

May 31, 2016

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COMMUNICATION	
CW (WORKING SESSION)	
JUNE 1/16	
ITEM -	2

The Committee of the Whole, June 1, 2016:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issue of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR).

Port Colborne Feline Initiative is an all-volunteer registered charity providing community-wide spay and neuter solutions throughout the municipality of Port Colborne in the Niagara region. Since inception in June 2009 we have enrolled close to 1,500 cats.

One of our cornerstones is a trap-neuter-return program for free-roaming, unowned, unsterilized cats which is endorsed by the city of Port Colborne. We also have been successful in lobbying for a small amount of funding for this program on the tax levy.

When we approached the city with the concept of TNR it was promoted as an alternative to the traditional "catch and kill" model used by the vast majority of areas within Canada and beyond. We were able to convey the model for what it was: a humane and fiscally responsible alternative to using tax payer dollars to destroy cats in shelters.

Catch and kill, aside from being unethical, simply does not work, making it an ineffective use of funds. While it may remove the cats from a specific area for a period of time, it does nothing to get to the root cause of this complex issue. Due to a scientifically recognized phenomenon known as the vacuum effect, other cats will move into this area over time, continuing the never-ending cycle of reproduction.

TNR offers significant and immediate impact. The cats are sterilized, thereby eliminating the birth of more kittens. Once sterilized the many nuisance behaviours associated with mating dramatically lessen. The noisy fighting, the roaming, and the destruction of personal property in attempts to find shelter for the birth of litters, to name but a few, cease. This immediately makes for a better neighbourhood plus the colonies continue to dwindle in size over time due to attrition.

As a case in point, one of the larger colonies we encountered on city-owned property was located near a marina. As part of winterizing the operation the boats were shrink-wrapped and stored outdoors. In a desperate attempt to seek shelter to give birth, pregnant females would claw their way into the boats and nest inside creating quite a mess. As one can imagine this did not make for a great relationship between the cats and the marina staff and boat owners.

Post TNR of this colony of 12 cats there has not been one incidence of property damage at this location. A component of a well-managed TNR program is to provide insulated shelters for the cats on a year-round basis. They are quite content to use this shelter as opposed to the boats. The colony has reduced to a current number of 8 cats over a period of 5 years. They are healthy, keep a low profile and continue to provide environmentally friendly rodent control throughout the area.

Cat complaint calls to Animal Control have reduced, as well as similar calls to members of city Council.

The live release rate at the local shelter has risen dramatically to 90% from 19% when our program began. This is as a direct result of fewer cats labelled as unadoptable ending up at the shelter. This is proof positive that TNR is an effective method of addressing cat population issues in both a humane and fiscally responsible manner.

TNR is a win-win for the cats and for the community as a whole. Even those that don't like cats are applauding our work as they are seeing less cats roaming their neighbourhoods.

Please don't hesitate to contact us should you require further detail. There are members of Port Colborne city council that would be available for comment as well.

Thank you for considering Trap-Neuter-Return, the fiscally responsible and effective approach of addressing Vaughn's cat population issues.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kristi Mallinson Vogel', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kristi Mallinson Vogel

President and Founder