



To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** May 19, 2010
From: Dave Semple
 General Manager, Parks and Recreation **File:** 12-8060-02-09/Vol 01
Re: Implementation of the Professional Dog Walker Program

Staff Recommendation

That:

1. The proposed Professional Dog Walker Program be endorsed.
2. The Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932, Amendment Bylaw No. 8598 (attachment 1) be introduced and given first, second and third reading.
3. The Business License Bylaw No. 7360, Amendment Bylaw No. 8619 (attachment 2) be introduced and given first, second and third reading.

Dave Semple
 General Manager, Parks and Recreation
 (604-233-3350)

Att. 2

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Business Licences	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Community Bylaws	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Law	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

At the July 13, 2009 Council Meeting, an amended version of the Dogs in Parks Management Strategy was adopted by Council. This strategy included a provision to allow professional dog walkers (registered through a special licensing program) to have up to four dogs off-leash in a designated off-leash area (other dog walkers are currently allowed three). A delegation of professional dog walkers attended and requested that consideration be given to increasing the allowable number of off-leash dogs to six or eight dogs.

At that Council meeting the following referral was made to staff:

“That staff investigate increasing the number of dogs permitted off-leash for professional dog walkers;”

This report responds to that referral.

Analysis

Background

The City of Richmond currently regulates professional dog walkers by requiring adherence to applicable bylaws such as the Animal Control Regulation Bylaw and the Business License Bylaw. Currently dog walkers (professional or not) are permitted a maximum of three dogs off-leash provided they are in a designated off-leash area. Professional dog walkers typically walk an average of eight dogs at a time, and have approached the City requesting that they be permitted to walk more than three dogs off-leash while in designated off-leash areas.

City staff held focus group sessions with professional dog walkers to discuss the concept of a professional dog walking program which includes additional off-leash privileges. The members of this focus group have been proactive in initiating and developing the proposed program and many of the guidelines are based on their input.

The focus group discussions confirmed that demand for the services provided by dog walkers has increased in recent years. This is further supported by the increase in the number of business licenses issued to professional dog walkers by the City (three licenses in 2004 up to twelve so far in 2010). Given the number of professional dog walkers currently using our parks, it is advantageous to ensure that their use is compatible with other park users and dog owners.

Clients who use dog walkers tend to be people working long hours or persons with mobility issues. In many cases the dogs would not receive adequate exercise without the services of the dog walker.

Proposed Program

Staff propose a professional dog walking program based on the terms set out in the attached bylaw amendments.

The chart below outlines the major changes to the current circumstances:

Current Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	Proposed Changes included in the Animal Control Regulation Bylaw and the Business License Bylaw
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no specific reference to professional dog walkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> official recognition and permit program for professional dog walkers who wish to walk up to six dogs off leash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximum of three dogs off leash in designated off leash area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximum of six dogs off leash at McDonald Beach (possibility for expansion to other off leash areas in the future)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no liability insurance required (many dog walkers currently voluntarily carry at least 2 million dollars of liability insurance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 million dollars of liability insurance required (City named as additional insured)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no identification required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> professional dog walkers with a permit must wear city issued identification while taking more than three dogs off leash in permitted area

The cost for the permit would be \$100 per a year which will go towards program administration and additional bylaw enforcement. Dog walkers will also purchase identification vests at cost (estimated to be \$30) which would be conspicuous for the bylaw officers and members of the public to see. The vests would be worn when more than three dogs are off leash in the permitted area (initially McDonald beach but could expand to other areas in the future). The vests can provide the dog walkers with additional credibility to other park users, who will know from signage that they are professionals permitted by the City.

The permit would be available from the front of house at City Hall and could be purchased at the same time as a business license. As part of the permit process professional dog walkers would demonstrate proof of insurance which lists the City as an additional insured This portion of the permit would be self regulating because insurance providers notify the City any time it is removed as an additional insured. Most dog walkers voluntarily carry some insurance. This program would determine the type of insurance to be purchased.

Bylaw officers currently patrol McDonald Beach and other off leash areas looking for bylaw infractions such as dangerous dog issues and too many dogs off leash. Under this program they

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would also be checking to ensure that the requirements of the dog walker licenses are adhered to. This would include ensuring conditions such as the vests are worn while walking more than three dogs off leash and that no more than six dogs are walked off leash by permit holders at a time.

The timing of the program implementation will be based on the adoption of the Business License Bylaw. The earliest date would be July 2010 to ensure that all notification requirements are met.

Staff will report back to Council with a status update of the program after six months (Winter 2010). It is expected that the program will be successful as the focus group participants are responsible dog walkers with a vested interest in maintaining the additional off-leash privileges.

If this initial phase of the program at McDonald Beach is successful staff will report back to Council with recommendations that it expand to other off-leash locations.

Financial Impact

The cost of \$750 to produce signage at McDonald Beach to identify the off leash area and to explain the professional dog walker permit. Funding is within the existing operating budget.

Conclusion

Professional dog walking is a growing business in Richmond, with more dog owners relying on professionals to ensure their dogs receive adequate exercise for health and wellness. A professional dog walking license program will permit the professional dog walkers to increase the number of off leash dogs under their care, and will improve the accountability of the dog walkers.



Jodie Shebib
Manager, Parks Programs
(604-244-1275)

JS:js



Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932, Amendment Bylaw No. 8598

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

- 1. Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932, as amended, is further amended by deleting subsection 2.3.5.2 in its entirety and substituting the following:

2.3.5.2 As exceptions to subsection 2.3.5.1:

- (a) No owner may have more than three (3) dogs off-leash at any one time, except an owner who is a professional dog walker with a valid off-leash permit may have up to six (6) dogs off-leash in the designated dog off-leash area within McDonald Park; and
(b) No owner may permit a dangerous dog to be off-leash in a designated dog off-leash area.

- 2. Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932, as amended, is further amended at section 9.1 by adding the following definitions in alphabetical order:

OFF-LEASH PERMIT means a permit issued to a professional dog walker pursuant to subsection 2.3.2 of the Business Licence Bylaw No. 7360, as amended or replaced from time to time

- 3. This Bylaw is cited as "Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932, Amendment Bylaw No. 8598".

FIRST READING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

MAYOR

Four horizontal lines for signature of Corporate Officer

CORPORATE OFFICER

Approval stamp: CITY OF RICHMOND, APPROVED for/content by originating dept., APPROVED for legality by Solicitor, with handwritten initials.



**BUSINESS LICENCE BYLAW NO. 7360,
AMENDMENT BYLAW 8619**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

1. Business Licence Bylaw No. 7360, as amended, is further amended by adding the following after section 2.2.1:

2.3 Professional Dog Walkers – Off-Leash Permits

2.3.1 A **professional dog walker** may have up to six (6) dogs under his or her care or control off-leash in the **designated dog off-leash area** within McDonald Park, provided the **professional dog walker** holds a valid **off-leash permit** and complies with all applicable **City** bylaws and the terms and conditions of the **off-leash permit**.

2.3.2 The **Licence Inspector** may issue an **off-leash permit** to a **professional dog walker** if the **professional dog walker** has met the following requirements, to the satisfaction of the **Licence Inspector**:

- (a) has completed an **off-leash permit** application, in a form and containing such information required by the **Licence Inspector**,
- (b) has a valid business licence issued by the **City** to the **professional dog walker** or **professional dog walker's** business;
- (c) has provided a certificate of insurance, in a form and on terms acceptable to the **City's** Risk Manager, to provide \$5,000,000 general liability insurance and naming the **City** as an additional insured;
- (d) has not had a history of non-compliance with this bylaw, other **City** bylaws or the terms and conditions of previous **off-leash permits** issued to the **professional dog walker**; and
- (e) has paid to the **City** the **off-leash permit** fee specified in Schedule C, which is attached to and forms a part of this bylaw.

2.3.3 The **Licence Inspector** may suspend or revoke an **off-leash permit** if the holder of the **off-leash permit** contravenes any provision of this bylaw or any term or condition of the **off-leash permit**.

- 2.3.4 An **off-leash permit** is valid for one (1) year from the date of issue or for such other period as may be specified in the **off-leash permit**. No portion of the **off-leash permit** fee paid pursuant to subsection 2.3.2(e) of this bylaw will be refunded if the **off-leash permit** is cancelled, suspended, revoked or otherwise terminated prior to the expiration date.
- 2.3.5 Every holder of an **off-leash permit** must comply with, and every **off-leash permit** issued under this bylaw is subject to, the following requirements, restrictions and regulations, to the satisfaction of the **Licence Inspector**:
- (a) comply with all applicable **City** bylaws, including in particular Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932;
 - (b) maintain throughout the term of the **off-leash permit**, general liability insurance in an amount not less than \$5,000,000, with the **City** named as an additional insured and containing such other terms required by the **City's** Risk Manager;
 - (c) ensure that all dogs under their care or control are wearing a valid municipal dog licence;
 - (d) wear an identification vest assigned by the **City** while walking more than three (3) dogs off-leash at the **designated dog off-leash area** within McDonald Park;
 - (e) immediately present a valid **off-leash permit** upon request by an Animal Control Officer, Richmond RCMP officer, or **License Inspector** with proper **City** staff identification;
 - (f) limit the number of off-leash dogs under his or her care or control:
 - (i) to no more than six (6) dogs while within the **designated dog off-leash area** at McDonald Beach Park; and
 - (ii) to no more than three (3) dogs while within all other **designated dog off-leash areas**;
 - (g) not walk with other **professional dog walkers** while having more than three (3) dogs under their care or control off-leash;
 - (h) keep dogs under their care or control on a leash until and unless they are in a **designated dog off-leash area**; and
 - (i) comply with any additional terms and conditions set out in the **off-leash permit**.

- 2. Business Licence Bylaw No. 7360, as amended, is further amended at section 7.1 by adding the following definitions in alphabetical order:

DESIGNATED DOG OFF-LEASH AREA means an area posted by sign, which defines the geographic area and/or time period when dogs can be off-leash

OFF-LEASH PERMIT means a permit issued to a **professional dog walker** pursuant to subsection 2.3.2 of this bylaw

PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKER means an individual whose business or employment is walking dogs owned by other persons

- 3. Business Licence Bylaw No. 7360, as amended, is further amended by adding the following after Schedule B to Bylaw No. 7360:

SCHEDULE C TO BYLAW NO. 7360

OFF-LEASH PERMITS

Annual permit fee \$100

- 4. This Bylaw is cited as “**Business Licence Bylaw No. 7360, Amendment Bylaw 8619**”.

FIRST READING _____
 SECOND READING _____
 THIRD READING _____
 ADOPTED _____



 MAYOR

 CORPORATE OFFICER