

Bylaw 37-2017 Responsible Dog Ownership**Report Purpose**

To provide the draft Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw, Bylaw 37-2017, to Council for consideration.

Recommendation

1. THAT Bylaw 37-2017, the Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw, be given first reading;
2. THAT Bylaw 37-2017 be given second reading;
3. THAT Bylaw 37-2017 be considered for third reading;
4. THAT Bylaw 37-2017 be given third reading.

Council History

May 16, 2017 Priorities Committee received an overview of the results of the public engagement process undertaken for the review of the Dog Control Bylaw.

December 12, 2006 Council passed Bylaw 85-2006, the Dog Control Bylaw.

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: n/a

Governance: The development of clear bylaw legislation is part of a well-governed municipality and increases confidence in the community's leadership.

Social: Rules and responsibilities surrounding dog ownership will help residents to live in harmony in the community and promotes a climate of safety.

Culture: n/a

Environment: n/a

Other Impacts

Policy: Clearer criteria for the exercise of administrative obligations will assist administration to fulfill Council's direction in relation to dog-related matters.

Legislative/Legal: The Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw will replace the Dog Control Bylaw on the effective date of January 1, 2018.

Interdepartmental: Legislative Legal Services collaborated with several departments including Family and Community Services and Enforcement Services.

Summary

The current Dog Control Bylaw was passed more than a decade ago. Since that time, there has been growing public awareness of dog care, and dog behaviour issues resulting in the adoption of responsible dog ownership bylaws in many jurisdictions. The content of these bylaws helped to frame the issues for a discussion about responsible dog ownership.

Responsible dog ownership places the onus on dog owners to control and manage their dogs, instead of focussing on the dog behaviours that create community issues. The choice to own a dog comes with significant responsibilities to ensure that the presence of the dog does not detract from the rights of others to a safe, clean and inviting community. Positive owner-actions lead to positive dog behaviour. This approach requires bylaw provisions that reward positive dog owner behaviour and impose progressively higher penalties and conditions on dog owners who engage in less responsible behaviour.

From November of 2016 to March of 2017, administration undertook a lengthy public engagement process with residents of Strathcona County and heard discussion and comments and received survey input from many residents about their views on what constitutes responsible dog ownership. The public engagement report was presented to Priorities Committee on May 16, 2017. The administrative team that worked on the project attended the meeting to hear the Committee's discussion on various matters in relation to dogs and advised that administration would bring back a new bylaw for Council's consideration.

A new bylaw was prepared with the underlying goal of rewarding good ownership behaviour and imposing progressively higher penalties and conditions for less responsible behaviour and significant behavioural issues. Legislative and Legal Services also undertook to update the bylaw format and to move to a more plain language approach. Draft Bylaw 37-2017 is the culmination of that work, and is presented for Council's consideration.

Communication Plan

Administration obtained input from the community on dog-related matters as presented in the public engagement report presented to Priorities Committee. The express provisions of the new bylaw differ from the current one, so will require some communication prior to the effective date of January 1, 2018.

Enclosures

- 1 Draft Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw 37-2017
- 2 Summary of changes – current and proposed bylaw
- 3 85-2006 Dog Control Bylaw
- 4 PowerPoint Presentation (to be distributed)