



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee

Date: April 28, 2014

From: Phyllis L. Carlyle
General Manager, Law & Community Safety

File: 12-8060-01/2014-Vol 01

Re: Summer Dog Programs

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled Summer Dog Programs (dated April 28, 2014 from the General Manager, Law & Community Safety) be received for information.

Phyllis L. Carlyle
General Manager, Law & Community Safety
(604-276-4104)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE
Engineering & Public Works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
RCMP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

This report supports Council's Term Goal #1:

To ensure Richmond remains a safe and desirable community to live, work and play in, through the delivery of effective public safety services that are target to the City's specific needs and priorities.

In the past few years there have been increased levels of dog complaints and a growing demand from residents for more animal control enforcement services. As the population in the area increases in density, these demands are expected to escalate and put additional pressure on fixed municipal resources. Innovative programs related to animal services are one way to address present and future demands to service delivery levels.

Analysis

Background

Community Bylaws enforces the Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932, as does RAPS during normal business hours. Thus far in 2014, the Bylaw department has received 56 complaints of dogs off leash with many of the complaints originating from the City's dyke areas.

A preliminary analysis of complaint data indicated that a majority of the complaints (33 of 56) were received from a single resident. In reviewing the location of the complaints most were located on the dyke between Garry Point Park (North) and Terra Nova Park.

In order to define the scope of the problem, staff from both Parks and Community Bylaws departments agreed to conduct a census of the area. During the month of March, non-uniformed staff was deployed on 8 separate occasions to conduct patrols. Patrols were conducted during the hours of 7 am to 11 am, 10 am to 2 pm, and 3 pm to 7 pm. In order minimize influence on owner and dog behaviours, staff were directed not to interact with the public, but to observe activities from a distance and take appropriate notes.

Census Results

An analysis of the results indicated that a total of 231 dogs were observed during the census period, for an average of 29 dogs per patrol. Of the 231 dogs observed, 52 dogs were observed to be "off-leash" (23%) and 17 dogs were clearly without a dog license (7%). The number of dogs without dog licenses may be significantly higher as the 7% represents only those instances where a missing license was verified through staff observations.

Risks of Off-leash and Unlicensed Dogs

The increase in Richmond's human and canine populations over the past few years has resulted in higher levels of pedestrian and dog traffic in public areas. Dog attacks, bites and

aggressiveness result in some serious injuries to residents and other animals in the community. In 2013, the City had 55 dog bite incidents.

To address these types of incidents responsible pet ownership should be promoted. Two key factors that are accepted “best practices,” and standard in most municipalities, involve dog owners ensuring that the pet is wearing a valid dog license and ensuring that their pet is on a leash, except when the dog is in a designated off leash area.

The City’s Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 7932 requires that dogs remain leashed and in control while in public. An unleashed dog is not only at risk, but may pose a risk to other dogs and to the public.

Proper identification is an essential factor that contributes to responsible dog ownership. An important piece of dog identification is a dog license. A license indicates that a lost or stray dog has an owner and that the pet should be returned to a shelter. Animal Control officers use dog licenses to quickly access information which helps reunite the missing pet with their rightful owner.

Dog Licensing Programs and Enforcement

To ensure that Richmond remains a safe community, the Bylaws division intends to launch two programs this spring which will encourage responsible dog ownership.

The Dog License Canvassing program, will involve collaboration with Community Bylaws and the Engineering and Public Works-Environmental Sustainability department. Leveraging the synergies of combined efforts, dog license canvassers will be deployed “door to door” to promote responsible dog ownership. Residents will receive information on responsible dog ownership and the requirements of the City’s Animal Control Regulation Bylaw. Canvassers, as a convenience to residents, will have the ability to facilitate contact with the City’s dog license registry by phone, take credit card payments on site, and issue a dog licenses. In addition, canvassers will be able to answer questions and distribute pamphlets in relation to the City’s Pesticide Use Control Bylaw No. 8514.

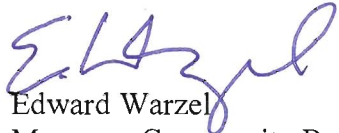
An Enhanced Dog Enforcement program will focus on high pedestrian and dog traffic areas. Community Bylaws officers with RCMP auxiliaries, and the support of the Parks department, will dedicate resources to City’s public areas such as beaches, dykes, playgrounds, and trails. Officers will provide a visible presence and enforce dog regulations where appropriate. The focus of this program will be to educate the public regarding responsible pet ownership, increase dog leash awareness, and encourage dog licensing. The Community Bylaws and the Parks department will be preparing an information pamphlet to provide educational material on safe and responsible dog behaviour while in Richmond parks.

Financial Impact

It is expected that program costs will be covered by surplus funding due to vacancies and potential off setting revenues.

Conclusion

Both the proposed Dog license Canvassing program and the Enhanced Dog Enforcement program will provide effective public safety services that will target community concerns while enhancing the safety and the desirability of our community.



Edward Warzel
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