for utilities, preventative maintenance and the Civic Buildings Comprehensive Maintenance reserve.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no Public Notice, privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Administration, as part of the 2024 marketing plan for SFFPZ, will include the information regarding the zebras as a new permanent animal to visit year-round at the SFFPZ.

Report Approval

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