

Strathcona County Management of Stray and Abandoned Cats Update

Council Meeting
June 29, 2021

Background

In response to the following motion on November 24, 2020:

2020/ 436 Moved by: B. Tonita

THAT by the end of the second quarter of 2021, Administration provide a report on opportunities for working with interested residents and business owners to address the issue of stray or abandoned cats in Strathcona County and that funding of up to \$25,000 be allocated from municipal reserves for this purpose.

Purpose

- To provide Council with a report on the opportunities to work with interested non-profit organizations and agencies to address the issue of stray or abandoned cats in Strathcona County.

History

- In September 2019, Council directed Administration to provide a report on the implications of a cat bylaw that covers the urban service area of Sherwood Park.
 - In October 2020, RCMP Supports and Enforcement Services provided a presentation and report to Priorities Committee on the implications of a cat bylaw.
- In November 2020, Council directed Administration to provide a report on opportunities for working with interested residents and business owners to address the issue of stray or abandoned cats in Strathcona County.
- On June 22, 2021, Roxx Strategic Management presented findings on the community support for the County to facilitate the management of stray and abandoned cats.

Current Legislation

- There are currently no municipal policies to address cat control or cat-related issues within the urban service area of Sherwood Park.
- The *Animal Control Bylaw* allows Community Peace Officers to address some cat issues, however a complainant must be able to identify the cat and the owner of the cat. Issuing tickets are the only recourse in the current bylaw; CPOs cannot take any animals into custody.

Current Needs in Strathcona County

- RCMP Supports and Enforcement Services receives a limited number of complaints regarding stray or abandoned cats each year. On average, there are an estimated 20 complaints regarding cats each year.
- The complaint situations involve an immediate need to provide shelter or re-home the cats, and cat on property complaints.
- RCMP Supports and Enforcement Services has a standing arrangement with the Edmonton Humane Society for the care and custody of dogs, however this arrangement does not apply to cats.

Partnership with Non-Profit to Establish Animal Shelter

- Administration is recommending a business case to outline the relationship with a non-profit organization to establish and operate a local animal shelter.
- Supporting a volunteer organization to operate a leased shelter space is a strategic first step in meeting the needs of residents with the management of stray and abandoned cats.
- A local animal shelter run by a non-profit organization provides a mechanism to promote voluntary licensing, voluntary spay and neutering, and community education with the goal of responsible cat ownership in the County.

Partnership with Non-Profit to Establish Animal Shelter

Anticipated Outcomes

- Address the immediate need of shelter for stray and abandoned cats in the County.
- Does not require significant, ongoing County resources.
- Begins the process of the responsible management of cats in the County.
- Provides a platform for the education of responsible cat and pet ownership.

Potential Risks

- Does not provide the County with enforcement measures further to the existing *Animal Control Bylaw*.

Partnership with Non-Profit to Establish Animal Shelter

- The shelter could be achieved through a short term pilot project partnership agreement with a non-profit organization.
- The County could support the shelter through initial grant funding and/or a leased shelter space.

Next Steps

- Administration will conduct an analysis and consult with local organizations to develop a business case for Budget 2022 for establishing a local animal shelter, including identifying buildings that may be suitable for this possibility, and an appropriate funding/partnership structure.