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Item No. 11.1.3

Halifax Regional Council
January 13, 2009

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan English", written over a horizontal line.

SUBMITTED BY:

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 15, 2008

SUBJECT: Breeding Kennel Fees

ORIGIN

At the July 8, 2008 session of Regional Council, Councillor Barkhouse requested a report that addresses a request to consider amending By-Law A-300 to assist owners of breeding kennels with the costs of registering their individual dogs.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that By-Law A-300 remain unchanged relative to the registration of all dogs.

BACKGROUND

The following legislation, Section 175 subsection (4) of the MGA, provides the municipality with the option to include this provision within HRM legislation:

The owner of a kennel of purebred dogs that are registered with the Canadian Kennel Club may, in any year, pay a fee set by council, by policy, as a tax upon the kennel for that year and upon payment of the amount, the owner of the kennel is exempt from any further fee regarding the dogs for that year.

Repealed By-Law D-100, Respecting the Registration and Regulation of Dogs, contained a provision relative to registering kennels. A fee of \$100 along with the owner/operators information and the business name, if applicable, entitled the owner to be registered with the Clerk. The provision did not allow for registration of individual dogs or the issuance of a unique identification system such as a dog tag.

On Sept 11, 2007 a Public Hearing was held allowing citizens the opportunity to provide feedback relative to the proposed By-Law A-300, Respecting Animals and Responsible Pet Ownership.

On October 23rd, 2007, a Supplementary Report was brought before Council outlining citizen feedback from the hearing and optional amendments for Council's consideration, including kennel registration fees. A staff review of the number of registered kennels under D-100 legislation revealed approximately twenty (20) registrations annually. In addition, there was an overlap in the regulatory intent of D-100 kennel registration (maintaining a list of kennels in the Municipal Registry) and enforcement of the Land Use By-Laws.

The recommendation was to remove the entire "Kennels" section from the A-300. Council voted in favour of the recommendation.

DISCUSSION

Council's decision to remove the "Kennel" sections from A-300 eliminated the potential conflict with HRM Land Use By-Laws.

Previously, individuals would pay a Kennel Registration Fee of \$100.00, with some assuming this permitted them to operate a kennel. However, the Kennel Registration Fee was not associated with the Land Use By-Law, therefore the individual's operation may have been in violation of the applicable Land Use By-Law.

In addition, the Kennel Registration form did not include any specifics pertaining to the individual dogs, just specifics of the Kennel owner, address and breed. This process did not allow Halifax Regional Police (HRP) to focus on the original intent of licencing individual dogs and the benefits it presents to owners, should Animal Services come in contact with the dogs .

Effective April 1, 2008 the dog license fee was increased to \$15.00 for altered dogs and \$50.00 for unaltered dogs. The significant differential is to recognize owners who have their pets sterilized and provide an economic incentive to recover the cost of surgery within a short period of time. Increased spay and neutering will also minimize the number of unwanted animals within the municipality.

The A-300 By-Law stipulates that all dogs registered with the HRM are provided an identification device ("dog tag"). Additionally, it is an offence for the tag not to be affixed to your dog. This dramatically increases the ability of HRM Animal Services Officers to access owner information at any time, expediting the return of a dog to its home.

In addition, a Council approved licensing strategy provided animal owners the opportunity to purchase a license for 10.00 from January 1, 2008 - June 31, 2008. Currently, the total number of licenses sold for the 2008/2009 fiscal year is 13,700. We believe the significant increase compared to this time last year is due to the licensing blitz, public awareness, and increased enforcement.

Staff has conducted research regarding Kennels that operate with the Halifax Regional Municipality. The findings are as follows:

- We have located approximately 62 kennels in HRM
- 27 of these kennels have 133 dogs licensed with HRM, representing an average of 4.9 dogs/kennel
- 35 kennels do not have any dogs licensed with HRM, making the assumption using the average above, this should reflect another 172 dogs that are not presently accounted for.
- Assuming all of those dogs are unaltered, registration is \$50/dog, representing \$15,250.00 in licensing revenue.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications as a result of this report based on Regional Council supporting the recommendation.

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

1. Amend By-Law A-300 to include a Kennel Registration component therefore requiring an amendment to Administrative Order 11 to reflect a Kennel Registration fee. This alternative is not recommended as it would not provide the details of all animals that are in the Municipality. If this recommendation was approved, there would be a budget implication due to the decrease in licensing revenue.
2. Amend By-Law A-300 to include a discount for licensing of Kennel dogs. This alternative is not recommended as this would give business owners an advantage over the owner of personal dog.

ATTACHMENTS

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.

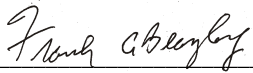
Report Prepared by: S/Sgt. Robin McNeil 490-4817

Report Approved by:



Tony Burbridge, Deputy Chief of Police

Report Approved by:



Chief Frank Beazley, Halifax Regional Police, 490-6500