



## Staff Report

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**Report To:** Dan Best, Chief Administrative Officer  
**From:** **Genevieve Scharback, Corporate Services  
Manager/Clerk**  
**Date:** February 5 2018  
**Report:** 2-2018  
**Subject:** Cat Control

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### **Recommendations:**

**That South Huron Council receives the report from G. Scharback.  
Corporate Services Manager/Clerk re Cat Control.**

### **Purpose:**

To provide information, as directed by Resolution #484-2017, regarding a pilot project to assist residents in sterilizing cats and to provide a draft amended Animal Control By-law for Council's consideration that limits the number of cats permitted per household and creates an offence for feeding wild animals.

### **Background and Analysis:**

South Huron Council passed resolution #484-2017, dated November 20, 2017, directing staff to further investigate the idea of a pilot project to assist residents in sterilizing cats and to review the animal control by-law and prepare amendments to limit the number of cats per household, add a fine for feeding wild animals and to report back to Council.

The Municipality received 10 calls with concerns over stray cats in South Huron. Report to Council 20-2017 outlined a variety of approaches that have been used by other municipalities, including public education campaigns, trap-neuter-release programs, and voucher programs.

## **Operational Considerations:**

### Trap, Neuter and Release Program (TNR)

The Municipality would either supply trapping or allow residents to trap feral cats and amend a by-law to allow for trapping of feral cats. The trapped cat would be taken to a veterinarian for surgery and an ear tip (so they can be identified later). Cats are returned to original colony by caretakers after recovering from surgery (usually 24 to 48 hours). Caretakers monitor and sometimes feed the colonies depending on the program. There are many views on how to address cat over population and free roaming cats. Some believe that the best method is to trap, neuter and release (TNR) feral cats while others believe in euthanizing all stray cats.

Considerations:

- Colony registration with municipality;
- A caretaker or municipal staff – paid or volunteer;
- Training – trapping, care of colonies, health and safety etc.;
- Caretaker/staff feed and monitor the colony;
- Establishment of colony – location, geographical size, location of release following surgery, etcetera;
- Equipment – shelter, trapping, transporting;
- Financial impact – dependant on scope of program, size of colony.

### Voucher Program

The municipality will allocate funding for a pilot project to provide spay/neuter vouchers to qualifying individuals. Council will decide whether the full amount of the surgery will be paid or a portion of the cost. Any costs related to the procedure over and above this amount are payable to the veterinarian by the applicant.

Council shall decide the qualifications: whether the program is open to all cat owners, low income family cat owners and/or for a registered feral cat colony program.

Generally programs provide that in order to qualify for a voucher, applicants must submit an application form for the vouchers. The vouchers will expire after ninety days and will be handed out on a first come, first served basis to those who qualify.

When an applicant receives a spay or neuter voucher(s) the applicant must take the voucher(s) to the veterinarian listed on the voucher along with the cat requiring spaying or neutering. The veterinarian will complete the procedure and keep the voucher. Within ninety (90) days the veterinarian must submit an invoice to the Municipality for each spay or neuter procedure and include the corresponding voucher(s) with the invoice. The veterinarian will then be reimbursed the amount provided for in the voucher by the Municipality.

Council would approve a Spay and Neuter Voucher Program Policy setting out the definitions and criteria for administration of the program. The draft policy is attached to this report for Council's consideration.

### By-Law Amendments

Suggested amendments as set out in the attached draft are red-line version. The next steps would include bringing the final version to the next council meeting for adoption, sending the short form wording for approval and an education campaign.

No fines will be enforceable on the Animal Control By-law until such time as the short form wording for the amended By-law has been approved by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

### **South Huron's Strategic Plan:**

Section 6.2.2 of the Municipality of South Huron 2015-2019 Strategic Plan identifies transparent, accountable and collaborative governance as a strategic objective.

### **Financial Impact:**

South Huron Vet Clinic has advised that they could provide services needed like spaying, neutering, vaccinating or euthanizing. The cost of these procedures per cat are as follows:

- Spay: \$315.00;
- Neuter: \$195.00;
- Full vaccines: \$89.75;
- Boarding: \$22.00/day;
- Euthanasia: \$120.00.

South Huron Vet Clinic has advised that the boarding would have to be further discussed as they are limited to the number of cages that can be used for stray cats.

The actual number of feral cats within the Municipality of South Huron cannot be accurately estimated for budget estimates. Council could consider a budget for the cat spay and neuter voucher program. A budget of \$10,000 could allow the Municipality to issue approximately 125 vouchers worth \$75.00 each or full payment for 30 spay or 50 neuters, with the remainder of the funds budgeted used for promotion of the program and postage.

The financial impact of the program outlined in this report is based on residents of South Huron trapping and delivering the cats and taking them directly to the veterinarian. Changes to the Animal Control by-law associated with implementing a cat control program would require additional funding of the program.

The average cost of a cat control program and enforcement is difficult to determine as South Huron relies on voluntary compliance and responds only to cat control issues on a complaint basis. Feral cats may not be healthy and may be required to be euthanized as determined by the veterinarian. Staff cannot advise on numbers or percentages that would be required to be euthanized.

### **Legal Impact:**

There is a high risk of bites and scratches from feral cats, even with proper personal protective equipment, some risk is associated with handling feral cats.

### **Staffing Impact:**

Significant staff time may be required to implement a cat licensing and control program as well as contracted services.

### **Policies/Legislation:**

### **Consultation:**

Huron County Animal Centre Goderich, South Huron Veterinary Clinic, Municipality of Leamington

### **Related Documents:**

1. Draft South Huron Spay and Neuter Voucher Program Policy  
Application for Spay or Neuter Voucher  
Spay or Neuter Voucher
2. Draft Animal Control By-law

Respectfully submitted,

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**Genevieve Scharback, Corporate Services Manager/Clerk**