

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM24.9	ACTION			Ward:13
--------	--------	--	--	---------

Accepting donations to continue operation of the High Park Zoo - by Councillor Sarah Doucette, seconded by Councillor Mike Del Grande

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Sarah Doucette, seconded by Councillor Mike Del Grande recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to accept the donations for the purposes of continuing to operate the High Park Zoo.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back to the Parks and Environment Committee in 2013 on options for the ongoing operation of the High Park Zoo.

Summary

Since the Council decision to stop funding the High Park Zoo, a core group of volunteers has formed the Friends of High Park Zoo as a registered not for profit corporation. This group has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the plight of High Park Zoo. They have coordinated volunteers who have been handing out flyers and fundraising at the zoo every weekend since the beginning of March. Special events at the zoo were arranged for March Break, Easter, and Mother's Day (and activities included, children's face painting, side walk chalk and colouring). Donations were collected to feed the llamas and a colouring book was printed and available for a \$5 donation.

Friends of High Park Zoo held a public meeting April 9th and had their first board meeting May 8th. They are moving forward with their business plan and future events include a dinner and silent auction in the fall.

Zoo visitors of all ages have donated online and in the donations boxes installed in the zoo and the Grenadier Restaurant. Local residents have been active as well, holding fundraising events, which have included lemonade stands, book readings, dance events, garage sales, collecting tins of pennies, holding bake sales and selling artwork. Even Councillor Cho kindly donated folding garden rakes.

The outpouring of support from across the City has been quite overwhelming. As Council is aware, thousands of signatures were collected on petitions both online, at the zoo and independently by groups and individuals across the city to save the High Park Zoo.

The Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation (TPTF) has been instrumental in collecting the on line donations. Between February 1 and April 9, the community donated \$23,168 to the account. Since April 10, the Honey Family Foundation offer to match \$50,000 has brought in an additional \$45,608 to the TPTF account. Altogether, the TPTF donations and the Honey Family Foundation \$50,000 bring the total to \$118,776. That covers the funding of \$114,000 we need for the second half of 2012.

For 2013, we already have \$58,678 raised by the Friends of High Park Zoo this year, which is increasing every day, and a \$30,000 anonymous donation of definite funding, for a total of \$88,678, which does not include the offer from the Honey Family Foundation to match \$50,000 again.

The 2012 Operating Budget approved enough funding to continue to operate the Zoo through to the end of June, leaving a 2012 operating shortfall of \$114,000. The funds raised through TPTF, including those matching the Honey Family donation, together with the anonymous donation and ever-increasing Friends of High Park Zoo efforts cover the 2012 shortfall, and allow the Zoo to continue to operate well into 2013. This will provide the Friends of High Park Zoo time to develop a plan to continue to build support and generate sustainable revenue for the Zoo.

(Submitted to City Council on June 6 and 7, 2012 as MM24.9)

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM24.9