



To: Council
From: Fire Chief Gilles Crepeau
Date of Meeting: November 25, 2020
Subject: Responsible Pet Ownership Program

Background:

The Township is currently reviewing the Township’s current animal services as result of time passed, best practices, complaints received and Council’s direction. This project is intended to, upon final delivery and approval, replace the current Dog Licensing and Control By-law and the Cat limit By-law. The intention is to develop a Responsible Pet Ownership Program that focuses on providing guidelines and requirements that will help ensure the health and safety of residents and animals in the Township.

Discussion:

The current by-laws have served the community for numerous years. However, ineffectiveness in addressing problems related to public safety and owner responsibility indicates the need for a redesign of the program. The adoption and implementation of a new and updated by-law would go a long way in better addressing these areas.

To date, staff has researched cat licensing, cat and dog limits, kennel regulations and operational kennel requirements. The “Responsible Pet Ownership By-law” will be drafted through further review of the identified items, a public consultation process and recommendations to Council.

The following items are being considered for review:

Licensing

The Township currently requires dog licensing but does not require cat licensing. Although some municipalities have implemented a cat licensing system, these municipalities usually have a greater population of residents than the Township of South Stormont.

As a result of research undertaken, it is estimated that the cost of a cat licensing program will be similar to the cost of the current dog licensing program. These costs include tags, a door to door salesperson (every other year) and the expenditures related to the Animal Control Officer contract. Going forward, the Township may consider not contracting with a door-to door salesperson. Of note, presently kennel costs are shared with 3 neighbouring municipalities. Additionally, enforcement by the Municipal Law Enforcement Officer and staff time to

administer the licensing program will be required. This cost is not identified in the table below.

Dog Licensing Costs			
Year	2018	2019	2020 to date
Tags	\$542.38	\$749.63	\$752.34
Door-to-Door Sales Agent Commission	N/A	\$13,455.99	N/A
Animal Control Costs	\$15,166.04	\$15,554.86	\$11,808.36
Shared Kennel Costs (with South Dundas)	\$15,386.54	\$15,436.29	\$6,743.04
Total Costs	\$31,094.96	\$45,196.77	\$19,303.74

Total Revenue	\$36,450.00	\$39,420.00	\$25,285.00
Net Total	\$5,355.04	-\$5,776.77	\$5,981.26

For reference, this table provides a summary of dog related calls, complaints and mileage. Should the Township proceed with the licensing of cats, budget will be required to address similar numbers for the control for cats.

Animal Control Summary from 2018 to 2020			
Complaints		Animal Control Officer	By-Law Enforcement Officer
2018	Dogs Collected	42	N/A
	Dog Complaints	92	42
	Mileage (km)	5891km	N/A
2019	Dogs Collected	33	N/A
	Dog Complaints	66	44
	Mileage (km)	4407km	N/A
2020 to date	Dogs Collected	13	N/A
	Dog Complaints	27	44
	Mileage (km)	2223km	N/A

Survey responses show 55% of respondents said the Township should license cat and 45% of respondents said the Township should not license cats.

The Township's current Animal Control Officer does not have the facility, equipment or available resources to capture or house cats at this time. Should the Township require cat licensing, a kennel facility is required to keep cats found at large until owners are found and an adoption program to have stray cats adopted or euthanized.

In addition to the above, staff have considered the current contract for animal control services, being the Animal Control Officer and Kennel Facility. Presently this contract is joint with 3 neighbouring municipalities. Should the Township wish to proceed with the licensing of cats and the neighbouring municipalities not wish

to proceed in this regard, the cost for kennel services for cats would be borne solely by the Township of South Stormont.

Because of cost and resources currently available, staff are not considering recommending that the Township require cat licensing at this time.

Kennels

The Township's Zoning By-law No. 2011-100 currently permits kennels in rural and agricultural zones only. It also requires that kennel be at least 150m from dwellings located on other lots, 100m of vacant lots having 2ha or less and must be at least 30m from their property line. Survey results show residents would like to see similar property requirements and minimum operational requirements to operate a kennel, catteries or animal shelters/rescues.

Survey results indicate that respondents would like property regulations to apply to permitted locations of kennels. The top four answers being the same for kennels, catteries and animal shelters:

- Someone must reside on the property,
- Minimum distances to lot line and dwelling on other lot lines,
- Must be located outside urban areas only; and
- Must have a minimum lot size.

Animal Control

The Township's current by-laws do not include cat related animal control issues such as letting owned cats roam at large and keeping cats on a leash when off their property. Based on feedback received, many residents voiced that they would like cat owners to be accountable for their cats similar to how dog owners are accountable for their dogs.

The Township's current Cat Limit By-law also addresses the feeding of cats, it writes: "No person shall place food designed for or attractive to cats outside of any dwelling unit or in front, rear or side yards." Staff has received feedback from residents who support the feeding of stray/feral cats. Staff has also received requests to prohibit the feeding of stray/feral cats. Prohibiting the feeding of stray cats could help limit the number of stray/feral cats and other wildlife in our villages. The Township also understands that the placing of food can be used as part of a Trap, Neuter and Release (TNR) program in order to control the growing population of stray cats. Staff are suggesting that the Responsible Pet Ownership By-law prohibit the feeding or the placing of food in a manner that is accessible to stray/feral cats. This regulation would not apply to organizations looking to use food in order to attract stray/feral cats as part of a Township approved Trap, Neuter, Release program.

Exotic Animals

Exotic pets are not only animals from outside of Canada, they are wild animals or animals not considered "normal" household pets. Many municipalities are currently prohibiting the keeping of exotic pets in their Township to ensure the safety of

both residents and the animals. The Township has received inquiries for various exotic cats, reptiles, foxes and birds in the last few years. Staff are proposing the establishment of regulations for the keeping of exotic animals.

Conclusion

To conclude, based on the information above, staff intend to proceed with a comprehensive "Responsible Pet Ownership By-law" based on:

- Not licensing cats,
- Improved kennel regulations to include dogs, cats, animal rescues and shelters,
- Animal control regulations for dogs and cats,
- Prohibit the feeding of stray/feral cats unless the organization is participating in an approved TNR program; and
- Inclusion of regulations for exotic animals.

Staff are seeking Council's input and clarification of direction in this regard.

In coming weeks, a draft by-law will be prepared and posted on the Township's website for public consultation and ultimately adoption of a new "Responsible Pet Ownership By-law".

Prepared by:

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