

## **Animal Control By-law Review Working Group Minutes Tuesday 28 February 2017 at 4:30p.m, Falstaff Room**

Present: Ken Wood, Sharon Morrice, Christopher Koslowski (via conference call), Kimberley Kempen, Pamela Bartlett, Gail Blanchard-Arsenault Ed Dujlovic, Stephanie Potter

### **1.0 Review minutes of previous meeting**

Revisions were suggested to the 17 January 2017 minutes. A revised draft will be brought forward at the next meeting.

### **2.0 Pet Sale Control**

- One member stated that spaying and neutering should remain status quo, the choice should remain with the owner
  - Others noted that the status quo is not responsible, spay and neuters and adoptions need to be encouraged
  - It was stated that Ruffin's fully supports the spay and neuter of pets, but not before they are sold
  - Others stated that compliance is not assured with that approach, therefore spay and neuters must be carried out before cats and dogs go to their new homes
  - One member noted that the price point to spay and neuter before an animal is sold makes it cost prohibitive for a business
  - It was again noted that low-cost spay and neuters are not intended for for-profit businesses
  - It was suggested that it is still possible to carry out spay and neuters and still make a profit
  - It was noted that the cost to adopt a cat from a rescue organization that has already been spayed or neutered and is fully vaccinated is far less than it is to buy a cat at a pet store and pay for altering and vaccinations on your own – adoption fees are minimal
- The following motion was put forward for the working group to consider recommending to Stratford City Council:

**That Cats and Dogs may only be offered for sale in Stratford pet stores if they come from registered Humane Societies and/or reputable animal rescue organizations (as defined by the City);**

**And That Cats and Dogs may only be offered for sale in Stratford pet stores after they have been spayed or neutered.**

- The recommendation was approved by the working group as follows:

- 4 in favour
- 1 opposed
- 1 abstained from voting
- This recommendation will be forwarded to Stratford City Council for their consideration.

### **3.0 Limiting the Number of Pets Allowed Per Household**

- The working group still feels there is no benefit to limiting the number of spayed/neutered pets per household so long as standards of care are met
- Limiting the number of altered pets allowed per household may prevent responsible pet owners from adopting more animals that they are capable of caring for
- Limiting the number of altered pets per household will not prevent animal hoarding, as hoarding is a mental health issue
- The OSPCA/Humane Society representative confirmed that animal hoarding is not a big issue in Stratford
- Education on proper pet ownership and bylaw enforcement are considered better courses of action than restricting the number of spayed/neutered cats and dogs per home
- The working group agreed that the following recommendation will be made to Stratford City Council:

**That the current Animal Control Bylaw remains as it is with respect to the number of pets allowed per household (no more than 3 unaltered cats; no more than 3 unaltered dogs; no limitation to dogs and cats that have been spayed or neutered).**

### **4.0 Cats At large**

- The working group does not wish to prohibit cats from roaming at large, however, they would like to advocate that cats be kept indoors, as indoor cats live longer healthier lives
- The following recommendation will be made to Stratford City Council:

**That the current Animal Control Bylaw remains as it is with respect to cats being allowed to roam at large;**

**And that advocacy for cats being kept indoors be included as part of a public education program.**

## **5.0 Waiving Licencing Fees for Rescue Pets**

- It was suggested that waiving licencing fees for rescue pets might encourage more people to adopt pets, or waiving fees for the first year
- It was suggested that the cost of licencing is not cost prohibitive when adopting an animal, it is a small fee and a source of revenue for the Humane Society. Waiving this fee will bring that revenue down
- It was noted that Feline Friends has never had an issue with licencing fees
- It was also suggested that indicating how much it costs to care for an animal on an annual basis should be part of an education program
- The working group feels that this matter has been resolved – no action will be taken

## **6.0 Backyard Chickens**

- A resident letter in support of backyard chickens was distributed and along with an example of guidelines for backyard chickens from the City of Kingston
- Some concerns were raised around animal welfare – that residents with no experience with chickens may not know how to care for them, provide climate control, proper diet, veterinary care, and adequate space
- Questions were raised over appropriate minimum setbacks from neighboring property lines
- Chickens are flock animals and 3-5 are needed; a minimum square footage of space should be required for each bird
- Secure fencing is a concern, as predatory wild animals may be able to access insecure chicken coops
- The humane society noted that they have not received any complaints about backyard chickens in Stratford
- It was noted that chickens live for 10 years but only lay eggs for 3
- If this were initiated in Stratford, it could be done as a pilot project
- Halifax and Kitchener may have processes we could follow
- Building and installation of an appropriate chicken coop could cost \$1000-\$1200 before feed and veterinary care/climate control are factored in
- Questions were raised regarding public health concerns/risks of salmonella; a representative from the Health Unit will be invited to our next meeting to speak to this issue
- This item was referred to the next meeting

## **7.0 Public Survey**

- The working group would like to initiate a public survey as soon as possible

- Action Items:
  - A draft survey will be circulated to the working group for comment via e-mail in the next two weeks
  - The survey will be finalized at our next meeting

## **8.0 General Discussion**

- It was suggested that as many vendors as possible should sell pet licenses, and it should be made clear to people that the revenue generated by licensing goes directly to the care of animals
- Wildlife policies have been referred to a future meeting, including a policy or education piece that will inform the public about urban wildlife and what to do when you find an injured or distressed animal, and banning the feeding of wildlife
- It was suggested that a representative from Upper Thames be invited to speak to wildlife issues
- Updates to the city website are suggested to complement the education piece; dedicating a page to animal care, humane treatment, licensing, wildlife, emergency animal services/24 hour vet care, animal control and OSPCA contacts, and information on how to report abuse
- It was noted that the standards of animal care section of the bylaw should be updated according to OSPCA minimum standards of care
- Creating standards of care for animals in pet stores should be considered as part of the update to the standards of animal care
- May also consider including restrictions on how long animals can be tethered in back yards

## **8.0 Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:12pm.