



City Hall
71 Main St. W., 1st Floor
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5
18 September, 2023

ATTN: City Public Works Committee

RE: Report PW23062 – Management of the Aviary at 85 Oak Knoll Drive.

We are writing in regards to the above report to request clarification of proposed recommendations (a) and (b).

We want to ensure that the recommendations are interpreted to clearly indicate that the Friends of the Aviary will **develop the Rehoming Strategy and complete re-homing of all birds housed at the Aviary**, with the support of Hamilton Animal Services and a qualified Avian veterinarian.

Proposed additions:

We are concerned that the recommendations could be interpreted to mean that Hamilton Animal Services will be directed to develop and complete re-homing with our input instead of our direction. We are a registered charity (887135010 RR0001) and also have a legal obligation to meet in executing our charitable mandate and mission to provide sanctuary to the birds. Like the City of Hamilton, we are subject to the provincial and federal laws on animal care and welfare. Additionally, we are legally and ethically obliged to operate our charity with the utmost transparency with our donors, partners and supporters. Being denied the right to participate in the birds' medical care interferes with and potentially violates the public trust placed on us to deliver our charitable mission to the community.

As the Council is aware, Friends of the Aviary (FOA) has been providing care for parrots and birds of many different species since moving to 85 Oak Knoll Drive in 1994. The FOA has already successfully used short-term medical foster placements to manage birds' medical needs, and has placed two birds in long-term placements when their care needs exceeded what was available in an aviary setting. We believe we can develop a re-homing framework that will ensure each bird is placed according to their unique needs. We have already begun developing a framework to place our beloved birds in qualified foster homes, and to continue operating in a new way as a foster-based organization.



It is our understanding based on "Aviary General Update Meeting" from August 8, 2023, that Hamilton Animal Services would be available to assist us in the re-homing process, and the City would be agreeable to long-term foster care as a suitable re-homing placement. We request that the recommendations be interpreted to be consistent with this understanding, and/or that the wording be amended to reflect the same.

Although we understand and accept the recommendation for re-homing, we hope that the Committee and ultimately Council will consider alternative recommendation two (i.e. complete a site search and continue to operate the aviary in an alternative location). We have been a "hidden treasure" in the Hamilton community for 96 years and have loved sharing the birds with the Westdale community. We continue to receive frequent requests to support community members with rehabilitating or re-homing their parrots, and we feel that we could address this need in our community if we had a permanent facility with City support.

Whatever form our organization takes in the future, we are committed to continuing to provide the best possible care for our birds, education for interested members of the community, and supporting parrots in need.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors
The Friends of the Aviary

Kimberly O'Hare
Levi Clemens
Caitlin Smyth
Marissa Casale
Emily Downs
Tom Priestly
Mirnaly Saenz de Miera
Stephanie Watson