

City looking to help out with day care shortage [CA-AB]^[1]

Author: Crush, Kevin

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Faced with an existing shortage of day-care spaces and exasperated by the possibility of one centre shutting down, the city will look into the idea of becoming involved in child care.

In the past, Grande Prairie has helped out local day cares but has moved away from that kind of a service.

Now with an age crunch, a booming city, and with some day cares apparently unable to make a profit in this market, something may have to be done, said Ald. Bill Given.

"In a community where we have more four-year-olds than 65-year-olds, day care and child care is a very important issue," said Given following Tuesday's community development committee meeting.

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On a motion by Given, city staff will take a look at day cares in Grande Prairie to get an overall picture of how day cares are faring in the city, and if there are gaps to explore ways that the city might be able to fill them.

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Grande Prairie has, in the past, provided environments where the city built a building and allowed a day care to buy it back from the city.

Mayor Wayne Ayling said it might be an option to look at that kind of model again, although he noted there are other day-care centres operating without any support from the local government.

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The Conservative government did put in place a program to give money to parents with children under five so they can better afford day care. Given doesn't know if that will help over time and said Grande Prairie doesn't have the time to wait.

"In a rapidly growing community like Grande Prairie we don't have the ability to wait for a long-term solution to solidify over time. We need to take action as the needs of our community warrants it."

- reprinted from Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune

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