

Hamilton/Burlington SPCA Submission to Planning Committee City of Hamilton



Amendment to City of Hamilton By-Law 12-031, As Amended, For
Responsible Animal Ownership in the City of Hamilton and Implementation
of Annual Cat Licensing Fees



Introduction

The HBSPCA commends the City for its commitment to responsible pet ownership, the apparent scope of inquiry into cat licensing and references to cat population strategies.

We understand that the Report in front of Planning Committee on Tuesday November 15, 2016 is a response to Council's direction that Staff examine

- the feasibility of implementing a cat licensing program in the urban area, and
- any resources available to
 - increase the micro chipping registration of cats and
 - strategically manage the over population of cats in Hamilton

The community's Hamilton/Burlington SPCA practices and promotes pathways for healthy safe and wanted cats to address the root problem of too many cats:

- Spay/neuter
- Preventative care, and
- Micro chip

These cat population strategies are alive and growing in the City of Hamilton. At the Hamilton/Burlington SPCA these strategies touch more cats every year with the support of donors and in active partnership with inner city neighbourhoods, Community Veterinary Outreach for pro bono pet health care for very low income pet parents, rescue groups, PetSmart Charities, and, Royal Canin, Cat Healthy and College of Veterinarians of Ontario.

Recommendations

That cat licensing be considered in the context of a community wide plan for healthy safe and wanted cats.

That a business case for cat licensing

- Be informed by current and future strategies among all cat welfare stakeholders;
- Be informed by current resources available among all cat welfare stakeholders;
- Be aligned with parallel changes in by-laws that currently limit cat ownership; and
- Weigh the merits of cat licensing and data base record keeping with the resources and tools already in place to ensure owned cats and free roaming cats are returned home.



That the City work collaboratively with cat welfare stakeholders to develop city wide educational campaigns supported by consistent and compelling messaging about the importance of

- spay neuter (it's hip to snip!)
- preventative care for cats e.g. vaccinations
- Pet identification, and
- With respect to free roaming cats, the responsibilities of caregivers and the resources available to manage free roaming populations.

Pathways to Responsible Pet Ownership for healthy, safe and wanted cats

Report Commentary

- The value add of dual identification initiatives - micro chip and licensing for return home - is not clear.
 - HBSPCA Staff experience no difficulties and no cumbersome time constraints tracking down owners of cats with micro chips
- Cat licensing revenues in other jurisdictions and how they support initiatives for healthy safe and wanted cats is not evident in the Report, nor is it clear that any potential net revenue would be directed to cat overpopulation strategies
- At current HBSPCA rates for spay neuter, \$100,000
 - Pays for 1,333 spay/neuters for owned cats;
 - Pays for 2,200 spay neuters for free roaming cats
 - subsidizes 1,818 spay neuters for cats in inner city neighbourhoods (\$20 co-pay)
- And all spay/neuter surgeries include the FVRCP and Rabies vaccines, de-worm and de-flea treatment (Revolution) and a microchip.

Spay neuter programs at work in your community's HBSPCA

To date at the HBSPCA

- 700 owned cats (belonging to families in inner city neighbourhoods) spay neutered for a \$20 copay, subsidized by PetSmart Charities;
- 1,300 family owned pets spay/neutered, for a flat fee of \$75;
- ~ 300 free roaming cats spay neutered for \$45 at the shelter and \$75.00 at a participating partner veterinarians (subsidized by HBSPCA); and
- Free spay/neuter for clients in the Community Veterinary Outreach program.



Preventative Care

Your Hamilton/Burlington SPCA was chosen to participate in a first in Ontario research project: will new pet parents follow up with a vet post adoption for preventative care? Yes, they do with the right educational support.

About free roaming cats

It takes more than empathetic residents to promote health and safety for free roaming cats, and people.

The HBSPCA alongside cat rescue volunteers and concerned residents trains and orients neighbourhood caregivers of free roaming cats on requirements for regular and safe feeding schedules, appropriate outdoor shelter and access to affordable spay neuter. In the instance where caregivers chose to be identified colony caregivers, the HBSPCA and HAS regularly share information on who is responsibly minding the free roaming cats and where.

The Staff report refers to Trap Neuter Vaccinate and Return programs that would help protect the unowned cat community. This program exists in Hamilton. We look forward to discussion with the City and others on pathways for program expansion. For its part, the HBSPCA is budgeting additional Companion Animal Hospital days on weekends for free roaming cats.

Looking Ahead: Collaboration

“No team at any level has ever successfully taken to the field, court or ice without a common understanding of the tactics they would use to try and achieve their goal”.

The Playbook. A Framework for Human Services Planning in Hamilton. City of Hamilton. (page 6)

Collaborative planning promotes active listening, dialogue, and shared learning, and builds consensus among stakeholders.

We strongly encourage the City to be a present and engaged partner on cat management strategies, together with cat welfare stakeholders, all of whom are committed to responsible pet ownership.

HBSPCA Submission. Responsible Pet Ownership. City of Hamilton Planning Committee. Nov.14, 2016



There is considerable time treasure and talent in the animal welfare sector in Hamilton. Our shared challenge is too many cats. No one of us can do it alone.

Responsible pet ownership for healthy, safe and wanted cats requires a basket of coherent, informed and evidence based strategies.

Let's start with the end goal – a shared goal. Assess what its going to take to get there. And how.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Marion Emo'.

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