

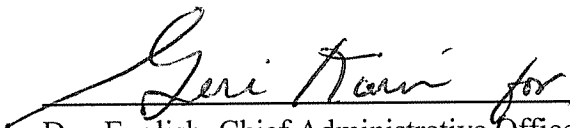
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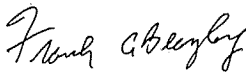


PO Box 1749  
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Halifax Regional Council  
July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

  
Frank A. Beazley, Chief of Police

**DATE:** July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Animal Licensing Strategy for 2008

### RECOMMENDATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

Council has requested staff to develop a strategy that would result in increased compliance with the licensing component of the D-100 by-law.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. Approve the amendment to Administrative Order #11(attached as Appendix A) and
2. approve the new licensing strategy respecting dogs for 2008.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Registration and Regulation of dogs in the Halifax Regional Municipality is governed by By-law D-100. The Financial Services business unit is responsible for the administration of Part I - Registration, and the Halifax Regional Police business unit is responsible for the administration of Part II - Dog Control.

Registration costs range from \$10.00 to \$30.00 depending if the dog is spayed/neutered and inoculated or unaltered. There is also a 20% discount on registrations from senior citizens. The revenue from registrations is received by the Community Projects Section of HRP to offset the costs of Animal Services. The registration database is a module of the Richter Financial System. The database includes owner and dog information and is used for registration confirmation and inquiries for lost dogs.

Owners are able to register their dog through the following:

- HRM Customer Service Centres
- through the mail
- at the SPCA
- at any of the 26 Veterinary Hospitals that accept registrations

Presently, only renewals can be taken over the phone at 490-4000 because of the requirement for dog owners to provide verification of spaying/neutering or inoculation.

Our present licensing system provides several opportunities for Animal owners to comply with the legislation. Although the exact number of dogs are unknown, consultants estimate that we register approximately 10% of the dogs in HRM.

## **DISCUSSION**

Meetings have been held with HRM Client Services, Financial Services and Halifax Regional Police in an effort to collaboratively identify ways to improve compliance with this legislation. It was recognized that HRM has had the same licensing fees for registering dogs since 1999. It is recognized that these fees have not kept up with the cost of the service and should be revisited on an annual or bi-annual basis to ensure the cost is still appropriate. It has been agreed that one of the major shortcomings of past licensing initiatives was the lack of an enforcement component. With no chance of enforcement, people have willingly disobeyed the legislation. The challenge with an aggressive enforcement campaign is that we must first remind dog owners of the rules through education, and then enhanced enforcement in steps with increased consequences.

To address this, HRM should adopt the following strategy to enhance our licensing program with the following expected outcomes:

- increased public awareness of the need and benefits of licensing your animal,
- notice a significant increase in the number of licenses issued through voluntary compliance,

- increased enforcement to ensure compliance if required.

1) Beginning in December of 2007 we will create an aggressive public relations campaign that will highlight the need for licensing, the cost for the service and the fines for not licensing your animals.

2) In an effort to increase voluntary compliance, we will have a time limited, one time only fee of \$10.00 applied to all dogs, regardless of where they fall within the fee schedule.

3) We will make registration and payment easier so residents can walk-in to Customer Service Centres, or apply for new license or renew their license by using visa or mastercard and placing a call to 490-4000 as well as through our partner Veterinarians or the SPCA.

4) Increased internal communication to participating business units to be aware of initiative and their roles. We will have a concentrated effort by HRM Police (including Parks Patrol and Animal Services) to stop and educate dog owners observed during patrols.

5) Following is a time line that will be used for this strategy:

- January 1<sup>st</sup>, to May 31<sup>st</sup> , every dog licensed at a low fee of \$10.00. Education with minimal enforcement.

- May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, every dog charged regular fee for licensing. Education with minimal enforcement.

- June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> , owner of unlicensed dog fined \$222.00, with the option to have the ticket cancelled (\*\*fees apply) if animal licensed during July.

- August 1<sup>st</sup> forward, pro charge enforcement of unlicensed dog violations.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

It is difficult to predict what the impact on revenues will be as it is dependent on how many animals are registered during the first 7 months of the initiative, and how many tickets will be issued for non-compliance after that. There is the potential for some over time and advertisement costs incurred by the business units during the peak enforcement and registration period, but these costs will be recovered through revenue and existing budgets.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Status quo- This is not considered a viable option as the compliance rate remains very low and the resulting revenues fall far short on the cost for providing Animal Services.

Hiring Summer students- Although this has had varying degrees of success in the past, we are not positioned to consider this as part of our 2008 strategy, but it may be considered as an enhancement in future years.

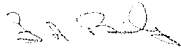
Proactive Campaign- from 1999-2002 Financial Services had a major licensing drive, Pitter Patter Paws. Although significant licensing and revenues were experienced, there was also a significant cost to administer the program and it was abandoned as expenses exceeded revenues. This may be an option as part of future strategies, but can not be a stand alone program at this time.

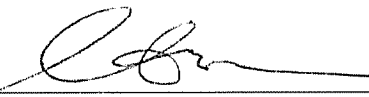
**ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A- Ammended Administrative order #11.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: S/Sgt. Robin McNeil, Halifax Regional Police 490-4817

Report Approved by:   
Deputy Chief Tony Burbridge, 490-7138

Report Approved by:   
Catherine Sanderson, Sr. Manager, Financial Services, 490-1562

APPENDIX A

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER #11**  
**Respecting fees for the registration of animals**  
**D-100**

IT IS ENACTED by the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality as follows:

1. (a). The Shelter Keeper for the Municipality is the Nova Scotia Society for the prevention of cruelty to Animals.  
 (b). The Shelter for the Municipality shall be the facility of the Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals located at 5 Scarfe Court, Halifax, N.S..  
 (c). The Shelter is authorized to receive any animals impounded by the Halifax Regional Municipality Animal Services.  
 (d). The Shelter Keeper may charge an redemption fee of \$100.00 from the owner of any impounded animal released to the owner.  
 (e). The Shelter Keeper may charge a daily boarding fee of \$25.00 from the owner of any impounded animal released to the owner.

2. The annual license fees payable by the owners of animals for the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2007 and 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2008 shall be as follows:

Unaltered dog	\$30.00
Unaltered and rabies inoculated dog	\$25.00
Spayed/Neutered dog	\$15.00
Spayed/Neutered and rabies inoculated dog	\$10.00
Senior citizens, upon presentation of Government issued identification confirm age 65 years or greater	20% discount
Service animal upon providing proof of the service animal status of the animal to be registered	No Charge
Kennel Registration Fees	\$100.00

3. The annual license fees payable by the owners of animals commencing April 1, 2008 shall be as follows:

Dog	\$50.00
Spayed/Neutered dog	\$15.00
Service Animal	No Charge
Senior citizens, upon presentation of Government issued identification confirm age 65 years or greater	20% discount

Kennel Registration Fees	\$100.00
Replacement Tag	\$5.00

4. The registration fee payable by the owners of animals for any period starting after the 1<sup>st</sup> of October of any year and continuing to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March of the following year, shall be the amounts indicated in Section (1) and (2) reduced by 33.3%.
5. Notwithstanding the foregoing license fees there will be a one time, special license fee of \$10.00 for all licenses purchased between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 - May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008.
6. Notwithstanding the forgoing license schedule as above, any registration or renewal received after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, will be issued for the 2008/09 licence period (1, 2 or 3 bonus months).