

Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

To: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY & PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
From: SCOTT MATHERS, MPA, P. ENG, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Subject: PET LIMITS FOR APPROVED FOSTER ORGANIZATIONS
Date: MARCH 1, 2022

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic Development:

- a) The attached **BE RECEIVED** it being noted that the current regulation of no pet limits for Approved Foster Organizations be maintained.

Executive Summary

Civic Administration's review finds that recommending a pet limit for Approved Foster Organizations would not be advantageous in continuing to meet the 90% Live Release Rate.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

Leading in Public Service – Increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by improving animal welfare by encouraging more animal adoption.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information on Pet Limits for Approved Foster Organizations

In January of 2020, a fire at the home of a City of London Approved Foster Organization occurred. The fire was extensive, and the property owner required medical assistance. Approximately 40 cats required immediate care and relocation. In addition, this very unfortunate event resulted in the reporting of four cat deaths. This incident further resulted in reconsideration around applying a limit of pets in foster care in the City of London. At the time of the fire there was not a limit in place for cats fostered in foster homes associated with City approved foster organizations. Limits had been proposed by Civic Administration in 2014, however the recommendation at that time was not adopted.

Municipal Council, at its session held June 10, 2014

referred clause 7 of the 12th

Report of the Community and Protective Services Committee (CPSC) to a public participation meeting for additional information, including legal advice, related to comments provided by the public and the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) with respect to this matter.

Clause 7 Reads as Follows:

7. That on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services and the Chief Building Official, the following actions be taken to amend various City of London by-laws to support enhanced animal care strategies and implement City Council's first principle of "no kill" and open shelter policy:

- a) the proposed by-law, as appended to the staff report dated May 26, 2014, BE INTRODUCED at the Municipal Council meeting to be held on June 10, 2014, to:

- i) amend By-law No. PH-3, Animal Control to implement the following animal welfare initiatives:

- increased pet limits for cats; new citizen clause; increased exemption period for licensing of newborn animals; allow discretion of licensing fee amnesty periods; add provisions related to microchips as a form of identification for cats in place of cat identification tags; and the inclusion of fostering regulations; and

- ii) amend fees and charges related to cat registration fees within Schedule A” attached to the by-law; and
- b) the proposed by-law, as appended to the staff report dated May 26, 2014, BE INTRODUCED at the Municipal Council meeting to be held on June 10, 2014 to amend By-law No. PH-4, Dog Licensing & Control to:
- i) implement the following animal welfare initiatives: increased pet limits for dogs; new citizen clause; increased exemption period for licensing of newborn animals; and allow discretion of licensing fee amnesty periods; redefine “at large” in response to a citizen concern; revised wording regarding muzzling to clarify when a Notice of Caution will be issued, and the inclusion of fostering regulations fostering; and
 - ii) amend fees and charges related to dog registration licensing fees within Schedule “A” attached to the by-law; and,
- c) the proposed by-law, as appended to the staff report dated May 26, 2014, BE INTRODUCED at the Municipal Council meeting to be held on June 10th, 2014 to amend By-law No. PH-5, Public Pound By-law to reflect name and position changes due to organizational restructuring, and to update the means of maintaining the Poundkeeper’s records; and, it being pointed out that at the public participation meeting associated with this matter, the individuals indicated on the attached public participation meeting record made oral submissions in connection therewith. (2014-CO1/P14) (AS AMENDED) (7/1 2/CPSC)

Municipal Council, at its meeting held on March 2, 2020, resolved:

That the following actions be taken with respect to the 3rd Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, from its meeting held on February 6, 2020:

- a) the Civic Administration BE ENCOURAGED to meet with representatives from the rescue organizations operating in London in order to determine what they require for the appropriate/safe operation of their facilities and for the proper fostering of their intake animals with respect to health, safety and well-being standards; it being noted that a verbal presentation from R. Oke, Animal Control and Welfare Coordinator, with respect to this matter, was received;

In April of 2021 Councillor M. Cassidy brought forward a communication at a Community and Protective Services Committee meeting that requested reconsideration of pet limits for approved foster organizations.

April 19th, 2021, Sandra Leckie, associated with the Approved Foster Organization Animal Outreach cat rescue, forwarded an email submission of non support for pet limitations related to fostering. On April 20th, 2021, a further email submission in non support of pet limits for foster organizations came from Constance Heuston, of the Heuston Family Foundation.

Municipal Council, at its meeting held on May 4, 2021, resolved:

That the communication, dated April 1, 2021, from Councillor M. Cassidy, with respect to By-law PH-3, being "A by-law to provide for the regulation, restriction and prohibition of the keeping of animals in the City of London", BE REFERRED to the Civic Administration for review and a report back at a future meeting of the Community and Protective Services Committee related to revisions or updates that could be made to the by-law; it being noted that a communication from K. and K. Beattie, as appended to the Added Agenda, with respect to this matter, was received. (2021-P14) (4.1/7/CPSC)

May 5th, 2021, an emails submission in support of pet limitations for fosters/recues was received from K. O’Connell.

Municipal Council, at its meeting held on July 6, 2021, resolved:

That the following actions be taken with respect to the 5th Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, from its meeting held on June 3, 2021:

- a) the following actions be taken with respect to the Sub-Committee Update:

- i) the attached document, with respect to the proposal to limit the number of animals in foster homes, BE FORWARDED to Civic Administration for their review and consideration;

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=82373>

2.0 Consultation, Municipal Comparisons, and London statistics – Pet Limits

April of 2021, in consultation with the City of London Veterinarian it was noted that according to the National Companion Animal Coalition, composed of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, Humane Canada™ (also known as the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies), and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada, establishing an arbitrary limit on the number of dogs and cats permitted in a dwelling does not address concerns about irresponsible pet ownership, but rather, may punish responsible pet owners who are providing proper care to their companion animals.

Municipal comparisons also confirmed that the municipalities of Toronto, Hamilton, and Kitchener/Waterloo all have adopted exemptions in their animal by-laws that support no limits for approved/recognized fosters and/or rescues.

Since 2016 when City of London animal welfare enhancements, including no pet limits to approved foster organizations, started to align, the Council mandated Live Release Rate target of 90% or better has been achieved. Annually over the course of the last six years the Live Release Rate has ranged from 91.8% to 94%. In the month of March 2021, the municipal shelter Live Release Rate was 100%. Over the course of the same six-year period (2016-2021) London Animal Care Centre and Catty Shack combined have adopted out a total of 4,039 animals, the majority being cats. In support of the City's efforts our community adoption partners, the approved foster organizations have also taken 936 transfer animals from the municipal shelter when capacity at the shelter is strained (the majority being cats). It is the combination of all available resources that allows London to maintain the 90% Live Release Rate.

Conclusion

When revisiting potential pet limits for Approved Foster Organizations many factors were considered.

In 2014 where Civic Administration had previously recommended a limit on the number of fostered cats and dogs, it was prior to having a veterinarian staff member's professional input.

Until the fire occurrence of 2020, at the residence of a fostering cat owner, approved by the City, there had been no complaints or concerns brought forward around pet fostering capacity at any approved foster organization location within the City of London. Further, the cause of the fire was determined to have been the result of the stove being on and igniting combustible materials on, or near it. There was nothing linking the number of animals housed to the fire. All animals examined by a veterinarian following the fire were found to have been well cared for.

The placing of a limit on pet fosters will very likely increase the intake capacity at the municipal shelter. An "open" shelter such as London's municipal shelter, when at capacity, and having no other options, is faced with euthanizing due to lack of space. This is not a humane response, is not what any shelter team wants to be faced with, and it is not in keeping with London's mandate to maintain the no kill, 90% Live Release Rate or better.

Following the completion of municipal comparisons, and various consultations, Civic Administration is recommending that no pet limits be implemented for Approved Foster Organizations, and any capacity related complaint be brought forth to Civic Administration for review. Should Civic Administration find that a London foster, providing shelter under the permission of an Approved Foster Organization not be operating appropriately, the City Representative would have the authority of revocation of the approval.

Since the animal welfare enhancements made since 2014, and the following years, the partnerships between Animal Services, and Approved Foster Organizations have proven extremely successful.

Civic Administration would like to acknowledge all internal, and external contributions. Those being members of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and sub-committees, members of the public, City of London Fire Prevention, London Animal Care Center representatives, the City Animal Welfare Coordinator, and the City Veterinarian.

Submitted By: HEATHER CHAPMAN, MLEO (C)
MANAGER, COMMUNITY COMPLIANCE AND ANIMAL
WELFARE SERVICES

**Reviewed and
Concurred By:** OREST KATOLYK, MLEO (C)
DIRECTOR, MUNICIPAL COMPLAINTS

Recommended by: SCOTT MATHERS, MPA, P. ENG
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