



## City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee  
**Date:** November 9, 2009  
**From:** Dave Semple  
General Manager, Parks and Recreation  
**File:** 12-8060-02-40/Vol 01  
**Re:** Prohibition on the Sale of un-neutered or un-spayed Rabbits in Pet Stores

### Staff Recommendation

1. That Business Regulation Bylaw No. 7538, Amendment Bylaw No. 8524 (Attachment 1) be introduced and given first, second and third reading.
2. That Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 7321, Amendment Bylaw No. 8556 (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			
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>		<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Business Licences .....		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Law .....		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b>
			YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the June 23, 2009 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee Meeting, the following referral was made to staff:

*"That staff bring back a bylaw to ban the sale of un-neutered rabbits in stores."*

### Analysis

The Business Regulation Bylaw No. 7538 restricts certain types of animals from being sold in Richmond. The list of prohibited animals includes, but is not limited to: primates (such as chimpanzees), chiroptera (such as bats) and all members of the lagomorpha species (such as hares and pikas) except rabbits.

Currently there are rabbits running loose in many areas of the City, including parks and agricultural areas. Animal and wildlife experts believe the rabbits are domestic breeds, not breeds found in the wild, and that these rabbits were either abandoned by their owners or are descendants of those abandoned rabbits.

At-large domestic rabbit breeds have become problematic in Richmond for various reasons:

1. Damage to flowers and plants in public parks. An influx of rabbits is damaging the plants, grass and trees by eating and defecating in the parks.
2. Damage to crops. The increased number of rabbits in Richmond agricultural areas has caused a direct financial burden to the farmers by eating valuable crops.
3. Increased rodent activity. Some visitors to Richmond parks, particularly Minoru Park, are bringing food for the rabbits. The food is not always eaten immediately by the rabbits and the leftovers are a potential food source for rats.
4. Clashes between the rabbits and vehicles. The large number of rabbits running loose in Richmond has resulted in a number of the animals being hit by cars.

There are currently two pet stores which sell live animals in Richmond with another one potentially re-opening. In addition the Society and Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (SPCA) operates an adoption centre and the Richmond Animal Protection Society (RAPS) runs the City owned animal shelter. Both the SPCA and RAPS ensure that all animals (rabbits included) are spayed or neutered prior to adoption. The remaining pet stores do not spay or neuter animals prior to sale. City staff conducted phone interviews with managers at all licensed pet stores and adoption centers offering live animals in Richmond requesting the following information:

1. Does your store sell rabbits?
2. If you sell rabbits do you spay or neuter them prior to sale?
3. If you sell rabbits how many do you sell in a week?
4. What is the cost of a rabbit at your store?



The chart below illustrates the phone results:

Pet Store or Source	Sell Rabbits?	Spay or Neuter?	No. of Rabbits Sold per Week	Cost of Rabbits
PJ's Pets	yes	No	5	\$54
Pet Habitat	no	n/a	n/a	n/a
SPCA Adoption Centre	yes (adoption for a fee)	yes	1 per month	\$65
RAPS	yes (adoption for a fee)	yes	1 per month	\$50
Petcetera	currently closed	n/a	n/a	n/a

According to these results PJ's Pets sells approximately 260 un-spayed or un-neutered rabbits annually. Other stores do not currently sell rabbits, however there is nothing preventing them from doing so in the future.

The Richmond Animal Protection Society, the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Vancouver Rabbit Rescue and Advocacy and other animal advocate groups all endorse spay and neuter requirements for animals being adopted. Experts in these organizations indicated that one of the most effective way to manage the rabbit population is to ensure that all domestic rabbits are spayed or neutered.

There are three options relating to the sale of rabbits in Richmond:

Option:	Recommendation	Cost
1. Maintain the Status Quo	Not recommended	None
2. Ban the sale of all rabbits in Richmond Pet stores.	Not Recommended	None
3. Ban the sale of rabbits which are not neutered or spayed.	<i>Recommended</i>	None

**Option One:** Maintain the status quo. *Not recommended.*

This option is not recommended as the number of rabbits running loose has increased in recent years. The Richmond Animal Protection Society, as the management contractor for the City's Animal Shelter, currently houses (42) forty-two rabbits and is successful in adopting-out an average of one rabbit per month. The ratio of surrenders to adoptions is not sustainable for the City's shelter. Adding to the burden is the average \$50 cost to spay or neuter each rabbit that is surrendered. Spaying and neutering of the rabbits is absolutely necessary to control the rabbit population both inside and outside the animal shelter.

**Option Two:** Ban the sale of all rabbits in Richmond Pet stores. *Not Recommended.*

Banning the sale of all rabbits in Richmond is problematic because it does not allow for responsible pet owners to legally obtain pets from pet stores. It may also present hardships for businesses which profit from the sale of rabbits.

**Option Three:** Require that all rabbits sold in Richmond pet stores be spayed or neutered. *Recommended.*

Under this option, rabbits are permitted for sale but they are required to be spayed or neutered. This will help control the rabbit population as a whole while balancing the demand of those residents who wish to purchase rabbits as pets. It is worth noting that the City of Kelowna has experienced similar rabbit overpopulation issues, and they have adopted a bylaw which requires all rabbits for sale be spayed or neutered.

The amendments proposed in this report should go into effect three months from the date of adoption of the amendment bylaw in order for businesses currently selling rabbits time to adjust to the new rules.

The bylaw will require that pet stores provide proof that the rabbits being sold in their store are spayed or neutered in the form of a written confirmation from a veterinarian. This certificate must be provided to all persons purchasing a rabbit, or to license inspectors and animal control officers upon request.

Fines for selling a rabbit that has not been spayed or neutered, or for failing to produce a certificate of spay or neuter to a license inspector or animal control officer will be \$100. This is reflected in the amendments to the Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 7321.

### **Financial Impact**

Enforcement for this initiative will be reactive on a complaint basis only utilizing existing staffing resources.

### **Conclusion**

Staff recommends the adoption of the proposed changes to the City's Business Regulation Bylaw No. 7538 and the Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 7321, Amendment Bylaw No. 8556 to prohibit the sale of un-neutered and un-spayed rabbits at all pet stores in Richmond.



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



Wayne G. Mercer  
Manager, Community Bylaws  
(604-247-4601)

JS:js





City of Richmond

Attachment 1  
Bylaw 8524

**Business Regulation Bylaw No. 7538,  
Amendment Bylaw No. 8524**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

1. The Business Regulation Bylaw No. 7538, as amended, is further amended at Part Twelve: Pet Store Regulation by adding the following after section 12.8:

**12.9 Duties of Pet Store Operator - Rabbits**

12.9.1 Every **pet store operator** must:

- (a) spay or neuter, or cause to be spayed or neutered, each rabbit offered for sale;
- (b) upon request by an **animal control officer** or **licence inspector**, produce for inspection a certificate dated and signed by a veterinarian verifying that a rabbit offered for sale has been spayed or neutered; and
- (c) provide to the purchaser of each rabbit sold a certificate dated and signed by a veterinarian verifying that the rabbit has been spayed or neutered.

2. The Business Regulation Bylaw No. 7538, as amended, is further amended at Section 8 of Schedule B: PROHIBITED ANIMALS by deleting the reference to "Lagomorpha (such as hares and pikas), except rabbits" and substituting the following:

Lagomorpha (such as hares and pikas) except neutered or spayed rabbits

3. This Bylaw comes into force and effect three (3) months from the date of adoption of the Bylaw.
4. This Bylaw is cited as "**Business Regulation Bylaw No. 7538, Amendment Bylaw No. 8524**".

FIRST READING

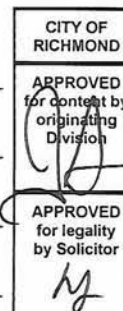
SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
CORPORATE OFFICER





## City of Richmond

## Bylaw 8556

**Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 7321,  
Amendment Bylaw No. 8556**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

1. That Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 7321, as amended, is further amended at Schedule B3 by adding the following in numerical order:

**SCHEDULE B 3****BUSINESS REGULATION BYLAW NO. 7538**

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Offence	Bylaw Section	Fine
failure to spay or neuter a rabbit offered for sale	12.9.1(a)	\$100
failure to produce a certificate of spay or neuter	12.9.1(b)	\$100

2. This Bylaw is cited as "Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 7321, Amendment Bylaw No. 8556".

FIRST READING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR\_\_\_\_\_  
CORPORATE OFFICER

CITY OF RICHMOND
APPROVED for content by originating dept.
APPROVED for legality by Solicitor