

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PHOENIX ELEMENTARY RENTAL FROM THE SALT SPRING CHAPTER OF THE BCSPCA

Date: March 15th 2025

Our local chapter of the BC SPCA would like to submit our expression of interest to rent the old Phoenix Elementary School property. We understand that presently, and perhaps for 12-18 months, only the top floor is available for rent.

As the largest animal welfare organization of its kind in Canada, the BC SPCA leads the way in animal care and management. We help abandoned, abused, injured and homeless animals, and run preventative programs around the province to address the root causes of animal suffering. Our work is evidence-based, using the best available scientific and professional knowledge about the welfare of all animals.

For many years now, the Salt Spring branch of the BC SPCA has been housed in the basement of the Gulf Islands Veterinary Clinic on Lower Ganges Rd. The 450 sq ft. space significantly limits the services we are able to provide that would help both the people and animals of Salt Spring Island.

We would like to express our interest in moving into the top floor of the former Phoenix school as soon as possible and expand to the main floor when it becomes available.

The Salt Spring SPCA serves our community on many fronts:

- We take in stray or unwanted cats
- We help capture, neuter and find homes for the many feral cats on Salt Spring
- We foster unwanted kittens and find them good homes
- We respond to calls regarding free-roaming dogs and attempt to find their owners (we have no place to house dogs at our facility)
- We board cats when their owners must leave their home (for medical, safety, or other reasons)
- We supply pet food, supplies and information to the community

With a location at the former Phoenix school, we would be able to:

- Hold education seminars on dog training, animal behaviour, pet first aid, nutrition etc. for the Salt Spring community
- Provide resources to enable people and companion animals to stay together
- Working compassionately and proactively with vulnerable populations to keep animals out of shelters and with their families

- Assist individuals in the community who are struggling to access services to care for their pets.
- Further develop and execute intervention and prevention strategies, such as targeted outreach and empowering community, to achieve a reduction in the need for direct animal care
- Designate an isolation room for cats when they arrive at the shelter (this is important because cats carry many infectious viruses that are life-threatening to other cats)
- Help the CRD with the increasing problem of stray dogs on Salt Spring Island

A community member who encounters a stray dog would be able to call the SPCA and a staff member would either come to retrieve the dog, or the finder could bring it to the shelter. SPCA staff would be able to check whether the dog has ID or a microchip and if so, contact the owner. The Phoenix property would give us the ability to house the dog in a safe and comfortable environment while staff attempt to reunite the dog with its owner (this process often takes 1-2 days). Although rare, if we are not able to find the owner, the dog could be transferred to the Duncan or Victoria branch. We understand that the CRD has an expectation to pay for this service which would help the SPCA offset our costs. We are suggesting a monthly rental fee of \$750.

Our staff are committed to the BC SPCA's mission of protecting vulnerable animals and mobilizing communities so animals and people thrive together. We are professional, responsible and would prove to be excellent tenants for this new CRD facility. Please consider the SPCA for this rental opportunity so that we may continue to provide and expand valuable services for the community.

NOTE: Given how important this organization is for Salt Spring, it would be a great risk to give up our present location and move to Drake Rd without some guarantee that we would be secure. In order to offer the services we would like to, we would certainly need to occupy the main floor as a minimum.

Submitted respectfully by,

Jerry Lewandowski
Rachael Gilliam

Salt Spring SPCA

