

Regarding the lack of adequate animal bylaws in our community

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing today as a concerned constituent, about the lack of adequate cat bylaws related to permanent identification and mandatory spay/neuter for cats permitted to free roam in our community.

The increase in ownership, movement and variety of animals kept as pets has resulted in problems with public safety, disease control and stray, lost and stolen animals. Carefully legislated and well-implemented permanent identification programs help to reunite pets and owners, reduce stress to individual animals and their owners, and reduce municipal daily care costs. The percentage of animals reunited with their owners in a community is directly connected to the quality of the licensing and identification program.

Cats breed prolifically, especially when a group of community cats has access to a food source. The continued growth of these groups, without any intervention, can put public safety and wildlife at risk, while the cats themselves are at risk of poor welfare. Sterilization of 80% or more of the cats in a group and continued monitoring is the only proven method of decreasing the cat population. If cats are removed from an area and the food source is still available, more cats will fill the empty space. The BC SPCA recommends that communities take steps to address their cat overpopulation issues by implementing spay and neuter programs.

The BC SPCA cares for more than 14,000 cats each year, approximately half of whom come to them as strays. While nearly every municipality in B.C. requires that dogs be licensed, very few have instituted cat licensing or a permanent ID strategy. For cat welfare to be improved in any community, regulatory and educational initiatives are needed. While mandatory permanent ID alone may not solve cat welfare and control issues, it can be a significant component of any community's efforts to address them.

Below is a link to the BC SPCA's Model Animal Responsibility Bylaw package, with the pertinent sections being on pages 19-24 of the document (pg 23-28 of the .pdf), which I hope that you will review. You can contact their bylaw and policy team at bylaws@spca.bc.ca if you have any questions related to their bylaw package.

<https://spca.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/BC-SPCA-Model-Animal-Responsibility-Bylaws-Sept-2017.pdf>

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,