

Oct. 4th, 2010

City of Richmond, BC
City Council
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC

Dear Honorable Councilors and Mayor Brodie:

I am grateful that you have taken such humane and responsible steps to improve the lives our animals in our city. You have my respect and my admiration for considering the ban and other proposals to make life in Richmond safer for domestic dogs.

There are several points I wish to address regarding the Proposal to Ban the Sale of Dogs in Storefronts. Based on reading the staff reports from December 3, 2009 (presented at the March 2 GPC meeting) and the Sept. 10th report from Glenn McLaughlin, it appears that there are two basic options to move forward with this proposal in order to avoid the status quo.

Based on my understanding of the materials submitted from staff and from interested parties, I hope you will consider the following options.

- Option 1):** Council can direct staff to prepare an amendment to Business Bylaw No. 7538, Schedule B, Section 8 to effectively ban the sale of dogs and puppies in retail stores (i.e. this would mean removing the domestic dog from the list of species that are exempt from prohibition for sale in Richmond's pet stores).
- Option 2):** Council can direct staff to prepare a proposal to amend Bylaw 7538 to incorporate the comprehensive oversight of pet stores suggested by the BC SPCA in Attachment 1 in the report from September 10. However, I feel the report stops short of the actual amount of oversight that would be required by the City, and I feel that oversight should also cover:
- a) Oversight of breeders in the Richmond City limits, including breeding licenses and inspections.
 - b) Ensuring that pet stores only dogs bred and raised within city limits so the breeders can be inspected by the City.
 - c) Ensure that pet stores provide standardized and comprehensive educational information to potential customers to help prevent animal abuse or neglect after purchase. (Note: Pet stores would be required to pay the cost of education and the City of Richmond would be required to provide oversight to these daily educational activities.)
 - d) Ensure the City ensures that a waiting period before sale (as suggested by the BC SPCA) is strictly enforced. Hence, the City will need to determine that the pet stores have not sold a dog to a person who has not visited the pet stores more than once.
 - e) Allow the Richmond Animal Shelter contractor (RAPS) to pass on all the costs to spay/neuter, feed and provide veterinary care for any animals that is surrendered to the Richmond Animal Shelter with proof of purchase at a Richmond pet store. Based on the number of dogs surrendered to RAPS, the cost to pet stores would be more than \$150,000 per year.

If you choose to direct staff to implement comprehensive oversight (Option 2) and grandfathering of pet stores, then it is important to note that the staff report indicating "There is no financial impact on the City" is incorrect.

To implement oversight of Richmond's pet stores to ensure they are in compliance with Animal Control and Business Licensing Bylaw and to ensure that all breeders are complying with animal welfare laws, it will be necessary to double or triple the number of animal control officers in Richmond. Currently, there is only one animal control officer on duty at any one time in Richmond, and oversight is nearly impossible. Additional oversight would therefore require a substantial increase in City funding for animal control.

On the other hand, if you choose ban the sale of dogs in pet stores (Option 1), in the long run, the cost to run the Richmond City Shelter should be reduced based on the fact that 57% of the dogs in the Richmond Animal Shelter are purebred, and that many are known to come from local pet stores (based on the receipts from pet stores that are surrendered with the animal). Based on reports of cruelty and neglect to pet store purchased dogs, a ban will help reduce these cases as well as surrenders to the Richmond Animal Shelter.

While action to ban dogs from sale might seem drastic from the point of view of council or from people selling animals or from business owners, I would like to explain why the opposite is true.

Today you will hear from rescue groups who have all rescued animals from people who have purchased them at pet stores and from horrible puppy mills.

The request by these rescue and advocacy groups to ban the sale of dogs *is NOT a fanatical request*. It is a necessary and measured action to take considering the cruelty of puppy mills, the trauma to breeding dogs, the failure of pet stores to screen their customers, the suffering of dogs not wanted after they are no longer puppies, costs to our local rescue groups and shelters and finally, the failure of the pet industry to regulate their own industry to prevent cruelty and overpopulation.

These conditions for our pet store- and puppy mill dogs are what are extreme and drastic, not the proposal to ban the sale of dogs in pet stores. The advocates of this ban are simply trying to stop the cruelty and suffering that they see every day, before more animals end up in unspeakable danger.

As an example of this danger, last year two German Shepherd dogs were found by a realtor in a Richmond house after it was raided by the RCMP. Both shepherds were just under 1 year old and were found locked in the garage. When the realtor found the dogs, one dog was vomiting rubber bands – which was the only thing she had to eat in well over two weeks. The other dog was dead and decomposing in the garage. I sit before you today, asking you to take action on this matter because those dogs were purchased by a person who should never have had dogs.

Shopping for a dog should not be as easy as shopping for vegetables. If you were the person to pull those dogs, one dead and one alive, out of an abandoned drug house in Richmond, wouldn't you be here today asking for a changes in the law to prevent any more suffering? Please take action.

With my upmost respect,

CHRISTIE LAGALLY

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