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Date: June 24, 2019

To: Mayor and Council

Author: Roberta Baines, Deputy Clerk – Administrative Services

RE: Animal Control - Cats

Report No.: CS-12-2019

AIM

To provide Mayor and Council with an overview of animal control relating to cats.

BACKGROUND

On May 7, 2019, a complaint was received through the Kingsville Works email regarding cats and the need for better animal control enforcement. Corporate Services also received a delegation request from a resident who is seeking a cat licensing by-law.

The Town's current animal control by-law (By-law 23-2001 Keeping of Animals) states in section 2(b) that no person shall keep in any urban area more than three (3) cats. The fine for contravention to this section of the by-law is \$105. Urban area is defined as those areas within the Town of Kingsville that are zoned residential. Also, section 5(a) states that no person who owns any animal shall permit such animal to be at large within the Town of Kingsville. This also carries a \$105 fine, but proving cat ownership is a challenge.

DISCUSSION

The issue of cats trespassing on neighbouring properties is not new. In addition to the Town's animal control by-laws, there have been two initiatives implemented over the years to help control the cat population. In 2005, the Town entered into an agreement with the Humane Society for the Cat Intake Program. The intent of this program is to control the number of stray cats (lost and abandoned pets) running at large within the Town. The Humane Society acts as the drop-off location for residents to drop off these stray cats. When cats are brought in, they are examined, vaccinated, spayed or neutered if needed, and either put up for adoption or released back in the area. Since its inception, over 1600 cats have been brought in to the Humane Society. In 2011, the cat intake program peaked

at 210 cats and since 2015 it has been holding steady at an average of 113 cats per year brought in by Kingsville residents.

A second initiative, the Spay or Neuter Voucher Program, was implemented in 2014. This program is designed to help control the overpopulation of feral cats. With the implementation of the ear-tipping requirement in 2017 for feral cats, this program continues to be in high demand with residents. (Please see information leaflet attached as Appendix A). All of the vouchers for 2019 have been issued and there is a waiting list of residents wanting vouchers. Each voucher is worth \$75 and is valid for 90 days. Trapping the feral cat is a challenge and the main reason why some vouchers are not redeemed. Expired and unused vouchers are re-issued as new vouchers to residents on the waiting list.

Licensing cats is not as common as dog licensing. Some of the larger municipalities across the province such as Guelph, London, Toronto and Brampton have imposed mandatory cat licensing. Interestingly, in the City of Hamilton, registration is voluntary. Residents are encouraged to buy a cat registration tag for a one-time fee of \$13 to help their lost or strayed cat return to their homes. None of the municipalities in Essex County license cats. Instead, those municipalities have implemented by-laws to limit the number of cats per dwelling.

Kingsville shares animal control services with the Municipality of Leamington, including operation of the pound facilities. The Town's Animal Control Officer is not authorized to seize and impound cats found running at large. Such authority is outside the scope of the contract and is not provided for within any Town by-laws. Moreover, the Town does not have the facilities to house impounded cats. As previously mentioned, the Town regulates the number of cats per household in an urban area and the Animal Control Officer can enforce this provision of the by-law.

In addition to the animal control contract and by-law restrictions, the following are some additional reasons why the Town would not be able to implement cat licensing:

- Lack of office staff and by-law enforcement resources
- Lack of facilities to house impounded cats
- Budget constraints
- Contract provider for animal control does not have the staff resources

Aside from moving to a licensing regime, there are other means to address this issue and enhance the policies and programs currently in effect:

- When the animal control by-law is reviewed and consolidated, there may be an opportunity to strengthen the language dealing with responsible pet ownership and nuisance control.
- Additional advertising may assist to further promote the Spay/Neuter and Cat Intake Programs.
- Council may want to consider increasing the budget in 2020 for the Spay/Neuter Program given its demand.

Whether it be letting the pet cat roam outdoors beyond their control, feeding strays or taking care of a feral cat colony, residents need to take responsibility and help prevent neighbourhood conflicts from arising. Responsible pet owners make good neighbours.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Animal Control Officer for Kingsville
Windsor Essex Humane Society

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the report relating to licensing of cats for information purposes.

Roberta Baines

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Deputy Clerk – Administrative Services

Jennifer Astrologo

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