## **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 28, 2014**

Item 1, Report No. 4, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted, as amended, by the Council of the City of Vaughan on January 28, 2014, as follows:

## By approving the following:

1) That the following recommendation, as set out in Communication C9 from the Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Service/City Solicitor and the Director of By-law & Compliance, dated January 27, 2014, be approved:

That consideration of including constrictor snakes in Prohibited Species Schedule 'B' of the Vaughan Animal Control By-law # 53-2002 be deferred, maintaining the existing size restriction of not larger than 3 metres, pending further review and consultation with Reptilia Inc., and other pet industry stakeholders as required.; and

That Communication C7 from Mr. Andre Ngo, Reptile Zoo and Education Facility, Rutherford Road, Vaughan, dated January 26, 2014, be received.

## 1 VAUGHAN ANIMAL SERVICES BY-LAW REVIEW & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 2) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services/City Solicitor and Director of By-law and Compliance, dated January 21, 2014, be approved;
- 3) That Communication C4, presentation material entitled, "Animal Control By-law #53-2002 Proposed Amendments", be received;
- 4) That the following deputations and communications be received:
  - 1. Ms. Laureen D'Alessandro, Woodbridge;
  - 2. Mr. Paul Oliver, Urban Nature Store, East Mall, Toronto and Communication C2, dated January 20, 2014; and
  - 3. Ms. Liz White, Animal Alliance of Canada, Broadview Avenue, Toronto and Communication C3, dated January 21, 2014; and
- 5) That Communication C1 from Mr. Louis McCann, President and CEO, PIJAC Canada, Polytek Street, Ottawa, dated January 20, 2014, be received.

#### Recommendation

The Commissioner of Legal & Administrative Services/City Solicitor and Director of By-law and Compliance recommend:

- 1. That Animal Control By-law 53-2002, as amended, be further amended in accordance with the recommendations contained within this Report, to include:
- a. restrictions to better address aggressive or menacing dog behaviours in order to minimize the potential of a bite or future incident;
- b. restrictions that prohibit dogs from being left unattended or tethered in places that may create a possible risk to humans, themselves or other animals;

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- c. restrictions on the feeding of wildlife or use of wildlife attractants in order to prevent the intentional or unintentional luring of animals in residential areas;
- d. restrictions on the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores and retail establishments, unless sourced from a shelter, humane society or rescue organization;
- e. adoption of an improved schedule of prohibited species;
- f. delegation of authority to the City's Hearings Officer to preside over appeal hearings regarding the By-law; and
- 2. That Fees and Charges By-law 396-2002, as amended, be further amended to reflect the introduction of an appeal process fee of \$125.

## Contribution to Sustainability

Adoption of the recommendations contained within this Report reflects a more progressive and proactive approach intended to reduce proliferation of strays resulting from unwanted and abandoned pets, and greater protection of health and well-being of our communities, environment and natural wildlife.

## **Economic Impact**

The recommendations within this Report include the establishment of a new fee of \$125 for appeals relating to muzzling orders or other restrictions imposed with respect to a menacing or biting dog, in order to offset related costs of administering the appeal process. The City of Vaughan 2014-2017 Budget Guidelines – User Fees identifies that it is inherent within the budget process to maximize costs recovered on services provided, inclusive of submissions for new "user fee" opportunities for existing non-revenue generating services.

Staff expect an increase in appeal applications with the introduction of the authority to impose preventative control measures through issuance of Orders under the By-law. An estimated projection of 10% of possible Orders issued may result in an expected 8 to 10 appeal applications in 2014 at a fee of \$125 per application. This increase is based on logical projection and review of 85 dog bite investigations having been carried out in 2013. Further, with the City's annual hearings schedule through the Administrative Monetary Penalty program providing three hearing dates per month, staff anticipate that the increase in related appeal hearings can be accommodated within the current hearings schedule. However, should a demand arise for scheduling of additional hearing dates, the additional projected \$1,250 (10 appeals @ \$125) appeal fee revenue will recover costs associated with two additional full days of hearings, without increased financial pressure on the projected 2014 Departmental operating budget.

Implementation of the Communication Strategy developed by staff, at the request of Council, to advance responsible pet ownership will require funding. Providing and sustaining public outreach, education and awareness initiatives is becoming increasingly challenging. Although the Department continues to capitalize on "in-kind" services through partnering with Corporate Communications, Access Vaughan and other departments, the demands to sustain this focus is outpacing Departmental fiscal assets and resources (both human and financial). During the 2013 fiscal year, in excess of 200 over-time service hours were attributed to attending events outside of core business hours (after 6:00 pm and on weekends), with an additional \$7,000 spent on promotional materials. Estimated costs associated with sustaining a similar level of public outreach are projected at \$9,000+ in continued over-time hours and an estimated 30% increase (approximately \$3,000) for

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additional promotional materials. As public awareness and knowledge increases, staff anticipate an increase in demand for attendance at public forums and events adding pressure to current limited resources.

#### **Communications Plan**

Upon adoption of the amending By-law, communication and public outreach will be facilitated through notification to key industry stakeholders, pet industry partners and known advocates. Information pamphlets identifying key changes will be made available at community centres, the Vaughan Animal Shelter, By-law & Compliance Office at City Hall, distributed by field officers and provided at public events and forums.

Staff will continue to seek opportunities to educate youth on the importance of responsible pet ownership and bite prevention, through attendance at school functions and improved partnerships with school officials, as time and resources permit.

In addition to the above, staff will continue to partner with Corporate Communications in the further development of our current public outreach campaign, including publicizing of newly adopted By-law amendments, such as introduction of an appeal fee, through use of the City's website and social media solutions.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Report is to:

- Provide Council with an update on the Communication Strategy that has been implemented by the By-law & Compliance Department (Animal Services Section) to promote responsible pet ownership in relation to unleashed dogs in the City of Vaughan, in response to Council direction dated March 8, 2011 (Attachment # 1 – Excerpt of Council Meeting Minutes - Report No. 11, Item 9);
- 2) Introduce recommended amendments to the Animal Control By-law that will:
  - a. Minimize the potential for dog bites/attacks through improved regulatory authority;
  - b. Restrict the sale of dogs and cats from pet stores and retail establishments;
  - c. Create an improved Prohibited Animal Schedule to the By-law;
  - d. Prohibit the feeding of wildlife and use of wildlife attractants;
  - e. Delegate authority of hearing appeals to the City's appointed Hearings Officer; and
- 3) Introduce recommended amendments to the Fees & Charges By-law to establish a fee for appeal of orders (eg: Muzzle Orders).

These recommendations are being proposed to improve health, safety, consumer protection and animal welfare.

## **Background - Analysis and Options**

At its meeting of March 8, 2011, City Council directed staff to develop a Communication Strategy to make dog owners aware of their responsibility to manage their pets as required by law. Staff was to provide a report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting regarding actions taken in response to unleashed dogs and dog attacks in the community.

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In response to the direction of City Council, staff developed and implemented an extensive Communication Strategy to further advance responsible pet ownership within the City, as well as bringing forward proposed improvements to the Animal Control By-law that will allow staff to more effectively address circumstances relating to aggressive dog behaviours. In the context of developing these proposed amendments and development of a Communication Strategy, staff undertook a fulsome review of the Animal Control By-law, with an emphasis on relevance and suitability to current and future community needs, and identified other areas of the Animal Control By-law that required improvement.

In preparation for this Report, staff consulted with industry stakeholders, including pet store retailers, such as: PJ's Pet Centres; Safari Pet Centres Vaughan Mills; Pet Valu; PetSmart; the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada (PIJAC Canada); the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA); The Association of Animal Administrators of Ontario; Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and animal advocacy groups. Vaughan Animal Services continues to dialogue with residents of the City of Vaughan through contact with the public, proactive outreach and educational initiatives on an ongoing basis.

In addition, a public consultation was held on November 20, 2013 at City Hall regarding the recommendations contained within this Report. Public Notice was delivered through media publications and the City's website. At the public consultation meeting, staff provided a presentation summarizing the main themes of the proposed recommendations. There was no opposition with respect to the proposed amendments. Areas of interest identified by the public included additional off-leash parks and/or consideration of expanded use of existing parkland allowing for dogs to be off-leash during designated times and/or identified areas. In addition, further comments included an interest to reduce or eliminate the restriction of having to keep dogs on a leash, claiming the By-law was ineffective and restricts responsible pet owners from allowing their dogs off-leash for proper socialization. Although staff acknowledged the comments provided, consideration of additional off-leash dog parks or expanded use of current parklands was not within the scope or purpose of this particular consultation, the Animal Services By-law review or proposed amendments.

A comparison of other municipalities' by-laws was completed in preparation for this Report (See Attachment #2).

#### COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Website and Social Media

Although the Resolution from Council in March of 2011 focused mainly on unleashed dogs, there are many other facets of responsible pet ownership, such as vaccination, pet identification and pet licensing, all of which are required by the Animal Control By-law. Staff has undertaken several communication and public outreach initiatives to educate dog owners and improve awareness in these areas.

With the ever increasing reliance on technology for gathering and receiving information, a key component of the Communication Strategy involves partnering with Corporate Communications, for improvement of the City's websites and the use of social media. Improvements to the Animal Services website includes easier navigation, enhanced information regarding pet vaccination, pet licensing, direct links to related by-laws and other relevant resources, such as urban wildlife information, neighbouring animal shelters/humane societies, relevant provincial agencies, etc.

Staff is also utilizing Facebook to advertise a variety of Animal Services' initiatives, including but not limited to, events, responsible pet ownership tips and By-law

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requirements. The use of Facebook has improved accessibility of Animal Services, enabled residents to pose questions, inquiries and offer comments for response by Animal Services' staff. Facebook has proven to be a valuable resource, featuring specific pets, photos of available adoption animals and generating many adoption inquiries; as well as an effective mode of communication for clients to post pictures and provide updates on the progress of their newly adopted pets. Animal Services receives many inquiries regarding volunteer opportunities posted therein.

Most recently in October 2013, By-law & Compliance Animal Services staff worked collaboratively with staff from Corporate Communications in the development and successful launch of information regarding the feeding of wildlife through the City's new blog page.

## **Promotional Material**

Recognizing that some residents do not use social media or access websites, staff developed an information pamphlet which outlines the provisions in the Animal Control Bylaw pertaining to animals running at large and provides useful tips for preventing dog bites, such as spaying and neutering, socializing and proper supervision. These information pamphlets are available at the City of Vaughan Animal Shelter and By-law & Compliance Department office at Vaughan City Hall, and continue to be distributed at all public events and by Animal Control Officers when engaging the public in the field. In addition to pamphlets, staff developed and offered auto magnets and business card magnets for a small donation, which offered residents convenient access to contact information for Animal Services. Staff continues to utilize all available avenues and explore new opportunities to improve and expand public outreach and awareness.

## **Special Event Participation and Education**

Another key component of the communication public outreach strategy is the participation of Animal Services staff in a number of special events and other public venues/forms. Since 2011, staff participated in a number of events, including but not limited to the following:

- a) Man's Best Friend Show (Vaughan Citizen);
- b) Maplefest (Vaughan);
- c) Carrot Fest (Bradford);
- d) Schomberg Fair (King);
- e) Bradford County Fair (Bradford);
- f) Maple Lions Pancake Festival (Vaughan);
- g) Concerts in the Park (Vaughan);
- h) Vaughan Safety Expo (Vaughan Mills Mall);
- i) Santa Fest Parade (Vaughan);
- j) Operation V.A.L.U.E "Vulnerable Animals Left Unattended Everyday" (Vaughan Mills Mall);

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- k) Movember (Vaughan);
- I) City TV News "Pick A Pet" to showcase adoption animals;
- m) Vaughan TV (City Hall);
- n) Reptillia Camp;
- o) Special Adoption Events (held semi-annually);
- p) Rabies and Microchip Clinics (held semi-annually);
- q) Attendance at satellite Cat Adoption centers (PetSmart & Pet Valu).

Staff also participated in various school initiatives to engage, educate and improve awareness amongst the students at Seneca College and Maple Montessori School.

This enhanced focus on public education and awareness is further emphasized by Animal Control Officers while carrying out their duties in the communities. Animal Control Officers distribute promotional materials and educate residents focusing on the benefits of responsible pet ownership and related By-law requirements at any opportunity that may arise while in the field, including during the course of investigations and when responding to public inquiries and complaints. Animal Services staff continue to attend public events, engage with educational institutions and seek future opportunities for greater outreach and improved public awareness as time and resources permit.

## **BITING, MENACING AND UNLEASHED DOGS**

In the course of creating a Communication Strategy for responsible pet ownership, staff also identified proposed improvements to the Animal Control By-law in an attempt to further prevent the possibility of attacks by unleashed dogs in the City.

Currently, the Animal Control By-law automatically requires a dog that has bitten to be muzzled and leashed when not on the premises of the owner and to be restrained when on the premises of the owner (such as a secure and fenced yard). Although these current regulatory provisions serve as a preventative measure following an occurrence, the current by-law provisions offer no avenue for prevention prior to an attack, is only triggered once a dog has bitten and is only enforceable if the dog was impounded by staff for being at large. There are many situations in which Animal Control Officers respond to and investigate complaints regarding aggressive dogs where there may be a likelihood that the dog may bite in the future, however, preventative restrictions cannot be ordered until the dog actually bites.

Pursuant to the <u>Dog Owners' Liability Act</u> of Ontario, the City may commence proceedings in the Ontario Court of Justice to obtain an Order requiring preventative measures for a menacing dog, including a muzzling order, a destruction order or any other effective control measures the Court deems advisable. However, these proceedings are costly, lengthy and therefore not entirely effective.

A review of departmental records for the period of 2012 and 2013 revealed that the By-law & Compliance Department received and investigated approximately 410 calls for service/case files regarding unleashed dogs and 125 calls regarding alleged dog attacks. These records include case files within King Township and Bradford West Gwillimbury, since these two municipalities are presently under service contract to Vaughan Animal Services.

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Within the City of Vaughan, records reflect 174 case files relating to dogs off-leash and 85 relating to alleged dog bites/attacks for the same period. As a result of the 85 dog bite investigations, 2 charges were laid, 1 muzzle order proceeding commenced and an Order was granted through the Ontario Court of Justice pursuant to the <u>Dog Owners' Liability Act</u> of Ontario and 3 animals were euthanized by Vaughan Animal Services (1 stray and 2 surrendered by the dog owners). Of the remaining 79 investigations, 1 dog was released to Toronto Animal Services; with the remaining 78 cases concluding due to insufficient information/lack of evidence or the inability to consider or impose preventative measures. In all cases, resolution included educating the dog owners regarding responsible pet ownership.

Of the 174 off-leash dog case files, 18 charges were laid, with the remaining cases resulting in insufficient information/lack of evidence to proceed and education of the dog owners.

Accordingly, staff are recommending that the City adopt a more effective and proactive approach to deal with aggressive dog behaviours by supporting the proposed amendments to the Animal Control By-law to grant authority to issue Orders where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a dog may or is likely to bite in the future. Proposed changes within the By-law include the ability to impose preventative control measures, allowing staff to act without the need for a dog to be found at large. Reasonable grounds would include, but are not limited to, menacing or threatening behaviours, previous occurrences, history and any other relevant information as identified and determined during the course of an investigation.

In addition to imposing restrictions or effective controls such as being muzzled, leashed or otherwise restrained accordingly, staff recommend that the Animal Control By-law be further amended to increase the measures that can be ordered and/or imposed. These may include but are not limited to: prohibitions on any person under the age of 18 from walking the dog; the dog be microchipped and sterilized; and that there be warning signage posted at the owner's home. These additional preventative measures effectively mitigate risk to both the public at large and to the dog owner(s). Staff believe these proposed improvements will better assist in mitigating and/or preventing the possibility of future dog bites in the City. Similar restrictions exist in other municipalities' by-laws.

To ensure fairness and due process, the Animal Control By-law currently provides for appeals of muzzling, leashing or other restraining Orders to be heard before Council or Committee of Council. This appeal is akin to a court process: evidence is entered; witnesses are subject to examination and cross-examination; and legal submissions are made. In this respect, members of Council are acting as quasi-judicial officers. Given the demanding schedule of Council, scheduling of additional meetings and obtaining quorum for hearings, these appeals may be difficult to process. Accordingly, staff recommends that the appropriate amendments be made to the Animal Control By-law delegating the appeal function to the City's Hearings Officer, currently appointed and presiding over appeals pursuant to the City's Administrative Monetary Penalty ("AMP") program.

## **UNATTENDED DOGS**

Staff identified the need for further amendments to the By-law to clarify expectations in any public off-leash park in order to mitigate potential for aggressive scenarios. Recommended amendments will include restrictions to ensure that dogs are not left tethered and unattended in places that may create a possible risk to humans, the animals themselves or other animals.

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## **WILDLIFE ATTRACTANTS**

Proposed amendments include prohibiting the feeding of wildlife or the use of attractants in order to prevent intentional or unintentional/accidental luring of wild animals into areas that places wildlife and citizens in circumstances that may lead to unprovoked interaction with one another (eg: urban areas). Proposed recommendations offer additional benefits in line with and supportive of existing regulatory by-laws, by providing the ability to address and deter activities that can lead or contribute to poor property conditions. New proposed amendments will also prohibit the use of leg-hold traps (used as a capture method), which can be very dangerous to unintended victims, such as domestic animals and/or children. Staff have determined similar restrictions exist in the City of Mississauga's By-law, but are not addressed consistently within many other municipalities' by-laws.

## **PROHIBITED ANIMALS**

Prohibited animals are currently identified through a Schedule of the Animal Control By-law. Proposed amendments will include prohibition of the keeping of raptors (birds of prey) and a prohibition on the keeping of constrictors (snakes). To minimize the possibility of a negative impact to any existing pet retailers who may house an inventory of constrictors for sale within the City of Vaughan, staff will be introducing the appropriate amending language providing retailers one year from passing of the By-law to retail their inventory accordingly.

In addition, staff recommend clarification of the language within the prohibited species section, making the By-law easier for public consumption and understanding; and the establishment of a list of criteria for traveling circuses to address public interest and safety. This criterion includes confirmation of animal security and right of inspection to ensure adequate conditions and vaccination protocols. Staff has determined that varied restrictions exist in other municipalities' by-laws.

# RESTRICTION OF DOG AND CAT SALES IN PET STORES & RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS

Restriction of the sale of dogs and cats by pet stores and all retail establishments has been raised as a concern by various citizens and the broader public at large. Concerns have included that the majority of dog and cat sales through retail establishments are sold at an age where the dogs or cats are too young to be spayed, neutered or adequately vaccinated; in essence adding to further proliferation of unwanted pets, risk of transmissible diseases such as rabies, and increased demands placed on Animal Services in many municipalities.

In August 2013, the By-law & Compliance Department was made aware of an electronic Facebook petition initiated by a public advocate in support of this ban. At the time this Report was prepared, this Facebook petition remained active with over 3000+ supporters responding from around the world.

In response to many of these inquiries and above-noted concerns, staff undertook to investigate community interests by initiating a comparative review of other municipalities (Attachment #2) and consultation with key industry stakeholders. Staff consulted with the pet retail industry, namely PJ's Pet Centres, Safari Pet Centres Vaughan Mills, Pet Valu, PetSmart; along with the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada (PIJAC), the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA), Dr Catherine Filejski – Public Health Veterinarian of Health Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, and animal advocacy representatives. The following consultation results chart provides the following findings:

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PET INDUSTRY CONSULTATION RESULTS CHART	
ORGANIZATION	COMMENTS / RATIONALE FOR SUPPORTING A BAN
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - Dr. Catherine Filejski, Public Health Veterinarian	Public Health and Protection - Greater prevention and control of spread of zoonotic diseases through preventative disease control.
	Improved health and well-being of the animals, reducing the likelihood of rabies transmissions to both animals and humans.
Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA)	Animal welfare.
	Supports interests of the OSPCA.
Humane Society of Canada	Reduces the burden of unwanted pets surrendered to animal shelters.
	Minimizes prevalence of animal overpopulation, abandoned animals and strays.
PJ's Pets	Pro-actively moved to facilitating animal adoptions in the interest of animal welfare.
PetValu	Animal welfare.
	Due diligence is taken by reputable recognized breeders to ensure their animals are adopted into a good home.
Advocate – Kasey Dunn	Animal welfare.
	Consumer protection.
Advocate – Michelle DaRe	Animal welfare.
	Supports interests of neighbouring municipalities.
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada (PIJAC Canada)	Advocates for responsible pet sales on behalf of the Canadian pet industry.

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In addition to the above consultation, staff held a public meeting on November 20, 2013 at City Hall that highlighted the proposed amendments.

The consultative process undertaken by staff further concluded that additional benefits may also be realized by the City of Vaughan, similar to that of other municipalities such as:

- Reduction in increased public service demands caused by proliferation of strays;
- Reduction in stray and abandoned animals;
- Reduction in the number of impulse pet purchases, further adding to increased unwanted animals ending up in shelters, rescues and humane societies; and
- Most importantly, reduction in the risk of the transmission of animal diseases such as rabies.

The risk of rabies was realized in January 2008, when a puppy sold at Doctor Flea's flea market within the City of Toronto, tested positive for rabies. Although there have been no other known incidents of this nature since that time, the incident may have been avoided with the appropriate restrictions in place.

Not unlike other regulatory schemes intended to address systemic issues and mitigate potential risks in the interest of the public, there is no absolute method to quantify other expected benefits. However, it is reasonable to conclude as other cities have, that more effective regulatory controls provide a governance system that offers greater confidence in our communities, supports greater consumer protection and public health, can contribute to further deterring "hoarding" and unlawful "puppy mill" operations from operating within Ontario (in accordance with and supportive of OSPCA mandates) and from a broader, more global perspective, these proposed measures contribute to the greater good and welfare of the community and the welfare of the animals within.

There is an increasing trend and interest amongst the animal care industry associations, such as the Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario and the Canadian Federation of Humane Society's to consider regulatory controls, including restrictions on the sale of commercially bred dogs and cats, at the municipal level.

Through assessment of the above data, staff recommend that, and believe in the interest of consumer protection, well-being and public safety, there is sufficient reason and evidence to support the introduction of the appropriate amendments to the City of Vaughan Animal Control By-law by limiting and moving to limit the sale of dogs or cats sold through pet stores and retail establishments to animals that are sourced from a shelter, rescue organization and/or humane society.

It is important to note that currently there are no known pet retailers engaged in the sale of dogs and cats not sourced from a shelter, animal rescue or humane society within the City of Vaughan. Supporting the above recommended related amendment(s) has no adverse effect on any established businesses within the City.

As other municipalities continue to introduce such regulatory controls, not proceeding progressively to do so within the City of Vaughan provides a forum by which retail operations may eventually migrate to the City, further exasperating the issue of increased risks to the public and increased proliferation of abandoned animals. Supporting the introduction of such regulatory controls will deter this activity, provide a level playing field for the pet industry and further support the global interests of our City and that of neighbouring municipalities.

## Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The proposed recommendations contained within this Report are directly aligned with the City's strategy of citizens first through service excellence, by focusing on public education

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for improved public awareness through providing a more comprehensive and effective Animal Control By-law, along with the introduction of necessary regulations that better address consumer protection, public interests, health and safety, and animal care within the City of Vaughan.

## **Regional Implications**

Adoption of proposed amendments within this Report provides an enhanced regulatory framework that directly supports regional and provincial public health mandates and legislation in respect of zoonotic diseases such as rabies.

## **Conclusion**

The findings and recommendations contained within this Report will create a more comprehensive regulatory framework for delivery of animal services that is better aligned with community needs, public health, safety and well-being.

## **Attachments**

- 1. Extract of Council Meeting Minutes of March 2011 (Report No. 11, Item 9)
- 2. Municipal Comparative Chart

## Report prepared by:

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)