

MOTION

6. Plebiscite on Phasing Out Cetaceans in Captivity in the Vancouver Aquarium

At the Regular Council meeting on Tuesday, April 29, 2014, Vancouver City Council referred this matter to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transportation and Environment meeting on Wednesday, April 30, 2014, to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Councillor Carr

SECONDED by Councillor Affleck

WHEREAS

1. There is considerable scientific evidence that cetaceans (whales and dolphins) are sentient beings with complex social relations that naturally are accustomed to living in large habitats (belugas, for example, travelling 11 to 30 km per day and deep diving up to 800 m) and that suffer distress and premature death in captivity in aquarium pools;
2. Large and globally renown aquariums, such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Maui Ocean Centre and the Sydney Sea Life Aquarium in Australia, are financially successful without holding cetaceans captive;
3. The Vancouver Aquarium's current \$100 million expansion plans to accommodate more dolphins and up to ten whales has prompted citizens concerned about the ethics of keeping cetaceans in captivity and contradictions with Vancouver's aim to become the world's "greenest city", to call for a plebiscite on keeping whales and dolphins in the Vancouver Aquarium;
4. The Park Board passed a motion November 27, 2006, to review in 2015 the Parks Control By-law regarding captive cetaceans at the Aquarium in Stanley Park;
5. The November 15, 2014, Civic Election offers an opportunity to survey the opinion of electors through a non-binding plebiscite on the ballot—a democratic process that can educate and engage the public as well as inform and guide subsequent Park Board decisions;
6. Under the Vancouver Charter, City Council, not the Park Board, has the authority to submit a plebiscite question to the electors;
7. Mayor Gregor Robertson has expressed the hope that the Aquarium and the Park Board can work collaboratively and come to an agreement on how to achieve phasing out the holding of whales and dolphins in captivity (the *Vancouver Sun* April 9, 2014, *CBC News* April 10, 2014) but there is no guarantee that this would occur prior to the November 15, 2014, Civic Election or prior to the commencement of the 2015 Parks Control By-law Review or prior to the start of construction of expanded whale and dolphin pools by the Aquarium.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT unless, prior to the six week deadline for Council to arrange a plebiscite question for the November 15, 2014, ballot, a decision has been reached between the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Aquarium to phase out keeping cetaceans in captivity, Council will arrange a plebiscite question on phasing out existing cetacean exhibits located in Vancouver on land leased by the Park Board.