



STAFF REPORT

Title: Downtown Security Concerns

Meeting Date: January 19, 2021

Executive Summary:

His Worship Mayor Copeland and CAO Nagoya had a meeting with the local financial institutions inclusive of the Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was intended to raise concerns on the escalating issues relating to trespassing, pan handling, mischief and the mistreatment of property downtown in Cold Lake South. The feedback provided to the City was that the issues have been escalating even further (including in frequency and aggressiveness) over the last few months and are becoming very serious and problematic to both the public and the patrons.

Administration is raising this issue to solicit a discussion with City Council on partnering on providing financial assistance in developing an enhanced security model in partnership with the downtown businesses.

Background:

The City of Cold Lake has been evaluating scenarios and models relating to providing enhanced "security" and/or programming in the downtown area to assist with the above noted challenges. Administration has framed the discussion into three (3) components:

- Social Programing
- Enforcement/Security Programing
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Social Programing

As Council is aware, the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre is working to re-establish their Kokum's House Program and the Cold Lake John Howard Society is looking to commence a temporary shelter program as well as outreach programming. The City of Cold Lake has been assisting and working closely with both organizations. That being said, both organizations are still in the process of standing back up.

Council has also allocated \$200,000 (\$40,000 over 5 years) in their 2021 budget to develop program for the vulnerable people. FCSS and Council's advisory committee will be providing a recommendation on a final terms of reference for the funding criteria.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Alberta also amended the funding to include flexibility for assisting vulnerable people including meals which has provided assistance in Cold Lake.

The above summary is not intended to be an all-inclusive report on related social programing, however, it does seek to provide a summary of the emerging projects.

Enforcement/Security Programing

The City of Cold Lake has both the RCMP and Community Peace Officer (CPO) programs to assist with enforcement. These organizations both have recently attended meetings with local businesses facilitated by the Cold Lake Regional Chamber Commerce. These meetings received very positive feedback from the Chamber. That being said, similar to the RCMP, the CPOs receive ongoing calls for service and complaints that require follow-up. These statistics can be found in their monthly reports to the CAO. An effort to develop a program such as having CPO's patrol downtown every couple hours will have significant impact the calls of the service without adding additional resources. Administration would also like to raise the potential negative impacts of having enforcement officers frequently (frequently being a variable term) taking enforcement action.

There is also an opportunity to use security personnel. Based on our discussion, it is administration's advice to not develop such a program under the City program and service level umbrella; rather this program could be grass roots, in partnership with the businesses. This will allow the program to be responsive to individual and immediate needs which are ever changing.

In effort to develop a pilot project and allow opportunity for the businesses to develop service, evaluate success, and develop a partially or fully self-funded service, administration is proposing to provide seed funding.

In effort to give City Council an understanding of the order of magnitude: A six (6) month program would cost roughly \$50,000 (6 months):

- 9:00 pm to 8:00 am (10 hours with a 1 hour break somewhere in the shift)
- \$25 to \$30 per hour
- 10 hours per day/7 days a week/26 weeks = 1820 hours

The City of Cold Lake has allocated funding for a program relating to crime prevention. Council is awaiting for its Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to provide recommendation on an initiative. The City has restricted \$90,000 in surplus. This funding could be re-allocated to a security project as mentioned above as no recommendation have been made to-date.



Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Although there are some low hanging fruit here, this category requires a longer term strategy. That being said, as mentioned above, Council was awaiting for its Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to provide recommendation and/or priorities on the \$90,000 funding.

Alternatives:

Council could consider the following options:

- City could provide an additional resources to the CPO program and dedicate the resources to business (similar to the Energy Centre dedicated enforcement personnel);
- City could seek proposals from security companies and develop the program as a City service level;
- City could provide financial assistance to either a business association or the Chamber of Commerce to develop and host a service as a pilot project.

Recommended Action:

The intent of this report was to solicit feedback from the Corporate Priorities Committee of Council in the development of an enhanced security program for the local businesses and feedback on whether Council would like to see the support in house or provide financial assistance.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

Submitted by:

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