



# Parkland County

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## Text File

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Animal Control Bylaw 02-2012 Information

### Recommendation

That Council accept Administration's Report as information.

### Purpose

To share the draft amended Animal Control Bylaw with Council and provide information on changes within it, as well as Administration's plans for public engagement.

### Summary

As per the attached Administrative Report our current Animal Control Bylaw reaches its sunset clause date on 2359 hours on July 1, 2012 and therefore requires review. The revised draft bylaw is necessary for the good of our residents as it assists the County in regulating and controlling household pets, animals and birds. Administration is proposing several changes which are outlined in the Administrative Report.

Administration intends to roll out the draft Animal Control Bylaw, along with the Community Standards Bylaw and Parks Bylaw which are also up for review to the public. The focus of the public engagement will center on creating awareness amongst the residents about the bylaw and its contents. The Public Engagement Plan is attached and contains further detail on our approach and key messaging.

### Administrative Position

Administration is of the opinion that the draft bylaw and identified public engagement approach will provide the necessary information Administration requires to fine tune the draft bylaw to bring back to Council for the formal bylaw approval process in May.

### Strategic Plan/Policy/Legal/Staff Implications (As Required)

Strategic Plan connections:

Quality of Life - Goal 2 Parkland County will maintain and enhance community safety.

Governance - Goal 1 Parkland County will ensure Administration is provided with the necessary tools to serve the residents of Parkland County efficiently and effectively.

Parkland County has the authority under the Municipal Government Act, to enact this bylaw.

### Other (As Required)

The bylaw will act as a guide for residents promoting responsible pet, animal and bird ownership.

Topic: Animal Control Bylaw 02-2012

**Introduction:**

The Animal Control Bylaw is reaching its sunset clause date of 2359 hours on July 1, 2012 and therefore requires review and resubmission to Council for approval. Administration is planning public engagement to provide our residents with opportunities to learn more about the proposed bylaw; prior to initiating the formal approval process with Council. Administrations purpose for bringing this bylaw forth at this time is to share it as information prior to implementing our public engagement activities.

**Facts (Background Information):**

This bylaw provides regulation and control of household pets, animals and birds.

**Analysis:**

Administration has only made a few changes to the bylaw and they are as follows:

- I 4 (1) (b) Ensure the dog does not enter into or remain in or on a school yard or cemetery within the county. (Remove this section as the dog at large section deals with this)

Administration also gave consideration to adding a section under Vicious Dogs that would set out conditions for the owner of a dog declared vicious to be able to rehabilitate the dog and thus have the county take the vicious dog tag off of the dog. Administration carried out research in Alberta and found only Grande Prairie County to have a condition such as this and after contacting them they are in the process of removing this section of their bylaw as it is something that could become a civil issue. We are not looking at changing this in our current bylaw as we feel that the conditions set out have been working.

Consideration was also given to banning specific breeds of dog. Administration does not believe that there should be specific Dog Breed restrictions. There is not a clear objective method in determining or establishing cross breeds therefore it would be extremely difficult in stating that a particular dog is a pit bull or Rottweiler type of dog. We already have strict fines associated to an owner of a dog declared vicious and in non-compliance of our bylaw with fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Enforcement Services supports Responsible Pet Ownership and will continue with efforts to provide education to our rate payers in these areas of concern. Since children make up more than 50% of dog bite victims, teaching children how to be safe through our "Be a Tree" program as well as obedience classes for dogs may prove to be more effective in reducing the number of attacks across the county rather than the banning of certain Breeds or not allowing someone to own a dog at all. A memo with further background information is attached to the Governance and Priorities Committee report.

**Conclusion/Summary:**

Administration is pleased to provide this report for Council's information.

**Alternatives:**

None

**Summary:**

Administration has amended the current Animal Control Bylaw and is about to initiate public engagement for the purposes of informing the residents of the bylaw and its impacts. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update of the amended bylaw and its changes prior to public engagement. Once public engagement activities are complete revisions, if deemed necessary, will be made and the bylaw brought to Council for the formal approval process.

**Date:** February 13, 2012  
**To:** Dave Cross, Manager Community & Protective Services  
**Copy:** Pete Morris, Supervisor Enforcement Services  
**Subject:** **Information regarding Dangerous Dogs, Breed specific Bans.**

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Dave, I am providing you with some information in regards to banning specific breeds of dogs and how that works or doesn't work in other areas of Canada. Most of this information that has been researched is from the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, the Canadian Kennel Club, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council as well as some Municipalities across Alberta and Canada.

The topic of banning specific breeds and deeming them vicious or dangerous has been an issue that continues to be debated. The issue of banning breeds that are thought to be more prone to aggressive behaviours has become the subject of debate – at the municipal and provincial levels. Some municipalities have imposed tough by-laws against dog breeds that they have been deemed to be dangerous, such as pit-bulls. However, there are several reasons why breed-specific bans are problematic:

- There is no objective method of establishing lineage of cross bred dogs or dogs which are not registered with a national kennel club.
- Dangerous dogs may exist in every breed and breed cross.
- Dangerous temperament and behavior are products of many factors other than just breed.
- This type of ban will result in exclusion of some dangerous dogs, and inclusion of dogs that are not dangerous.
- The incidence of dog bites has not been shown to be reduced by restricting the ownership of certain dog breeds.
- Statistics that we have gathered from across the United States and Canada from 1982 up until 2009 show that there have been 2694 reported attacks by dogs doing bodily harm with 345 deaths associated to these attacks. These are reported attacks however the Canada Safety Council estimates that there are approximately 460,000 Canadians that are bitten every year.
- Pit bull and Rottweiler type dogs have the highest percentage of these attacks however there are numerous breeds that have been found to kill and maim including Labrador Retrievers, German shepherds and also a poodle and dachshund to name a few.

- The City of Edmonton has a restricted Dog section in their bylaw however the fine structure is consistent to what is in the Parkland County Bylaw to date.

The research and numbers gathered by our staff have found that the conditions and fine structure existing in our bylaw in regards to vicious dogs are as stringent as any across Alberta and Canada. Enforcement Services in the past 10 plus years have deemed 3 dogs to be vicious with only one of those being appealed.

**Summary:**

Enforcement Services does not believe that there should be specific Dog Breed restrictions. As stated above it has not been proven that a particular breed is necessarily more vicious than another. There is not a clear objective method in determining or establishing cross breeds therefore it would be extremely difficult in stating that a particular dog is a pit bull or Rottweiler type of dog. We already have strict fines associated to an owner of a dog declared vicious and in non-compliance of our bylaw with fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Enforcement Services supports Responsible Pet Ownership and will continue with efforts to provide education to our rate payers in these areas of concern. Since children make up more than 50% of dog bite victims, teaching children how to be safe through our "Be a Tree" program as well as obedience classes for dogs may prove to be more effective in reducing the number of attacks across the county rather than the banning of certain Breeds or not allowing someone to own a dog at all.

**Recommendation:**

Parkland County's Animal Control Bylaw currently meets county rate payer's needs.

**Prepared by:**

Randy Shermack, Supervisor Bylaw Services.

## Public Consultation Plan

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|--|---|
| Project Name:  | Animal Control Bylaw  |
| Department Responsible:  | Enforcement Services  |
| Project Manager:   | Randy Shermack  |
| Project Participants:  | Enforcement Services  |
| Project description:   | Provide information to the public regarding the change to fine structure in the bylaw, the rationale behind the reduction in fees, and have public understanding regarding the change.  |
| Decision being made:   | Whether to adopt the changes proposed in the new Animal Control Bylaw   |
| Decision makers:   | Parkland County Council will make the final decision based on recommendations from staff from Enforcement Services.   |
| Scope (including impact and complexity) of this decision:        | <p>No public feedback sought. Administration may share spontaneous comments from the public with Council at time of second and/or third reading.</p> <p>Some residents may not support the idea of reducing fines as it could be seen as being more lenient with people who are in contravention of the bylaw.</p>  |
| Timeline for decision:   | The current Animal Control bylaw has a sunset clause for expiry July 1, 2012, therefore important for the proposed new bylaw to receive all three readings prior to that date.  |
| Reason for public consultation:                                  | Not actively soliciting public feedback. May consider spontaneous feedback as a means to increase level of engagement depending on nature and quantity of spontaneous feedback.   |
| Level of public consultation:                                    | Information sharing   |
| Information being sought from public:                            | <p>Public consultation is not required under the MGA for this type of bylaw.</p> <p>Public consultation occurred when Animal Control Bylaw first proposed in 2009. The bylaw replaced existing dog bylaw and also included provisions for animal control that were included in the County's Land Use Bylaw.</p>   |
| How information from public will be used in the decision making: | <p>We are not actively seeking public feedback nor are we putting in any formal mechanisms to receive feedback. We may receive spontaneous feedback regarding other aspects of the bylaw that are not being considered for change. There are other issues with barking dogs in the community. Some residents who have had concerns with barking dogs may take objection to the reduction in fines.</p> <p>If any feedback is received, it may be compiled as information for administration and Council, but not anticipated at this time to influence the outcome.</p> |

| Public Consultation Strategy   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Potential Participants   | Proposed level of consultation   | Consultation Strategy  |
| Animal Rescue Groups   | Information sharing  | Raise awareness of proposed changes to bylaw, educate on reason behind changes, educate on overall provisions of bylaw, including role and purpose for establishing and maintaining quality of life in the County. |
| Seniors  | Information sharing  |  |
| Residential property owners - with/without dogs  | Information sharing  |  |
| Recreational property owners with/without dogs   | Information sharing  |  |
| Resources and Budget   |  |  |
| Staff/Contractors  | Enforcement Services   |  |
| Communication Materials  | \$600  |  |
| Information Management   |  |  |
| Type of information being gathered   | How information will be recorded/managed/included into planning considerations   |  |
| Any feedback will be spontaneous therefore no formalized mechanisms will be in place. Can expect emails, phone calls and comments on the County’s Facebook page. | Community & Protective Services staff and Communications Services will monitor and document comments as they come in.  |  |
| Communication Strategy   |  |  |
| Target Audience  | Key Messages   | Communication Tool(s)  |
| Animal Rescue Groups   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share “responsible pet ownership” messaging</li></ul>  | Parkland Communicator newsletter, Animal Control Facebook page, Article in newspapers  |
| Seniors  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible pet ownership</li><li>• How to protect yourself</li><li>• Who to call</li></ul>  | Special insert in the Tax Notices, Parkland Communicator newsletter, Article in newspapers   |
| Residential owners - with dogs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible pet ownership</li><li>• At-large dogs</li><li>• Animal units</li><li>• Excessive barking</li><li>• Animal shelter info</li></ul> | Special insert in the Tax Notices, Parkland Communicator newsletter, Animal Control Facebook page, Article in newspapers, local veterinary clinics, local pet stores   |
| Residential owners - without dogs  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What constitutes excessive barking</li><li>• Excessive barking complaint process (who, how, etc.)</li><li>• Animals at large</li></ul>       | Special insert in the Tax Notices, Parkland Communicator newsletter, Article in newspapers   |
| Recreational property owners with/without dogs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible pet ownership</li><li>• At-large dogs</li><li>• Animal units</li><li>• Excessive barking</li><li>• Animal shelter info</li></ul> | Special insert in the Tax Notices, Parkland Communicator newsletter, Animal Control Facebook page, Article in newspapers   |

| Evaluation Strategy   |   |
|---|---|
| Criteria to be used to determine if public consultation is successful:          | Public consultation will be deemed successful based on overall acceptance of the proposed changes to the bylaw and spontaneous feedback from the community is in favour of the changes.   |
| What will be measured and evaluated to determine success:                       | Spontaneous feedback will be evaluated informally using both qualitative (legitimacy of comments) and quantitative (number and frequency of comments); if it appears particularly contentious, may need to increase level of consultation with the public with more formalized feedback mechanisms. |
| When measurement and evaluation will take place and the methods to be utilized: | Comments will be evaluated between dates of first and second reading of the bylaw. If appears that second level consultation required, will address at time of second reading.  |
| How the measurement and evaluation results will be used:                        | Post-project debriefing to identify where consultation plan successful, gaps, and areas of improvement when dealing with similar situations   |