

Responsible Pet Ownership

Governance and Priorities Meeting

January 15, 2024

Responsible Pet Ownership

Background

- 2021 Election campaign feedback
- Strategic Plan
- Scope of review

Outline

- Animal Licensing
- Cat regulations
- Other considerations

Responsible Pet Ownership

Licensing

- Jurisdictional scan (Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Leduc, Lethbridge, Lethbridge County, Parkland County, St. Albert, and Stony Plain)
- City of Spruce Grove removed requirement for licensing in 2016
- City Bylaw still requires identification tag and contact information
- City had consistent reunification numbers and higher than other local municipalities
- Licensing has no tangible impact or benefit on enforcement action
- Licensed animals to actual animals ranges on average between 10 - 20 per cent
- Main benefit tied to revenue generation only (minimal for Spruce Grove)

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Cat Regulations

- Contemplated several times by previous Councils
- Jurisdictional scan (Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Leduc, Lethbridge, St. Albert, Strathcona County, Stony Plain, Spruce Grove)
- Regulation of cats split evenly. Lethbridge, St. Albert, Strathcona County, and Spruce Grove do not regulate cats and the other four comparators do.
- Largest percentage of animal complaints associated with dogs (average around 10 per cent for cats)
- Regulating dogs vs. cats
- Reunification rates for impounded dogs 90 per cent+ and 26 per cent for cats
- Higher vet bills and impound costs for cats

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Spruce Grove Processes

- A resident can call Enforcement Services and pick up a cat trap if they have a concern (free of charge but with a deposit in case of damage)
- If animal is trapped, resident takes to shelter and returns the trap
- City pays impound fees/vet bills (if owner is connected to animal the City can recoup costs)
- Minimal officer time required

Processes for Municipalities that regulate cats

- A resident calls Enforcement Services and picks up a cat trap (free of charge with deposit)
- If animal is trapped, resident calls Enforcement Services who then picks up animal and takes to shelter
- Municipality pays impound fees/vet bills (if owner is connected to animal the municipality can recoup costs)
- Picking up, processing animal, file creation, etc. takes roughly three hours of officer time per incident

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Other Considerations

- Hens/Bees - separate work and regulations ongoing
- “Livestock” animals as domesticated pets
 - Ambiguity in existing City of Spruce Grove Bylaws
 - Regardless of Committee’s desire clarity is needed
 - Direction on whether to allow or not allow
 - Jurisdictional scan (excluding Spruce Grove) had two that allowed (Stony Plain and St. Albert) if domesticated as household pets and five that did not allow
- Bylaw name change

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Recommendations/Options

Licensing

- Not recommending re-introducing licensing
 - High rates of reunification with identification provisions
 - No benefit to enforcement action
 - Licensing is minimal to actual number of animals
 - Return on Investment (ROI) minimal after considering time and other costs
- Committee/Council desires to re-introduce licensing
 - Initial set-up is resource heavy
 - Would require a pause or delay in other identified CityView implementation priorities
 - Estimated three - five months of set up, communications, roll out, etc.
 - 100 - 200 hours of ongoing administrative work not currently part of departmental plans
 - One-time start up costs of approximately \$60,000; \$4,000 annual support fees
 - \$50,000 estimated annual revenue

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Recommendations/Options

Cat Regulations

- Not recommending introducing cat regulations
 - Small percentage of complaints
 - Consistent impound and reunification numbers to those that regulate cats
 - Unlikely to change owner behaviours
 - ROI minimal after considering officer time and other costs
 - Increase public information/education and communications regardless
- Committee/Council desires to introduce cat regulations
 - Additional officer resources required or understanding that other priorities will be impacted
 - Estimated 300 - 450 additional officer hours
 - Increased impound/vet fees likely

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Recommendations/Options

- Recommendation to change bylaw name to Responsible Pet Ownership
- Recommendation to add clarity regarding “other” animals dependant on Committee/Council feedback

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Questions/Discussion

1. Continue with current practice of not licensing animals in the City of Spruce Grove?
2. Continue with current practice of not regulating cats in the City of Spruce Grove?
3. Support the bylaw name change to Responsible Pet Ownership?
4. Allow or not allow “livestock” animals in the City of Spruce Grove except where allowed in the Land Use Bylaw?