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Halifax Regional Council  
June 25, 2002

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
Allan Waye, General Manager, Community Projects

**DATE:** June 18, 2002

**SUBJECT:** Control of Wild Cats

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## INFORMATION REPORT

### ORIGIN

Motion of Council of June 11, 2002 (Item 8.1) for staff to provide an interim report as to the status of the cat by-law. This Report also responds to Council motions of January 22, 2002 (items 10.1.1 and 13.1) through which Council requested that staff consider a spay and neuter by-law for pets.

### BACKGROUND

The issue of a proposed Municipal cat by-law has been discussed at Regional Council on numerous occasions. Most recently, on May 15, 2001, staff presented a report recommending that Council not proceed with the adopting of a cat by-law. At that time, Council moved that the staff further investigate the issue and come back with an alternative solution that would be more general, complaint driven, and far less costly than the proposed cat by-law.

**DISCUSSION****Comprehensive Animal Control Strategy - Needs Analysis**

In response to ongoing Council concerns about effective animal control services respecting dogs, cats and other animals, in November 2001, staff initiated a needs analysis process. The intention of the process was to prepare for the release of an Animal Control tender at the expiration of the current dog control and pound contract with the Provincial Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

The needs analysis identified that in addition to addressing concerns about dogs that are in violation of the HRM *By-Law Respecting the Registration and Regulation of Dogs*, the contracted dog control service is often called-out to respond to other animal concerns (i.e. cats, agricultural animals, injured birds, etc) that are outside of the contractual arrangement. The analysis identified a requirement for the HRM to:

- a) establish memoranda of understanding with other government and private sector agencies involved in animal issues (i.e. Provincial Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, animal hospitals, shelters and veterinarian services);
- b) establish the ability to respond to animal nuisance issues which are not subject to municipal by-law such as cat colonies and “wild” feral cat complaints; and
- c) establish service agreements through the By-Law Rationalization Working Group with other HRM business units involved in animal issues (i.e. Parks and Open Spaces, Halifax Regional Police, RCMP and Public Works and Transportation) so that services can be made efficient, effective and economic.

**Tender for Animal and Pound Control Services**

A tender for Animal Control and/or Pound Services designed to respond to the needs analysis was issued on June 8, 2002. The objective of the tender is to provide the municipality with comprehensive animal control and pound services. The tender requires vendors to:

- a) provide costs of providing a service to respond to calls about violations of existing animal control by-laws, specifically the HRM dog by-law, exotic pet by-laws, the former City of Dartmouth waterfowl by-law and the county defecation by-law;
- b) provide costs for responding to animal control complaints that are outside of municipal legislative responsibility (i.e. addressing a cat colony issue or responding to a cat attack call). These costs include referral to appropriate other government agencies (i.e. Provincial Department of Natural Resources for wildlife or Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans); and

- c) provide costs for conducting pre-authorized selective enforcement.

This service and costing information will be available when the tender closes on July 3, 2002. Staff will submit recommendations to Council subsequent to vendor proposals being assessed.

#### Spay and Neuter Program

The dog by-law provides reduced licensing fees for spayed or neutered dogs. This approach does not appear to be having a significant impact.

Staff recognizes that cats running at large can create a nuisance. A spay and neuter program may be of assistance in addressing this issue. The challenge for the HRM is to determine if they want to undertake such an initiative. As there is no municipal program at this time it would take substantial resources to develop and maintain a program. The approximate cost of spaying a female cat is \$ 120.00 and \$ 70.00 for neutering a male.

#### Intentions Respecting Cat By-Law

Currently, the HRM does not have a by-law or program to address cat related issues. There have been occasional responses in exceptional circumstances (i.e. cat colonies) for service fees. These services are not a budgeted item. The municipality has to determine what responsibility it deems appropriate.

#### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

To be determined further to Council's direction.

#### **MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL STRATEGY IMPACTS**

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**

Numerous alternatives exist which include:

- a) maintain the status quo;
- b) establish a framework through which concerned citizens can leave a deposit with animal control to borrow a live cat trap to capture nuisance cats;
- c) fund a spay and neuter program; or
- d) establish a cat by-law and program along with appropriate resources.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or fax 490-4208.

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