Summary of Recommendations

re: By-law Amendments for Expanding Animal Welfare Initiatives

to: The Community and Protective Services Committee

re: Public Participation Meeting/ May 26th, 2014 from: The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

A.) Pet Limits. (PH-3 and PH-4)

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee's recommendations for changes to the Pet Limit bylaws regarding dogs and cats (PH-3 and PH-4) are contained in the CPSC agenda of March 24, 2014, and can be viewed at:

http://sire.london.ca/mtgviewer.aspx?meetid=667&doctype=AGENDA

(4th Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committe)

Summary:

1. Rescue Group/ Foster Homes to be exempt from the Pet Limit regulation:

-Recommend a two-tiered system where foster homes working under the direction of recognized Rescue Groups are exempt from the Pet Limit bylaw, and have no limit on the numbers of dogs and/or cats that they can house. The Rescue Groups themselves will be responsible for regulating appropriate numbers of dogs and cats per foster home.

2. Pet guardians/owners (regular homes):

- -Maximum of 4 dogs per home.
- -Maximum of 8 cats per home.
- -Maximum combined total of 8 pets per home, with no more than 4 of those being dogs.

View the complete recommendation which explains how Foster homes could be identified to By-law enforcement agents, and how they can benefit from temporary, city-funded licenses for foster dogs.

3. Regulation or Registry of Foster Homes:

- -AWAC recommends that Foster homes working under the direction of recognized Rescue Groups should have their privacy protected and not be subject to registration or regulation by the City.
- -The City should instead conduct communications with the Rescue Groups through their directors or named representatives. The Rescue Group representatives will identify whether or not a foster home provider is under their direction should the need to identify occur.

We did not find it to be common practice for municipalities to regulate or register Rescue-foster homes, including large urban centres like New York City. The problems of pet over-population; and stray, abandoned, or surrendered dogs and cats are not caused by the activities of Rescue groups. The numbers of animals requiring care by the city would be far higher if not for the work of Rescue groups. They should be left to continue their work without unnecessary oversight, and not be subject to a greater level of scrutiny than the average pet guardian/owner.

B.) <u>Additional By-laws to ensure Public Protection</u>, <u>Animal Welfare and</u> Human Enjoyment of Private Property.

Preamble:

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee recommends additional By-laws to mitigate possible concerns about increased numbers of dogs and cats in London homes, and to ensure increased levels of animal welfare.

Pro-active and specific bylaws that regulate care can better mitigate problems than simply limiting numbers of animals per household. It only takes one poorly treated dog to create excessive noise, fecal contamination and distress to neighbours who live near such an animal.

Contrary to popular belief, animal protection legislation does not provide a completely adequate tool to ensure proper care of companion animals. It is difficult for Humane Agents to legally prove 'distress' in an animal even when their own observation tells them that the housing and other provisions would cause undue distress. Yet, clear-cut regulations of basic provisions that can be easily viewed by a Bylaw enforcement agent have proven in other jurisdictions to be effective in discouraging poor petkeeping practices that impact both the community and suffering animals.

These recommendations are contained in the CPSC agenda of May 12, 2014, and can be viewed at:

http://sire.london.ca/mtgviewer.aspx?meetid=693&doctype=AGENDA

(Pet Limit Bylaw Additional Regulations -REVISED.pdf)

Summary:

1. Regulate the tethering/chaining of dogs while outdoors.

- Recommend that dogs 'tethered' or 'chained' outdoors must be on a lead *at least* 12 feet in length and only for periods of 30 minutes or less at a time, for no more than a total of 1 hour per day.

'Tethering' and 'chaining' refers to the practice of tying a dog to an object so the dog cannot escape. This regulation does not refer to dogs tied up outside of stores while guardians are inside, or to dogs that are tethered while at a park, back-yard or other outdoor area in the direct presence of human guardians. Direct presence means that the person is actually in the outdoor area with the dog, and does not refer to a person being inside a building while the dog remains alone in the yard.

We generally know these dogs as 'back-yard dogs' and most if not all of their lives are spent chained up outside. These dogs are given little if any exercise, stimulation or social contact. This is a very distressing way for a social pack-type animal to live. Chaining also makes the dog vulnerable to attack from free-roaming animals or malicious persons.

Public Safety: Chaining dogs can lead to aggression in dogs due to the frustration of being tied. Evidence points to an increased risk of bites from dogs forced to live much of their lives chained, posing a threat to human safety. The Humane Society of the United States says: "Numerous attacks on people by tethered dogs have been documented. Tragically, the victims of these attacks are often children who are unaware of the dog's presence until it is too late."

Chained dogs can cause distress to neighbours as chained dogs frequently bark or howl in loneliness, fear and boredom.

Education: It is not desirable to simply substitute a solitary life behind a fence or out-door pen if a dog remains a mostly un-socialized, un-exercised 'back-yard' dog. Therefore, we recommend that when a Bylaw agent encounters chained dogs that education about the social and physical needs of dogs be given, and the guardian/owner be encouraged to integrate the dog into the home as opposed to simply penning the dog as a substitution for chaining. A publicity campaign should also be undertaken to inform Londoners about the new regulations and suggest ways to work with unsocialized dogs that need to be brought in from their solitary lives.

Other communities in the United States and Canada have regulated and even banned this inhumane practice.

View examples of 4 Canadian communities that have regulations re: 'Tethering/Chaining' of dogs:

Burnaby, British Columbia:

https://burnaby.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=10923

Village of Lion's Bay, British Columbia:

http://files.lionsbay.ca/Bylaw%20376%20-%20Licensing%20of%20Dogs.pdf

Calgary, Alberta:

http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/ABS/Pages/Bylaws-by-topic/Dogs.aspx

New Westminster, British Columbia:

http://www.newwestcity.ca/database/rte/files/AnimalControl7586.pdf

<u>View examples of American communities that have regulations re: 'Tethering/Chaining' of dogs:</u>

http://www.peta.org/issues/companion-animal-issues/cruel-practices/chaining-dogs/current-legislation-tethering-dogs/

Further Resources on Tethering/Chaining of dogs:

http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/chaining_tethering/facts/chaining_tethering_facts.html

https://abbotsford.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentDisplay.aspx?ID=31020

Information compiled by Animal Alliance of Canada and contains information on:

http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/ls/comm/communicationfile-37664.pdf

2. Regulate shelter and sufficient provisions for dogs (& other domestic animals) while outdoors.

- A dog, or any other companion animal, must have adequate shelter from the elements during all seasons.
- When dogs or other animals are housed outdoors for longer than 30 minutes they must have access to over-head shelter from the elements, both sun and rain; and must have a resting board or matting that allows them to have a resting surface that remains dry and comfortable.
- If any companion animals are outside for longer than an hour, then a dry four-sided shelter house must be provided, (further specifications about what constitutes appropriate outdoor shelter can be viewed in the agenda submission.)
- Clean water must be available at all times to all dogs, cats and other animals while outdoors for longer than an hour. During winter months this will mean that heated water bowls are required.

3. Limit the out-door housing of Domestic Rabbits to daytime hours only.

- Rabbits should only be housed outdoors during daylight hours and in appropriate housing (proper housing is more fully explained in the agenda submission.)
- Domestic rabbits, kept for any purpose as pets or as food, must be brought indoors during non-daylight hours.
- Rabbits must not be outside when temperatures exceed 24 degrees Celsius, or are below 10 degrees Celsius. See the full recommendation for size and material regulations of outdoor housing.

AWAC recognizes that at this time, Domestic rabbits are not as widely kept as dogs and cats in London homes. We do know that rabbits are sold in pet stores, especially around Easter, so companion rabbits do enter London homes. Research shows that, like all companion animals, rabbits can become subject to neglect when the purchaser loses interest in them. Because rabbits are very quiet, they can be easily ware-housed in back-yards when the family no longer enjoys their company. Rabbits are just as social and active as dogs and cats and as such, social isolation and lack of exercise causes them distress. Rabbits are also highly vulnerable prey animals, and even unsuccessful attempts by predators or dogs to gain entry into the rabbit's cage can cause the rabbit to suffer a heart attack. Rabbits are also very sensitive to both the heat and cold.

This Rabbit by-law would be complaint-driven and we do not expect By-law enforcement agents to seek out these situations. But in a similar way to distressed back-yard dogs, this by-law would provide an effective tool for agents to use in cases where they may have a report of a rabbit that has concerned someone, or should they discover such an animal while investigating another complaint.

Further, it is our hope and intention that the retail sale of dogs and cats will be banned in London in the near future. If this should occur, then there is a high likelihood that stores and breeders may want to increase the sale of rabbits to maintain revenue. This would increase the number of impulse purchases of rabbits. It would serve us well to have a pro-active bylaw in place. For these reasons, we feel that it is timely to include protections for domestic rabbits as well during this by-law review.