

June 25 2020

Rebekah Msuya-Collison
Clerk – Municipality of South Huron
P.O Box 759
322 Main St S.
Exeter, ON
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Re: Municipality of South Huron council meeting - June 15 2020, Delegation 5.2 - Request for Exotic Animal Bylaw Exemption - Brandon Vanderwel & Destiny Duncan.

Mayor and Council,

Due to the safety of your residents, your tourists, your established business community, and the safety and well being of your neighbouring Municipalities, I ask that By-law 29-2014 maintain in force and effect across the Municipality, and that all requests for exemption to such by-law be denied.

Pursuant to the Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, c.25 as amended, empowers councils of a local municipality to pass by-laws to regulate or prohibit the keeping of animals or any class thereof within the municipality. The Municipal Act also pursuant to Section 11 (3) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25, a lower tier municipality may pass By-laws respecting unnecessary the health, safety and well-being of persons, protection of persons and property, consumer protection and animals.

By-law 29 -2014 has been passed to complete these tasks and safeguard your community as outlined in the Municipal Act. Giving an exemption to such, places your constituents at an unnecessary risk. Also, allowing an extension to one property for their own personal gain is not proper, and it sets a precedence that in my view would question why South Huron would even have a by-law addressing this issue at the onset.

This request can be compared and equated to an individual asking the court for an exemption to obey speed limits, since he just acquired a car that needs to be driven fast. While all others who use the road need to obey the posted speed limits. I hope when put in such context this request sounds as absurd as it does to myself, and it shows how dangerous such an ask potentially could be.

These animals pose dangers and harm to the communities that have allowed them. Recently, the Municipality of Lambton Shores dealt with a similar situation where lions and other exotic animals were brought to a property. Within weeks animals had escaped forcing families and children to not enjoy their properties for over a year as they lived in fear. The noise from such animals can be frightening to young children/families, and keep people up at night. The smell from feces can be horrendous from such animals with no regulations in place to minimize or remove such. This does not even account for the excess traffic that swarmed this area, and the expensive legal battle that the municipality endured and continues due to multiple different infractions of multiple by-laws at such property.

In delegation 5.2 of the June 15 2020 Council meeting there are many signs that such exemption to by-law 29-2014 will begin the path of a unregulated roadside zoo or sanctuary that follows no regulations. They indicate fencing that does not meet the heights stipulated in there supporting documentation.

They admittedly state that they have no formal training with such animals. She states in her documents that she adopted this animal, however had no place to bring them which shows poor planning. As you can see from the pictures submitted, they treat these animals as pets, there are even pictures of them both in the Lions cage with the animals, something she stated during her delegation she would not do as that is a unsafe practice. A quick search online can show that these animals even in captivity can hurt, kill and never loose their wild animal instinct. They also state in their delegation that they would like to grow tourism and expand the local economy. If this exemption was just to house their two pet lions 50 minutes away from where they live, why would they state that this venture would grow tourism and expand the local economy. The answer to that question along with seeing two different fenced in areas on their site plan is they already have plans to expand their menagerie of animals, and use such animals for personal gain.

The risks outweigh the benefit when reviewing such request. I ask again that South Huron Council deny any exemption request from by-law 29-2014

Regards,

John & Stephanie Hamilton
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