

Corporate Report

REPORT NUMBER 287-2023-Corporate Services-Licensing & Enforcement

DATE

PREPARED

September 6, 2023

FILE

MEETING DATE

September 18, 2023

SUBJECT

Amendment to Animal Control By-law 22-1995

RECOMMENDATION

WITH RESPECT to Report 287-2023-Corporate Services-Licensing & Enforcement, we recommend that the draft amendment to By-law 22-1995 being a by-law respecting the owners of animals, as appended to this report as Draft By-law 289-2023, be approved for presentation to City Council on September 25, 2023;

AND THAT that Outstanding Item 2021-116-DEV Animal By-law Amendment be removed from the Planning Outstanding List.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The promise of the Maamawe, Growing Together City of Thunder Bay Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is an improved quality of life for the people of Thunder Bay through priorities that include a focus on service excellence and safety and well being.

The proposed new By-law amendment furthers the value of respect by providing enhanced cost-effective services to citizens, and quicker resolutions to issues outlined in BL 22-1995.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report 287-2023 recommends that Council approve this report and the draft amendment to By-law 22-1995, being a by-law respecting the owners of animals by adding Nuisance Animal under Definitions and adding a new section with respect to Nuisance Animal Behaviour.

This recommended amendment to the By-law supports Council's December 14, 2020 direction to restructure the Licensing & Enforcement Division (Report R 149/2020 December 14, 2020) and that, "policies, procedures and by-laws be reviewed and

amended so as to streamline enforcement efforts and improve overall efficiency and effectiveness” and any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

Poor control of a few citizen pets, both dogs and cats, result in a high volume of repetitive calls-for-service involving a relatively low number of specific animals, putting pressure on staff resources. Most calls are relatively minor and involve trespassing pets but more aggressive animal calls to school yards and public streets and open spaces are increasing which can then become a public safety concern.

This By-law amendment will create an offence where “repetitive” offending animals, that create issues by trespassing or running-at-large in public spaces, can be addressed with stiffer fines; this Nuisance Animal designation would not affect animals in the case of an inadvertent escape.

DISCUSSION

In December 2020, Council directed that the Licensing & Enforcement Division continue to review and amend, as considered appropriate, the organizational structure of the Licensing & Enforcement Division, including that by-laws should be reviewed and amended so as to streamline enforcement efforts and improve overall efficiency and effectiveness. The By-law addressed in this Report was identified as a top priority (Outstanding Item 2021-116 DEV) and supports restructuring as set out in the Development & Emergency Services September 2021 Corporate Report (R 120/2021 Licensing and Enforcement).

Poor control of a few citizen pets, both dogs and cats, result in a high volume of repetitive calls-for-service involving a relatively low number of specific animals, putting pressure on staff resources. Most calls are relatively minor and involve trespassing pets but more aggressive animal calls to school yards and public streets and open spaces are increasing causing a growing public safety concern. Generally, a few owners fail to take any reasonable steps to ensure their animals do not become repetitive problems; this amendment is intended to address the repetitive non-compliant behaviours of the owners.

There have been a concerning number of public safety related issues that have arisen over the last few years, mainly where multiple large and aggressive dogs are routinely permitted to leave the owners property and are of great concern to the local neighbourhoods. While there are some unusual “individual offences” like running-at-large commonly handled with a ticket, administration believes the “Nuisance Animal” designation will signal to the courts that stronger action is required. It may also assist in a Dog Owner Liability Act hearing, where the City can seek Court Orders for greater control or destruction, when appropriate.

This By-law amendment will create an offence where “repetitive” offending animals, that create issues by trespassing or running-at-large in public spaces, can be addressed with stiffer fines; this Nuisance Animal designation would not affect an animal in the case of an inadvertent one-off escape of the family pet.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

Administration does not foresee any additional expenditures by enacting this By-law; fine revenues may increase where offences results in a conviction.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that Council should approve the draft Nuisance Amendment to the By-law respecting the owners of animals, drafted as By-law 289-2023 and that Item 2021-116 DEV Animal By-law Amendment be removed from the Outstanding list.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – Draft Nuisance Animal By-law Amendment

REPORT PREPARED BY

Doug Vincent, Manager – Licensing & Enforcement

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Karen Lewis, General Manager – Corporate Services

September 7, 2023