

The City of Vaughan
Vaughan City Hall
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive,

Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

C 14
COMMUNICATION
CW (WORKING SESSION)
June 1/16
ITEM - 2

May 14th, 2016

His Worship Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of the Committee of the Whole

RE: Feral Cats and Trap-Neuter-Return in the City of Vaughan

We ask that you take the time to consider amending the current Animal Control Bylaw (53-2002) as amended, including at-large and licensing provisions, to include further provisions for a comprehensive trap-neuter-return (TNR) program for the City of Vaughan.

Why TNR?:

Euthanasia due to homelessness is the largest cause of death in cats. The majority of cats in shelters are born to feral and stray cats. TNR is the only humane and effective way to reduce the homeless cat population. TNR involves trapping, sterilizing, vaccinating, ear tipping and returning cats to their "colony" – kittens and socialized cats are, when possible, removed from the colony and adopted and a caretaker feeds and monitors the remaining colony daily.

Proof: TNR has been practiced for over 20 years in the UK, South Africa and Denmark. After 1-3 years of TNR colony sizes decrease by 16-32% (Natoli 2006). TNR is an effective long term strategy to stabilize or modestly reduce the size of feral cat colonies as well as improve the health of these cats (Levy, 2003). Many cities in the U.S. have implemented strategic TNR programs and the trend is now growing in Canada.¹

1 *These are just a few municipalities where animal care and control addresses community cat populations:*

Toronto, ON (toronto.ca/animal_services.ca)

Pittsburgh, PA (pittsburghpa.gov/animalcontrol/spay_neuter.htm)

Elk Grove, CA (elkgrovecity.org/animals/feral-cats.asp)

In Toronto the estimated feral cat population is 100,000. In 2010 a coalition of municipal animal control, humane organizations, and rescue groups, was formed to work collectively to improve the lives of feral cats through strategic and coordinated TNR programs. In four years, the Toronto Feral Cat Coalition has sterilized over 6000 feral cats. At Toronto Animal Services between 2010 and 2013, euthanasia of feral cats dropped by 88% and stray intake by 45% (Appendix 1). We believe, that with Toronto's implementation of additional progressive policies and additional partnerships, these numbers will continue to drop.

A Good Foundation:

The City of Vaughan can have equal success by adopting similar bylaws and practices and by fostering positive working relationships with community stakeholders. We strongly recommend the municipality engage and coordinate with local non-profits, rescue groups and their volunteers to pool resources and track desired outcomes.

It is important to note that addressing feral cat issues collaboratively will, in a short time, deliver several positive results. A successful TNR program will: reduce nuisance behavior and improve the health of the cats; reduce human interaction thereby reducing complaints from residents living close to colonies; and decrease shelter intake and euthanasia and associated costs. Partnerships with community stakeholders will increase volunteerism, increase adoptions (saving lives) and increase community goodwill, where previously there may have been only animosity.

Adding provisions for feral cats, their caretakers and TNR will only strengthen the animal care and control foundation as the community continues to grow and change.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the City of Vaughan:

- 1) Seek assistance from Vaughan colony caretakers and rescue groups to establish a comprehensive feral cat trap-neuter-return (TNR) program unique to the needs of the city.
- 2) Review Parts 1 and 2 of the following videos presented by the Humane Society featuring Brian Kortis:

Trap Neuter Return: Fixing Feral Cat Overpopulation: Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-UKg2iK1Zk>

Trap Neuter Return: Fixing Feral Cat Overpopulation: Part 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duT2OT9VWS4>

Also, review the 168 page handbook 'Trap – Neuter – Return for the Feral Cat Caretaker' produced by Neighborhood Cats.

http://www.neighborhoodcats.org/uploads/File/Resources/NC%20TNR%20Handbook_PRINT_v5-4.pdf

- 3) Draft and amend by-laws, similar to the City of Toronto, including provisions for feral cats, TNR and banning the resale of cats and dogs in pet stores unless these animals are from rescue groups and municipal shelters;

http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_349.pdf

http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_545.pdf

- 4) Recognition and protection to include a definition of "Feral Cat" to read "an un-socialized cat who, in general, receives little human contact or care and lives outdoors or unconfined at all times";
- 5) Recognition and protection to include a definition of "Feral Cat Colony" to read "a collective term, referring to a group of mostly or all feral cats in the municipality that congregate as a unit";
- 6) Recognition and protection to include a definition of "Feral Cat Colony Caretaker" to read "any natural person or body corporate of who provides managed long-term care, in conjunction with trapping, neutering and return, for a feral cat colony";
- 7) Recognition and protection to include a definition of "Stray Cat" defined as "a domestic cat of any age, lost, or abandoned by its owner, who lives outdoors or unconfined at all times"; and
- 8) Exempt Feral Cats and Colony Caretakers from the controlled confinement, licensing, unattended animals, nuisance animals, and running at large provisions of the current municipal bylaws.
- 9) Establish a Working Advisory Group as other municipalities have done comprising of Councilors and Town Staff, representatives from local Rescue Groups, Local Humane Society, , Vets and the OSPCA to review staff recommendations and offer additional suggestions in creating a fully functioning TNR program for the municipality. One such example can be found with the City of Kingston:

https://www.cityofkingston.ca/documents/10180/1269397/RPOP_Agenda_0413.pdf/edf9192e-b7d4-4da6-9636-281846b73e20

Dr. Hanna Booth and Dr. Esther Attard, veterinarians with Toronto Animal Services, have attended several conferences and have done extensive research on community-wide TNR programs in North America. They would be happy to provide advice and would be open to connecting with the municipality to discuss hurdles and steps towards implementing a successful TNR program in the community.

City of Toronto staff can be reached at the following:

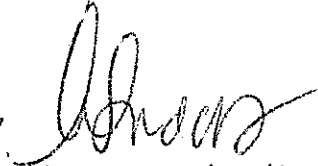
Dr. Esther Attard: eattard@toronto.ca / 416-678-4751

Dr. Hanna Booth: boothhanna@gmail.com

Our TNR advocacy has the collective support from the Ontario SPCA, Regional Humane Societies, Toronto Humane Society, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and many other national and provincial organizations.

On behalf of our Vaughan and surrounding area advocates, we hope you will consider a TNR program and the above recommendations for the joint benefit of community residents and all cats within the community.

Sincerely,



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