

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Animal By-law PH-3 - Meeting of the Community and Protective Services Committee

I'm reaching out regarding Councillor Cassidy's proposed amendments to the animal control bylaw, to be discussed at Tuesday's Community and Protective Services Committee meeting. My family has been fostering for 10 years. In that time, my husband and I have maintained full-time careers in healthcare, have raised our now 16-year-old son, and have fostered 58 dogs.

The local rescues we have fostered for would never authorize or even suggest that we take more than one or two dogs at a time, with the exception of mothers with litters which we had the pleasure of experiencing for the first time in December 2020. It was exciting and exhausting at the same time. I understand the reasoning behind Councillor Cassidy's concerns, but this seems to be an unnecessary reaction to a serious yet isolated case of a rescue director taking on more than she could or should have handled. I can only speak for the dog rescue I currently foster for, but I can assure you we don't take on more than we can handle nor do we pressure foster families to take dogs. We often have to decline owner surrenders and LACC requests when we don't have enough foster homes available. Dogs are work. A lot of work. The dogs we take in often have medical or behavioural concerns that need to be managed. We can't help them if we don't have the time, space, and means to do so. We pride ourselves on the work we do to help dogs and to place them with the most suitable and deserving adopters.

I have great concerns with Councillor Cassidy's suggestion that we "change the bylaw again and put those limits in place that they had originally". What other concerns have been raised besides the one serious occurrence in January 2020? Where is the research? What discussions have taken place with rescues and the community? I think if you asked my neighbours, they'd tell you how well we do with our foster dogs, and that they are neither a nuisance or a concern. I don't think we are the exception when it comes to foster families in London. All of our foster families have a City of London foster tag and are screened and monitored regularly. I worry about what will happen to families who have three dogs of their own who will be unable to foster under these proposed amendments. Some of these families are our very best, most committed, and experienced fosters.

I truly hope you'll consider all sides before making a decision. The lives of many dogs and cats depend on it.

Sincerely,

Laurie Poynter
Foster Mom and Treasurer, Paws United Dog Rescue