

**Animal Control By-law Review Working Group Minutes
Tuesday 17 January 2017 at 4:30p.m, Avon Room**

Present: Ken Wood, Sharon Morrice, Christopher Koslowski
Maxine Watson, Pamela Bartlett, Ed Dujlovic, Stephanie Potter

Regrets: Kimberley Kempen, Jack Kinch (no longer on committee)

1.0 Review Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2016 were approved by the working group.

2.0 Discussion of Bylaw Review Items

2.1 Banning the sale of pets in pet stores

- The working group restated that this discussion would be limited strictly to the sale of cats and dogs
- It was suggested that instead of debating a “pet sale ban,” we should be discussing “pet sale control,” i.e.:
 - Should a pet store be able to sell cats and dogs from any source? It was suggested that the City should determine what constitutes a legitimate source (i.e. – registered rescue, shelter, non-profit, etc.);
 - Pet sale control could also constitute prohibiting the sale of cats or dogs that have not been spayed or neutered;
 - Further regulations could be placed on where the animals are sourced;
 - Regulations could be placed on certification requirements;
 - A distinction should be made between selling and adopting out cats and dogs.
- It was noted that kittens can be fixed at 8 weeks or when they weigh 2 pounds
- It was noted that stray dogs are not a big problem in Stratford because they do not have litters at the same rate as unaltered cats
- It was noted that Ruffin’s Pet Store gets calls daily asking if they can sell litters of puppies at their store; the Ruffin’s will not take puppies if they cannot conduct an onsite visit of the source
- It was further stated that Ruffin’s cannot get an adequate inventory of puppies through rescue agencies because rescues rarely have puppies
- At present, pet stores must provide certification to show where a puppy has come from, anyone can ask for this
- There are no sourcing requirements for cats
- Ruffin’s is willing to partner with rescue organizations to sell rescue kittens in the store, and is willing to try to find a way to make selling only altered kittens work if it is not cost prohibitive (ie – if spay/neuters can be done at low cost through a high-volume clinic – at present there is no high volume clinic in Stratford)

- It was suggested that the City could work with the humane society to set up a high volume clinic when our contract for animal control services is renewed this year, as many people want to have their pets fixed but can't afford to do it
- It was further suggested that the City consider subsidizing low cost spay/neuter clinics; a coalition could be formed to help with this
- It was also suggested that Ruffin's should try to find a vet that might work with them for low-cost spay/neuters
- It was noted that rescue organizations and vets are less likely to do spay and neuters at low cost for a business selling cats and dogs for profit, typically this is done for non-profit rescue organizations
- It was suggested that any licensing revenue that the City receives for animals should go towards the care of animals to reinforce the belief that animals have value
- It was noted that all of the efforts made in the City of Toronto have all helped to reduce the cat shelter intake by 55% since 2011, including trap-neuter-return programs and banning the sale of pets in pet stores
- Ruffin's is open to establishing a working relationship with rescue organizations and high volume spay/neuter clinics and/or local vets

2.2 Limiting the number of pets allowed per household

- It was agreed that the current bylaw works well as it is with respect to pet limitations – if changes need to be made, Calgary was suggested as a model
- It was noted that limiting the number of pets does not address pet hoarding issues, these issues are separate mental health issues
- It is also not clear that we have a hoarding issue in Stratford, rescue representatives stated that they have seen very few cases. The City more often gets calls about people not cleaning up after their dogs in their yards. It was suggested that the Humane Society might be able to provide some raw data

2.3 Limiting the amount of dogs per owner allowed in the off-leash Stratford Dog Park

- The off-leash dog park is run by the Stratford Dog park Association – this policy falls under their jurisdiction
- A representative will be invited to a future ACWG meeting to discuss the issues they may have

2.4 Cats running at large/Leashing of Cats

- It was generally agreed that cats must be able to run at large given the feral population and trap-neuter-return program
- It is too difficult to expect all cats with homes to wear collars at all times – they often remove them and they can also be hazardous if caught on something, this part of the bylaw should be changed

- It was suggested that cats running at large must always be microchipped to ensure that they can be identified, returned to their homes, and have their vaccination records confirmed
- This should be more of an education piece – an outcome of this working group should be figuring out how to promote responsible pet ownership (see Calgary example).

3.0 Review Draft Survey

Survey questions were suggested as follows:

- Should the current Animal Control Bylaw remain as is?
- Should all cats and dogs not used for breeding be spayed/neutered?
- Should microchipping be the form of licensing?
- Should the limit of three unaltered cats/dogs be changed?
- Do we have enough off-leash dog parks in Stratford
- Is there a lack of enforcement for off-leash dogs in Stratford?

4.0 Next Steps:

A draft survey will be circulated before a future meeting for feedback and contributions.

Items to be resolved at next meeting (February 2017):

Pet Sale Control

Number of Pets per Household

Limiting the number of dogs at the off-leash park (depending on Dog Park Association availability)

Cats running at large/leashing of cats

New Items to discuss (February 2017):

Waiving licensing fees for rescue pets;

Revisions and/or updates to definitions in the bylaw

Allowing chickens as pets

Items to be reviewed at March/April 2017 Meeting(s):

- Updating business licensing criteria for Pet Stores;
- Updating licensing requirements for breeders;
- Updates to the standards of animal care requirements;
- Enforcement issues

5.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.