

Petition Against New Bylaw Limiting Number of Household Pets

Background – In 2009 City Council put forth a proposal to streamline the amalgamated Hamilton municipal territory Animal Control By-laws. This affects the following areas:

- Ancaster
- Dundas
- Flamborough
- Glanbrook
- Hamilton
- Stoney Creek and;
- The successor to the former Regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth

Petition Received
February 8, 2012
511 Signatures

At this point committees were appointed to educate themselves, hold public meetings with advisors and experts relating to different fields that the by-laws were affecting, and plan a new and improved proposal to be called the **Responsible Animal Ownership By-Law**.

On November 15, 2011 a Special Planning Committee Meeting was held to hear public input on the proposed Responsible Animal Ownership By-law. A proposal was drawn up and presented to City Council on January 12, 2012 for debate.

On the issue of “**Pet Limits**”, after exhaustive research, public input, looking at what other communities had adopted and different successful no limit clauses; it was presented to City Councilors that enough significant positive support was received for eliminating pet limits. These were the reasons presented:

- Pet limits were originally established on an arbitrary basis to enable the municipality to deal with problem situations. Staff has reviewed the details of complaints regarding exceeding the pet limit, and determined that virtually all of the situations could have been more effectively addressed under nuisance by-laws (i.e. Noise, Yard Maintenance etc.).
- Records indicate that less than 100 complaints related to the number and types of animal are received per year and, of these, there is only evidence to support laying of less than 10 Provincial Offence Notices (PON) per year. Hoarding issues are dealt with by the HBSPCA with Hamilton Animal Services providing support where necessary. Complaints often result from broader neighbor disputes (tattle-tale) when the number of animals is not causing any identifiable problem.
- The municipal “best practice” appears to be the Calgary where there is no pet limit on the number of animals, as several municipalities are eliminating their pet limits.

After asking for public feedback from experts and professionals. City Council simply said “Thank You” for all your hard work and then ignored what the public demanded, setting a limit of a maximum 4 pets per household

What does This Mean to You? Technically, you will be breaking City By-law if:

- You have more than 4 fish in an aquarium
- You have pets wherein the resulting babies (puppies, kittens, hamsters) bring the total to more than 4
- You have 2 dogs, 2 cats and 1 bird (or various other mixtures)
- You are a full/part time animal breeder who raises animals for supplemental income