

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.**

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.