



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: March 19, 2025

Report Number: SRCS.25.04

Department: Community Services

Division: Community Standards

Subject: **SRCS.25.04 – Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law Enactment**

Purpose:

To enact a new Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law, amend the Kennel Licensing By-law and provide for Administrative Monetary Penalty enforcement and adjudication of both.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That staff report SRCS.25.04 be received;
- b) That the Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law No. 22-25 (Attachment 1) be enacted;
- c) That By-law No. 23-25 (Attachment 2) be enacted to include designated Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law violations in Schedule 'A' of the Administrative Penalty By-law No. 69-16, as amended;
- d) That By-law No. 24-25 (Attachment 3) be enacted to amend the Kennel Licensing By-law No. 188-05 and Municipal Code Chapter 321;
- e) That By-law No. 25-25 (Attachment 4) be enacted to include designated Kennel Licensing By-law violations in Schedule 'A' of the Administrative Penalty By-law No. 69-16, as amended;
- f) That By-law No. 26-25 (Attachment 5) be enacted to amend the Tariff of Fees By-law No. 121-24, to add fees for cat licensing and re-inspections; and
- g) That the following by-laws and all associated amendments be repealed:
 - i) Animal Keeping By-law No. 15-88 (Municipal Code Chapter 304)
 - ii) Animal Trespassing By-law No. 76-79 (Municipal Code Chapter 306)
 - iii) Cat Keeping By-law No. 23-88 (Municipal Code Chapter 309)
 - iv) Dog Control By-law No. 260-99 (Municipal Code Chapter 310)
 - v) Dog Licensing By-law No. 15-01 (Municipal Code Chapter 314)

Page 2

Contact Person(s):

Melinda Fartsalas, Manager of By-law Policy and Adjudication, Extension 5480

Don Guy, Director of Community Standards Division, Extension 2427

Report Approval:

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

Page 3

Key Messages:

- The proposed new Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law will replace the City's five existing animal keeping and regulation by-laws with a modernized and streamlined by-law that promotes responsible pet ownership, facilitates the health and safety of both animals and people, and helps to build a livable City.
- Amendments to the City's Kennel Licensing By-law are recommended to align with the new Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law.
- The Administrative Monetary Penalty System will provide an additional tool for efficient and effective enforcement and adjudication of the proposed new Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation by-law and amended Kennel Licensing By-law.

Background:

On October 9, 2024, Council received SRCS.24.13, which provided an update on the comprehensive review of Richmond Hill's five animal regulation by-laws. SRCS.24.13 summarized key directions from research and public consultation, presented a draft Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law (the "By-law") for comment, and recommended that staff report back to Council with a final proposed By-law addressing comments received.

Discussion:

Since the October Council Meeting, additional community engagement, benchmarking research, and consultation with animal experts was conducted. In particular, the draft By-law was posted on the City website for review and comment; and emailed for review to 291 public members who provided their contact information through the initial survey consultation.

Generally, comments received on the draft By-law were positive. For example, there was support expressed for cat licensing and provisions to help mitigate roaming cat populations and protect the City's local bird and wildlife population. Additionally, limits on the maximum number of pets, additional care and control provisions, and wildlife feeding prohibitions were well received.

Revisions to the Draft Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law

The following revisions to the draft By-law are recommended as a result of additional input received since October 2024. These revisions are reflected in the final Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law recommended for enactment (Attachment 1):

- *Maximum Pet Limit per Dwelling Clarification* – During the October Committee of the Whole meeting, a question was raised regarding whether maximum cat and dog limits applied to each pet owner or per household. The By-law has been revised to clarify that maximum dog, cat and total number of pet limits apply per

Page 4

dwelling unit or household. Additionally, residents may now keep any combination of seven animals per household; however, the specific maximum limits of three dogs and four cats per household still apply. Fish are exempt from the maximum limit, provided they are kept in enclosures which provide adequate space for their health and well-being.

- *Abandoned Animals* – Vaughan Animal Services recommended adding additional provisions to prohibit forms of animal abandonment. The By-law now has new provisions which prohibit owners from leaving an animal on a vacant property, and requiring owners who leave their animal in the care of another person to retrieve the animal by the agreed upon deadline.
- *New Positive Pets List* – Based on further research and consultation with Vaughan Animal Services, municipalities and animal experts, the By-law will now use a permitted pets list as opposed to a prohibited pets list. Currently, the City uses a prohibited list under Animal Keeping By-law No. 15-88 (Municipal Code Chapter 304) which lists animals that are not permitted to be kept as pets. Permitted lists instead outline what types of animals can be kept as pets and are concise and easier to understand. Permitted lists also take a precautionary approach by ensuring that each pet has been vetted to confirm they can be properly cared for and do not pose a threat to public safety.
- *Reviewed Types of Permitted Pets* – A number of comments were received suggesting that the types of animals prohibited as pets was too restrictive. The new permitted pets list (Schedule A of Attachment 1) has been reviewed in detail to determine additional inclusions through benchmarking, consultation with animal experts and a review of pets offered by local pet stores. As a result, the following animals were added to the permitted pets list, provided they are derived from self-sustaining captive populations:
 - the African pygmy hedgehog
 - additional rodent species such domestic mice, rats and jirds
 - reptile species recommended by animal experts and popular species offered by local pet stores

In addition, to the new pet inclusions, the following animal species have been excluded from the positive pets list based on the recommendations of animal experts:

- all Testudines (turtles and tortoises), due to their long lifespans, potential to spread disease such as salmonella, and difficulty being rehoused once surrendered to local shelters
- amphibians, as they are vectors for many zoonotic diseases which pose a significant risk to local wildlife and public health
- saltwater or marine fish, given most species are wildly caught and not suited for captive environments

Page 5

- *Application to Keep Animals Legally Owned Prior to By-law Enactment* – The current list of prohibited animals under the City's Animal Keeping By-law No. 15-88 (Municipal Code Chapter 304) is outdated and lacks clarity. As a result, some residents may currently legally own pets which will not be permitted under the new By-law. To prevent the displacement of animals, the new By-law has granted the Director of Community Standards authority to allow owners to keep these animals for the remainder of their lives.

Amendments to Other By-laws

The following additional by-law amendments are required for consistency purposes and to align with the new provisions and definitions of the Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law:

- *Administrative Penalties By-law* – Schedule A of the Administrative Penalties By-law No. 69-16 (Attachment 2) requires amendment to implement Administrative Penalties (tickets) for violations of the By-law. Fine amounts have been adjusted since presentation of the draft by-law to provide for better consistency of penalties for similar offences.
- *Kennel By-law* – It is recommended that Kennel Licensing By-law No. 188-05, (Municipal Code Chapter 321) be amended (Attachment 3) to align with the By-law. In particular, the definition of “kennel” is proposed to be amended to include cats, and enforcement provisions have been added to include designated violations in the City's Administrative Monetary Penalty System program (Attachment 4). Further considerations for animal-related businesses (for example, pet daycares and professional dog walkers) will be explored during the business licensing by-law review to be initiated later this year.
- *Tariff of Fees* – It is recommended that an amendment to the 2025 Tariff of Fees By-law (Attachment 5) be enacted to include new fees for cat licensing and additional inspections conducted by By-law Enforcement Officers effective July 1, 2025. The 2025 cat licensing fees are adjusted by 50% of the recommended annual fee reflecting that the 2025 licensing year will only include six months.

Public Awareness Plan

Upon enactment of the Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law, staff will implement a comprehensive communication plan to increase awareness for the new By-law regulations, and common animal-related complaints such as off-leash dogs in public areas, failure to clean dog waste, and maximum pet limits. Communication strategies will include:

- Updating the City website and animal-related webpages;
- Incorporating public service announcements in the City's annual letter to dog licensees;
- Networking with local community groups and businesses to create new opportunities for public awareness;

Page 6

- Collaborating with pet stores and veterinary clinics to post signage communicating an electronic link to the By-law;
- Attending local City led events to promote responsible pet ownership and provide answers to animal services related questions; and
- Utilizing social media and digital advertisements where permitted.

Enforcement

The City's Animal By-laws are currently enforced by Vaughan Animal Services through a contract that is to expire at the end of 2025. Staff are in the process of assessing enforcement options for the future. The City will continue to utilize a complaint-based approach to respond to animal-related service requests, and in areas where recurring issues are experienced, proactive patrols may be established.

Adding animal-related violations into AMPS program provides an additional enforcement tool to discourage non-compliance by providing a deterrent penalty option. Serious offences and Provincial regulated offences will continue to be enforced by charges pursuant to the Provincial Offences Act, 1990, the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019 (PAWS), or the Dog Owners' Liability Act, 1990 (DOLA) where applicable.

Financial Implications:

Implementing cat licensing would generate approximately \$10,000 in 2025, and \$20,000 annually thereafter to support the City provision of animal services and animal enforcement. Incorporating AMPS enforcement into the new By-law will result in a minimal increase in fine revenue.

Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

Enacting a new Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law supports the health and safety of animals and the public which relates to Pillar 3, Strengthening our Foundations, specifically, Priority 2, focusing on quality customer service and a continuous improvement mindset to support innovation and be responsive to residents, stakeholders, businesses, the private sector and colleagues.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format, please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment 1 – Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law No. 22-25
- Attachment 2 – By-law No. 23-25 to amend Schedule 'A' of the Administrative Penalty By-law No. 69-16 to include designated Responsible Pet Owner and Animal Regulation By-law No. 22-25 violations

Page 7

- Attachment 3 – By-law 24-25 to amend the Kennel Licensing By-law No. 188-05, Municipal Code Chapter 321
- Attachment 4 – By-law No. 25-25 to amend Schedule 'A' of the Administrative Penalty By-law No. 69-16 to include designated Kennel Licensing By-law No. 188-05 violations
- Attachment 5 – By-law No. 26-25 to amend Tariff of Fees By-law No. 121-24 to add fees for cat licensing and re-inspections

Page 8

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.25.04 - Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law Enactment.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attachment 1 - Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law No. 22-25.docx- Attachment 2 - By-law No. 23-25 AMPS By-law Amending By-law for Animal By-law Offences.docx- Attachment 3 - By-law No. 24-25 to amend Kennel By-law No. 188-05, Municipal Code Chapter 321.docx- Attachment 4 - By-law No. 25-25 AMPS By-law Amending By-law for Kennel By-law Offences.docx- Attachment 5 - By-law No. 26-25 to amend Tariff of Fees By-law No. 121-24.docx
Final Approval Date:	Mar 4, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Don Guy - Mar 4, 2025 - 12:43 PM

Tracey Steele - Mar 4, 2025 - 12:45 PM

Darlene Joslin - Mar 4, 2025 - 1:39 PM