

5.6 (a)

Charlotte Samoyloff


September 17th, 2023

Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street W
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Dear honourable and distinguished guests:

**Re: Public Works Committee meeting, September 18, 2023
PW23062: Management of the Aviary at 85 Oak Knoll Drive (Ward 1)**

Did you know that approximately 75% of parrots die before ever reaching the consumer and the majority of those that survive will eventually end up in at least 5 homes before prematurely dying? Puff Dad, Snowball, Jessie, Tia, Howard, Rosella, Rosie, Mya, Bobette, Billy, King, and Maddie, Cockatiels 1 to 6, and Zebra Finches 1 through 5 have so far beaten the odds, and all I can do is beg you... do not let them become a statistic.

I remember a story about an old man in Cambodia who, after a lifetime, worsening arthritis meant he could no longer work in the rice fields. The man became unhappy. Western doctors in the area, diagnosed him with depression and prescribed medication but the man's family refused and bought him a goat. With his goat, the old man provided milk for his village and he was no longer sad. His family explained that the goat gave him purpose. Puff Dad, Snowball, Jessie, Tia, Howard, Rosella, Rosie, Mya, Bobette, Billy, King, and Maddie, Cockatiels 1 to 6, and Zebra Finches 1 through 5 are my purpose.

But it's not just me.

In fact, countless studies show the positive impact animals have on our mental health. When it comes to parrots, a recent article suggests that because they are wild animals, often caged in very small enclosures, unable to fly, subject to deplorable conditions, socially deprived, and stressed due to rehoming, they suffer PTSD symptoms similar to their human counterparts and therefore, through the "reparative nature of compassion and empathy" are increasing being used in trauma therapies. Consequently, although it is difficult to calculate, the money saved in mental health supports for the community served by the Hamilton Aviary and its countless volunteers, possibly outweighs the cost of sheltering and vetting its residents.

I once read, that in Hawaii, you do not own your pet. You are their kahu, their protector, guardian, and steward of not just their physical existence but a piece of your own soul. Honourable and distinguished guest, I ask you on behalf of Puff Dad, Snowball, Jessie, Tia, Howard, Rosella, Rosie, Mya, Bobette, Billy, King, and Maddie, Cockatiels 1 to 6, and Zebra Finches 1 through 5, be their Kahu. Help us keep them together, safe in the arms of the Friends

of the Aviary, who diligently clean up after them, prepare food for them, socialize them, and love them. Paul Farmer, physician, activist, academic, humanitarian, and teacher, once said “The idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that is wrong with the world” and I could not agree more.

Thank you for your time,

Charlotte Samoyloff
Volunteer at the Hamilton Aviary,
Age 12

