

**From:** Ken

**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 10:36 PM

**To:** Clerks Richmondhill <clerks@richmondhill.ca>

**Subject:** Public Comments to be submitted to The Committee of The Whole Meeting Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 9:30 a.m

17 March, 2025

To The Mayor of Richmond Hill. Mr. David West.

Regional and Local Councillors

Deputy Mayor Godwin Chan

Joe DiPaola

Members of Council

Carol Davidson. Ward 1

Scott Thompson. Ward 2

Castro Liu. Ward 3

Simon Cui. Ward 4

Karen Cilevitz. Ward 5

Michael Shiu. Ward 6

**The Committee of the Whole Meeting. CW#04-25. Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.**

**The new Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law. Item 11.13. SRCS.25.04**

**Submissions from;**

Kenneth Stewart

Fontainebleau Community

Oak Ridges

Richmond Hill

Dear Mayor West. Regional and Local Councillors, Members of Council. Chairman Liu;

**I would like to request on behalf of myself and my wife and the 711+ known Richmond Hill residents who have been bitten by dangerous dogs since the last Bylaw Amendments in 2015; that the proposed Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law before you today NOT be enacted in its present form and that it be sent back to the Administration for significant amendments as directed by the Mayor, Chairman and Council today after reading this correspondence.**

The statistics for those 711+ victims of dog bites in Richmond Hill since the last Bylaw review in 2015, were provided to me at my written request each year to York Region. Health Protection Division. Community and Health Services Department who are required to be notified of all reported dog bites from Physicians and Police Constables under their Rabies Control Program in York Region. They provided these numbers specifically for Richmond Hill. In some years, as indicated below I did not obtain the number. These are the numbers for those years reported, **that total 711 dog bites!** Based on the trend, with no 2024 numbers one can quite easily assume that **there were most probably in the region of 1,000 people bitten by a dog in Richmond Hill since 2015! An appalling number that reveals the total failure of the much heralded "Responsible Pet Ownership Program" that was adopted by Council in 2015** with research back then provided by Lynsey Ormerod, who had been retained as Animal Services Educator at that time, whom I had correspondence with at that time expressing my concerns.

2015 - 82 dog bites

2016 - 94 dog bites

2018 - 131 dog bites

2020 - 134 dog bites

2022 - 130 dog bites

2023 - 140 dog bites

I would like the Committee to know that several years ago, I wrote an email to the then Manager of Richmond Hill, Bylaw Services requesting dog bite statistics, also how many dogs were licensed in Richmond Hill. My request was refused, informing me that I would have to submit a Freedom of Information Request to the City Clerk. The City Clerk's office informed me that I would have to pay a \$5 initial fee and that additional charges may be applied to obtain the data. As a Richmond Hill taxpayer I found this totally unacceptable and refused in principle to submit the request. I received dog bite data for Richmond Hill from York Region, Health Protection Division upon email request from me - with no "obstruction" and at no cost! I ask that Council request this information be made available to every taxpayer upon request with no charges!

My name is Kenneth Stewart. I am a 75 yr old man who with my wife moved to the Fontainebleau Community of Oak Ridges in 2011. My wife and I have always gone for daily walks to maintain our health. We used to walk on the sidewalks in our community in the Bayview and Bloomington Road area, even walking down along Olde Bayview Avenue down to Lake Wilcox and back - until we were charged at and menaced by growling, snarling dangerous dogs that came

running off their properties, without a leash at us on the sidewalk with no owner visible in half these instances. I was left defending my wife, whom I asked to get behind me while I attempted to calm the dog down with my dog skills, while calling out loudly for the owner to call the dog back, not knowing if anyone was actually on the property. **We have experienced 18 incidents of these attacks on us together or on me walking by myself since 2011. I have been bitten 3 times in those incidents (without breaking the skin thankfully)** The dogs in these incidents have ranged from Pitbull type dogs, two English bulldogs, Labrador-crosses, a Cairn Terrier, German Shepherd, a very psycho Karelian Bear dog and several smaller Cockapoo breeds. Several of these dogs still live in the community.

The shocking thing is, that in the vast majority of these confrontations the dog owners who eventually came to call their dog back, did not apologise at all! I reported several of these incidents to the RSPCA who had been contracted to provide Dog Bylaw Enforcement Services by Richmond Hill, and later to Vaughan Animal Services - with mixed results on these investigations where in the most recent incidents I was informed that enforcement action taken could not be provided to me astonishingly! Even being denied to know if the dog was licenced! There have been instances where I have reported attacks, and months later have seen the very same dogs that attacked us off-leash on the public street again! Some dog owners simply DO NOT care about their responsibilities as a dog owner - **a problem that will NOT be adequately addressed in the Amended Bylaw you have before you today!** The very reason why I am requesting The Committee of the Whole Bylaw NOT adopt it, but send back to the Administration for them to amend and incorporate the amendments that I am proposing below that I assure you **WILL** ensure responsible dog ownership in Richmond Hill. And **WILL** significantly lower the shocking and unacceptable number of dog bites on Richmond Hill residents.

**I will now provide the Committee with my proposed amendments;**

**Amendments that;** Significantly hold dog owners to a much higher level of accountability of control over their dogs **with a requirement for a mandatory Dog Owner Education Course and Test for dog owners convicted of violating the Bylaw, the cost of which shall be borne by them,** to retain their proposed new **Dog Owner Licence!**

**Item 1.**

**That; a licence be issued to the Dog Owner and not the dog! A "Dog Owner Licence" issued to a dog owner with each dog owned "Registered" to the owner, as is done with licences issued to owners of vehicles, boats, guns, and owners of many professional practices. - to obtain much greater legal accountability over an irresponsible owner of a dog, where upon multiple convictions of the Bylaw, or where a dog has bitten a person and the "Licenced Dog Owner" has been convicted of the offence and his/her dog euthanized as per my proposed Bylaw amendments; then that "Licenced Dog Owner" would have his/her licence revoked with no appeal, and would never be permitted to be a "Licenced Dog Owner" in Richmond Hill - Ever!**

**Item 2.**

**That; where a dog bites a person unprovoked, that dog shall immediately be determined to be a "Dangerous Dog" under the my proposed Bylaw Amendments and authority be given to**

a "Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer" to immediately designate the dog as a "Dangerous Dog" by serving a Notice to the owner. **The "Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer" is then authorised to seize the dog and bring it to a designated kennel, where it will be held until a conviction is upheld in a court of law against the owner, at which time the dog will be immediately euthanized with no appeal process at all!** The cost of kenneling the dog borne by the owner of the dog. **Where there is no conviction**, the dog shall be returned to the owner. **But if any additional charges are laid** in relation to the bite, such as a dog being off-leash off the owners property, or the dog "menacing" a person; then the dog owner will be required to take a **mandatory Dog Owner Education Course and Test at his/her cost, where upon passing of a required Test**, the dog will be returned to the owner.

**The safety of 711+ known residents of Richmond Hill residents who have been bitten by dangerous dogs since 2015 and traumatised by the experience, and will have received medical attention to treat their wounds and had a rabies shot also, and lost personal time in their life as a result - supersedes the interests of an increasing number of dog owners who have caused these events because of their negligence as a dog owner, and therefore should NOT be a "Licensed Dog Owner" in Richmond Hill - Period! In the interest of Public Safety. In my proposed amendments!**

**Item 3.**

**That; no person be permitted to own a dog in Richmond Hill that has bitten a person, and has been designated a "Dangerous Dog" by a "Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer" by serving a notice on the dog owner as is proposed in the Amended Bylaw before you. Where under sections 4.2.2 and Article 5 – the Dangerous Dogs section, where the owner of a dog that has bitten a person, and been convicted of the offence it appears - can still keep the dog at his home with conditions, such as posting "dangerous dog" signs around his home and muzzling his dog among other requirements.**

**I submit to the Committee that it is totally unacceptable for a dog that has bitten a person because of the negligence of the owner, to be permitted to be on that owner's property at all - Period! Under any circumstances and conditions because common sense and good judgement says that dog will eventually get off that property and bite another person again, just as many dogs have rushed off their properties to attack a person that has resulted in 700+ dog bites in Richmond Hill since 2015! A dog that has bitten a person - should be deemed a "Dangerous Dog" be immediately seized by a "Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer", and euthanized upon conviction of the irresponsible dog owner! This is the right thing to do in the interest of Public Safety! There is no cruelty in this at all!**

**Item 4.**

**That; after the Amended Bylaw before you has been sent back to the Administration and been returned with amendments I have suggested for adoption; that Bylaw Services immediately mail-out to every current licenced dog owner, and provide every new applicant for a "Dog Owner Licence" a pamphlet that lays out very clearly all the legal Bylaw responsibilities of a dog owner required in the Bylaw and fines for non-compliance - because dog owners have NOT been receiving this critical information at all from Bylaw Services and Richmond Hill Administration**

**public counters when licensing a dog!** That, I believe to a great degree, has resulted in the appalling number of 711+ dog bites in Richmond Hill since 2015 and probably hundreds more attacks where there was no bite, but trauma inflicted on residents nonetheless.

On three occasions I have appeared at the Municipal Building Service Counter, and at the Oak Ridges Community Centre counter requesting to purchase a dog licence and asking what information can I be given about my responsibilities as a dog owner? The answer each time - we don't have anything! On one occasion at the Municipal Building Service Counter, I was told I could go upstairs to ask from the information from Bylaw Services. This is totally unacceptable and in part has contributed to the problem we have today!

**Item 5.**

I further request that **Council require the Administration to provide annual statistical information to Council so that the effectiveness of the new Bylaw can be determined;** that being the number of reported dog bites, number of dog attacks on people, number of prosecutions. The number of Licenced Dog Owners and number of Registered Dogs owned by each in Richmond Hill. The number of dogs that have been designated "Dangerous Dogs" and have been euthanized. This statistical data to be made available to all residents of Richmond Hill upon request - with no fee! Because non-dog owners in Richmond Hill currently contribute massively to the annual cost of Dog Bylaw Enforcement Services currently contracted to the Vaughan Animal Services for "Patrol and Enforcement" that in 2015 was \$438,646.22 paid to the RSPCA at that time for these services. What the contract fee to Vaughan Animal Services currently is, a considerable amount funded by I am sure a significant number of non-dog owners!

**Item 6.**

Fines in the proposed Bylaw need to be doubled!

**Item 7.**

I further propose that Richmond Hill Council call for the Administration to complete a survey as to how many dogs are being kept in Richmond Hill? Because there has been at least a three fold increase in that number in my community since 2015 where at that time Lynsey Ormerod, who had been retained as Animal Services Educator informed me that based on analysis she had - only 10% of dogs in Richmond Hill were licenced! A current analysis needs to be completed because I never see any required dog licence tags on dogs at all today!

**Item 8.**

in 2018 had met personally with then Ward 1 Councillor Greg Beros recommending measures to educate dog owners of their responsibilities in problem areas of Richmond Hill by placing mobile signs stating "Attention Dog Owners. Problem dogs are in the community." Visit (the Web Site [xxxxx.com](http://xxxxx.com)) to know your responsibilities." With QR codes on the sign linking to a newly developed Animal Services Bylaw web page that has the Bylaw posted with explanations as to what responsible dog ownership means. These mobile signs I suggested would be part of the strategy to deal with the increasing number of problem dogs in the community. I highly recommended utilising these mobile signs that Councillor Beros was very supportive of, but sadly never was able to get

organised. **I highly recommend utilizing these signs to be used at the implementation of the New Amended Bylaw.**

I will close by saying that I have been around dogs my whole life. I was a dog owner, have worked border collies with sheep in Ireland on my family's farms. Have been around Australian Cattle Dogs on ranches in Alberta. I like good dogs and they like me a lot! I know what responsible dog ownership is. The situation we have in Richmond Hill is outrageous and out of control and very dangerous for its residents, my wife and I included. To get control of the situation the many irresponsible dog owners have to be held to account, be responsible or not allowed to own a dog in Richmond Hill - Period! And any dog that has bitten a person absolutely must be put down!

I very much want to thank The Mayor of Richmond Hill. Regional and Local Councillors, and all Members of Council for permitting me to provide my comments and recommendations in the sincere hope that the Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law before you today will be sent back to the Administration for the reasons I have articulated above.

Thank you all.

Kenneth Stewart