



Date 7 December 2011

City Council Committee Report

To: Mayor Canfield & Members of Council

Fr: Karen Brown

Re: Kenora Recreation Centre Fire Route

Recommendation:

That Council hereby supports City administration in enforcement related to ensuring any fire route for a City facility, including the fire route at the Kenora Recreation Centre, is kept free and clear at all times: and

That this enforcement shall include towing of any unauthorized vehicles located on or within a signed fire route for any City facility.

Background:

At the November Health & Safety / Staff meeting for the Arena Maintenance Operators, an ongoing issue was identified with regards to vehicles being left parked in the fire route adjacent to the Kenora Recreation Centre (KRC), despite signage displayed indicating that this was a fire route, and a no parking zone, and subject to tow away. Tow away provisions had not previously been enforced.

In order to address the issue, the City first needed to confirm that that there was sufficient authority in place to tow away vehicles from the fire route, or if additional authority needed to be put in place such as through a City by-law.

Following a detailed review of the situation, including consultation with the City's solicitors, it has been confirmed that the City has sufficient authority to have vehicles towed that are left within this fire route. During this review, certain issues were identified that are currently being addressed prior to any tow away is enforced:

- Inconsistent Signage – a review of the KRC fire route by by-law enforcement noted that there was a variety of signs posted in the area, only some of which noted the route as a fire route. New signage is being ordered by the recreation department and will be posted, clearly advising of the fire route, that there is no parking, and vehicles will be subject to tow away.

- Lack of past enforcement – while signed a no parking area, and with some signs indicating that it is a tow away zone, the tow away has never been enforced. Patrons are now used to parking in that area, despite the current signage. The recreation department has begun verbal communications with the offenders to forewarn them that they will be towing vehicles, and is also looking into developing notices that will be placed on vehicles while the new signage is on order.

It is worth noting that the Section 2.5.1.3 of the Ontario Fire Code states that “fire access routes shall be maintained so as to be immediately ready for use at all times by fire department vehicles”. At current, this is not being done, and poses a potential liability for the City. This issue needs to be addressed on a forward basis.

The intent of this report is first and foremost to provide Council with information related to this situation, including advance warning that the City will be enforcing a tow away provision in the fire lane at the KRC. Secondly, and while not required, it is to obtain Council support of this enforcement through Council resolution. This will both ensure the public is aware of Council’s support on this matter, as well as have the matter publicly discussed at an open meeting of Council to assist with communications.

Other enforcement that the City may continue pursuing on a forward basis may include the development of set fines for parking within a fire route for a City facility, although this is not being actively pursued at this time.

Budget:

The City will enter into a contract for towing services, where costs for the tow would be borne by the vehicle owner directly when the vehicle is recovered.

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:

Improved and consistent signage will be posted at the KRC fire route, as well as communication to individuals currently parking in this area during the period the new signage is on order, prior to commencing towing.

Cc: Colleen Neil
Mary Anne Mooring