

Currently a household can have 3 dogs. Each person in the household can also have 2 cats (or other pets). Dogs are far more responsibility than cats. They require walks and more attention than cats (as anyone owning both can tell you). If one person can have 3 dogs and 2 cats, why can't that one person have no dogs and 5 cats, or a couple have 7 cats? As you can clearly see, there is no logic to this by-law. (The people who developed it obviously preferred dogs to cats.) Then you have the case of the man whose wife died and was told he could no longer have three cats (since it's 2 cats per person). Animal control eventually exempted him but why should he have had to go through that stress? This by-law needs to be removed.

The fact is there should be no set number of pets because there are too many variables to take into consideration. The by-law should read that animal owners must be able to meet the following criteria for each and every pet owned in order to keep an animal:

- 1) provide the necessities of life: a safe and clean home, food, water, care, attention, affection. Note: Here is where the current by-law fails miserably. It does not take into consideration individual factors. For example, it should be obvious that someone living in a 3000 sq. ft. home can house far more animals than someone living in a one bedroom apartment; or that people with higher incomes can afford to have more pets. A retiree who has more time to devote to pet ownership could properly care for four or more animals which is more than the current by-law allows, whereas someone who works and keeps a dog tied up permanently in the backyard is not meeting the needs of the animal even though they are technically following the by-law. Etc. Etc. You cannot have one rule for everyone in this matter.
- 2) provide medical care (vaccines, spay/neuter, yearly check-ups, unanticipated medical care, etc.).
- 3) ensure pets remain on the owner's property when not in the care of the owner so that they are not a nuisance or danger to other animals (including wildlife) or people and their property. Cat owners must adhere to this stipulation, preferably keeping their cats indoors.
- 4) pets must be licensed to ensure they can be returned if lost.

These four criteria would ensure that pets are properly cared for. Any infractions reported would be dealt with by Animal Control, the London Humane Society or the police.

The real issue London City Hall should be dealing with are the overwhelming number of unwanted and stray animals in the city. The current by-law ties the hands of those trying to rescue unwanted animals because it arbitrarily limits the number of animals a person can have in their home. It encourages people to go underground in their rescue efforts. It decreases the number of animals that could be saved.

What is needed instead is a by-law stating that all animals must be spayed or neutered unless the owner has a breeding license. This by-law would reduce the number of abandoned, abused and unwanted pets, and the burden they place on taxpayer. It would be wise to invest money in free or low-cost spay/ neuter clinics held monthly to ensure everyone can afford to spay/neuter their pets. This would end up saving the city money.

We should also be banning the sale of puppies and kittens in stores, markets, etc. to ensure puppy mills are eliminated and people spay/neuter their animals.

Sincerely,

Susan Ross  
581 Elmdale Ave.  
London ON N5X 1H6