



Animal Control Bylaw Information Report

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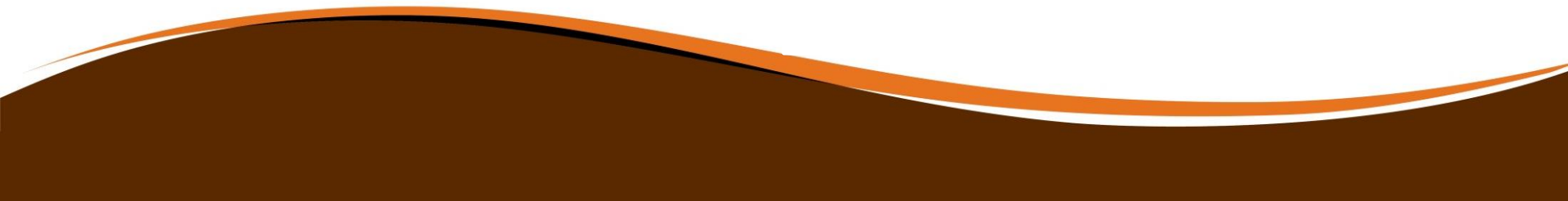
Introduction

- Animal Control Bylaw 2015-09
- Animal Control Bylaw 28-2009 has been under review for the past three years
- Our goal is to recognize the wants of our residents and determine what issues must be addressed
- The current Bylaw is beneficial to the majority, however, a fraction of the population (perhaps 10-20%) is responsible for approximately 80-90% of the issues
- Responsible Pet Ownership would help curb many reported problems regarding Animal Control in Parkland County
- This report will outline:
 - Information we have received through public interactions
 - How we handle Animal Bylaw related complaints
 - Recommendations for our next steps

Facts (Background Information)

Main Animal Control Issues (based on public input) :

- Excessive Barking
- Dogs at Large
- Responsible Pet Ownership
- Raising awareness about what our department does, how we do it, and why we do it
- Cat Bylaw
- Small acreage food source farming



Facts (Background Information)

Reasons a Bylaw ticket may not always be the solution:

- The Complainant will still continue to live next to the neighbour (possible ongoing neighbour dispute)
- Should the accused plead not guilty:
 - The Complainant is not always willing to testify in court
 - Trials are often set for 8-10 months after the accused has pled not guilty

Facts (Background Information)

Neighbour Disputes:

- Animal Control Bylaw is used as leverage between neighbours who dislike each other
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) requests are often submitted by residents involved in neighbour disputes
 - 44% of Parkland County FOIP requests from 2008-2013 were for Enforcement Services
 - 24% of Parkland County FOIP requests from 2008-2013 were dog related

Facts (Background Information)

Neighbour Dispute Example:

- Complainant was videotaping their neighbour standing on the road in front of their driveway waiting for the school bus with his dog
- Dog Owner did not have his dog on leash, it was standing beside him
- Once the Dog Owner's child got off of the bus, they walked directly back to their property
- Was the dog technically at large? Yes, However:
 - Parkland County does not want to encourage neighbours to videotape each other
 - Parkland County does not want to charge people for minor/technical infractions
 - Ex: driving 4km over the speed limit is speeding, however, tickets are not issued for minor breaches like this

Analysis

Incident Type	How We Handle	Public Input	Recommendations
Excessive Barking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Neighbourhood Inquiry- Visit Dog Owner- Offer suggestions to Dog Owner- If complaint persists, evidence package must be completed providing a detailed, 14-day documentation of nuisance barking- Parkland County must prove barking to be excessive, not moderate- Mediation may be offered through Alberta Justice and Solicitor General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public recognizes that the dog is not the problem, lack of “Responsible Pet Ownership” is the problem- Complainants do not always want to go to court- Complainants would like Parkland County to prohibit certain residents from owning dogs- Complainants do not want to speak to their neighbour, and would like the County to fix the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- As per research provided to GPC March 13, 2012 – evidence packages are the best solution- Excessive Barking definition added to Bylaw as per our legal review. It will better assist them when dealing with this issue in court.- Encourage neighbours to talk to each other

Analysis

Incident Type	How We Handle	Public Input	Recommendations
Dog at Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Respond on a complaint basis only- Since October our Officers are proactive where there are issues. Staffing changes supported by Council have allowed us to do this- Since January 2015 we are now handing out information packages to ratepayers in areas of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public would like to see a more proactive approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Current Bylaw is appropriate- Review operational procedures- Initiate targeted proactive patrols through “problem areas” determined by Report Exec statistics

Analysis

Incident Type	How We Handle	Public Input	Recommendations
Responsible Pet Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lack of responsible pet ownership is the leading cause of many animal related problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public agrees in many cases that the Dog is not the problem, the owners are- Public would like to see the County do more to encourage responsible pet owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More research is needed to develop options, such as handing our Responsible Pet Ownership packages- One-on-one training- Option Four Fine System

Analysis

Incident Type	How We Handle	Public Input	Recommendations
Repeat Offenders/Penalties	- Current Bylaw has incremental increase in fines for repeat offenders	- According to the survey, 87% of residents support increased fines for repeat offenders	- No need to change - Raise awareness

Analysis

Incident Type	How We Handle	Public Input	Recommendations
Small Acreage Food Source Farming – less than 2 acres	- Not included in the current Bylaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public would support this idea- Prohibit roosters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A number of municipalities have looked into this with mixed results- We have not made an allowance for this in the current Bylaw- Further research would be required to determine process, licensing and resources required for this type of program- Should Council wish to pursue this Administration would recommend a one year Pilot Program to better assess it. A Pilot Program proposal would be prepared by staff to better outline how the program will look and what resources would be required to present to Council in June of 2015 for Councils consideration and decision on implementation.

Recommendations

- Enforcement Services has drafted an Animal Control Bylaw which meets as many wants of the community as possible, keeping in mind realities of staffing levels
- RMRF has provided the legal review of this draft
- Enforcement Services has reviewed our current practices and has adjusted them. We will continue to review to ensure that we are providing superior customer service

Conclusion/Summary

- Administration supports Bylaw 2015-09
- Enforcement Services will continue to ensure we provide best practices

