



Staff Report

Report To: Dan Best, Chief Administrative Officer
From: **Genevieve Scharback, Corporate Services
Manager/Clerk**
Date: November 20 2017
Report: 20-2017
Subject: Animal Control - Cats

Recommendations:

**That South Huron Council receives the report from G. Scharback, Corporate Services Manager/Clerk re Animal Control – Cats; and
That Council provides direction regarding the regulation and control of cats.**

Purpose:

To provide Council with information on regulating cats in South Huron and respectfully request direction regarding this matter.

Background and Analysis:

Council directed a review of the animal by-laws as well as further information regarding the control of feral cats.

The municipal office has received ten (10) complaints concerning roaming, stray and feral cats this year, up to the date of this report. All complaints regarding sick or injured cats were referred to the SPCA. Most of the complaints noted that a neighbour had been regularly feeding stray cats or that the cat was known to be a neighbour's pet. Two of the complaints involved residents that adopted stray cat(s), then decided they did not want them anymore.

South Huron does not have a by-law regulating cats at this time. A survey of Huron County and adjoining Southwest Ontario municipalities was completed by staff. Animal Control – Cats report to Council in 2016 noted that there were no Huron County municipalities that regulated cats but two of the nine regulated the number of pets in a household. The current survey resulted in no change to cat regulation but four municipalities now regulate the total number of pets in a household.

The Town of Saugeen Shores, a similarly sized municipality, does have cats included in their Animal Control By-law. Pound fees average \$180.00 per cat. This includes boarding and aftercare fees but does not include costs for their animal control contract and administration of the program. These costs are billed to the owner when/if the cat is picked up. Only one cat per year has ever been reclaimed, with all other costs paid by the ratepayers.

The City of Stratford licenses cats annually. They have a contract with the Humane Society that covers all of the city's animal control. For 2017 the contract is \$101,850.00.

Staff contacted the Huron County Animal Centre in Goderich and were advised that they are a cat adoption centre only and do not offer any services regarding feral or stray cats. Staff was advised to contact the provincial office for further information on feral support programs. Monica Seto at the Ontario SPCA provided staff information on existing feral cat programs, most located in the greater Toronto area. These programs support communities to trap, neuter and release feral cats (TNR). The Ontario SPCA does not trap or neuter but supplies traps to caretakers for no charge. More information on this program and training sessions can be found at <http://ontariospca.ca/what-we-do/animal-welfare-services/feral-cats>.

Municipalities such as the City of Mississauga and the Town of Collingwood have adopted by-laws that prohibit the intentional feeding of wildlife. These by-laws specifically include both feral or wild animals on private or public property. There are exemptions for organizations that have a mandate to care for feral or stray animals.

In an effort to curb the number of homeless cats some municipalities such as the City of Windsor and the Municipality of Leamington have allocated funding to provide spay/neuter vouchers to residents.

Four local veterinary clinics were contacted and the lowest cost per cat for spaying is \$187 (more if the cat is pregnant), for neutering \$135 and for vaccinations \$20 per cat. These numbers do not include HST.

Options to Regulate and Control Cats

Following the review of municipal practice in the regulation and control of cats, staff has considered a range of options including the following:

- Status quo – no change to regulate or control cats but continue an education and public awareness program;
- Amend the Animal Control by-law to the permitted number of cats per household and add a fine for feeding wild animals, the definition of which would include feral cats and continue education program;
- Consider a voucher program pilot project to assist residents in sterilizing cats and continue education program.

Operational Considerations:

Extensive cat control programs will require agreements with pound and veterinary service providers detailing duties and costs related to cats.

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:

Canine control costs a minimum of \$125.00 per call. This amount includes minimum By-Law Enforcement Officer and dog catcher expenses. It does not include their time if follow-up is required, possible pound fees, administration costs such as staff time processing the complaint and administering the dog tag program, or any legal expenses arising from Part 1 Provincial Offences under the Animal Control by-Law.

The cost is expected to rise with cat control; however the cost of administration and enforcement will depend on the extent of enforcement deemed appropriate by Council.

Legal Impact:

N/A

Staffing Impact:

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

Policies/Legislation:

N/A

Consultation:

Huron County Clerks, City of Stratford, Town of Saugeen Shores
Manager, Shelter Health & Wellness OSPCA, Huron County Animal Centre
Goderich, South Huron Veterinary Clinic.

Related Documents:

Website Education & Awareness Information Pages, copy attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Genevieve Scharback, Corporate Services Manager/Clerk