

Proposed Amendment Bylaw 37-2017 Responsible Dog Ownership

Strathcona County Enforcement Services
2023



- Strathcona County council has passed the first-ever local Dog Bylaw, that focuses on raising fines, dictating the number of dogs a resident can own, and helping neighbours deal with excessive barking.

The county is also hiring a permanent dog catcher, who will be charging owners \$25 for a dog found running amuck, with the fine doubling for each repeat offense.

— April 26, 1978

History

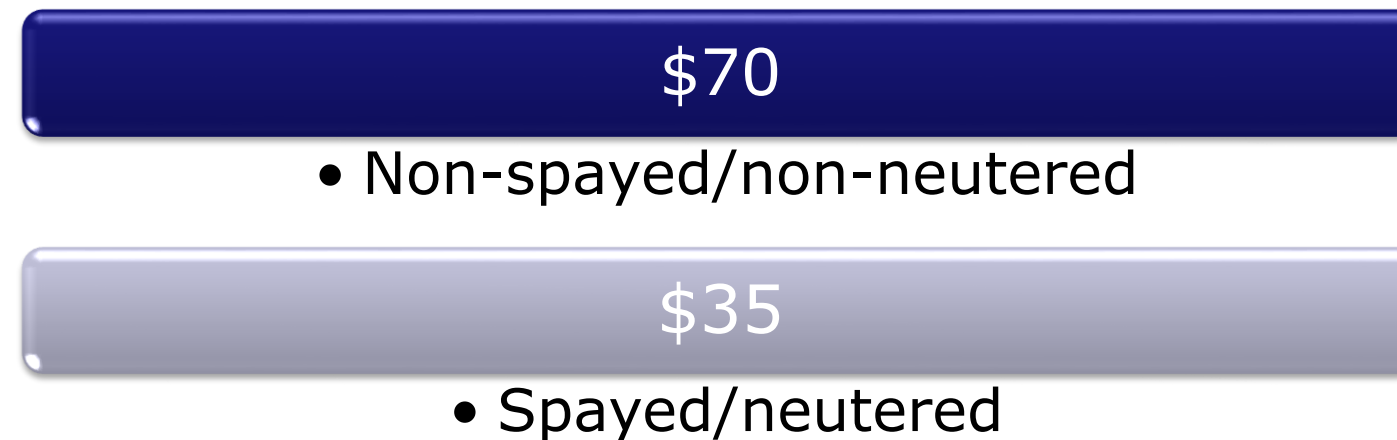
- In 2017, Strathcona County Council passed the Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw that impacts how dogs were licensed within Strathcona County. The new bylaw came into effect January 1, 2018.
- Pursuant to Part II of the Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw 37-2017, every person who resides in the County for more than 30 days each year who owns a dog older than three months, unless exempt under the bylaw, must apply for a dog license. Municipalities typically license domestic dogs as a mechanism to reunify the animal with their owner. Current licensing provisions are designed to incentivize registration.
- With the current Bellamy licensing program due to expire in 2024, analysis of the existing bylaw commenced. Three primary issues were identified pertaining to Part II – Licensing:
 - Licensing incentives have not resulted in an uptake of dog licenses – Analysis shows a 55% increase in the number of unlicensed dogs from 2019 to 2023.
 - Modern safety and identification methods employed by responsible dog owners (i.e., subcutaneous microchips, tattoos, static and digital identification tags, social media) have supplanted licensing as a reunification method.
 - The cost of replacing the current software system to accommodate the current bylaw is cost prohibitive and would negate any return on investment for at least four years.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

- A December 2021 ITS-led opportunity analysis and subsequent business case identified Oracle-based Tempest as a competent software solution to replace the current platform. The estimate of transitioning to a new system was \$1.2 million over four years.
- A revised analysis without system customization, which would require a bylaw amendment to eliminate license incentives, and using internal resources to facilitate implementation, lowered the expected cost to about \$300,000 over four years.
- Substantial future cost implications resulting from a new software system can be averted with reasonable amendments to the current bylaw and the elimination of Part II – Licensing. This change would also enable a re-deployment of existing staff resources, streamlining operations.
- Eliminating licensing is an opportunity to eliminate low-value and low-priority work, while maintaining service levels, public safety, and providing a financial savings to law-abiding residents.

Cost Savings for Residents

- The 2022 Community Safety and Wellbeing What We Heard Report identified financial well-being as a key determinate of physical, mental, and social health.
- As residents grapple with tough economic times, the County is always looking for effective ways of demonstrating fiscal responsibility.
- By removing Part II – Licensing, there would be an annual cost savings to residents.



Justification



Community Safety



Cost Savings for Residents



Inefficient Licensing Exemptions



Advancements in Dog Reunification



Costly System Requirements



Bolstering Bylaw Penalties

Community Safety

- No change to community safety standards
- Responsible dog owners will see the same service levels
- Licensing is not a control on dogs in the community
- Pertinent sections of the bylaw will remain:
 - Excessive barking
 - Dog at large
 - Dangerous dogs
 - Dog attacks



Advancements in Dog Reunification

The primary goal of dog licensing was reuniting lost dog with their owners.

Due to the advancements in social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram this original purpose is becoming obsolete.

Technology advancements such as subcutaneous microchips, rabies tags, and QR code/application enabled tags also aid in the identification of lost dogs.

Strathcona County RCMP and Enforcement Services utilize a sharable excel spreadsheet where all lost and found pets are logged and cross referenced to expedite the reunification process.

Most notably, Bylaw 37-2017 will mandate every dog must have visibly worn identification that includes their owner's contact information.

Fine increases are being proposed to bolster the impact of not having proper identification for your dog.

Pet Identification - It's the Law

Every dog must have visibly worn identification that includes their owner's contact information.



Bolster Bylaw Penalties

Failure to Attach Dog Identification

Proposed Revised Fees

\$150 – First offence
\$300 – Second offence
\$500 – Third offence

Impound Fees

Current Fees

\$80 – Dog displaying ID tag
\$100 – Dog NOT displaying ID tag

Proposed Revised Fees

\$150 – Dog displaying ID tag
\$250 – Dog NOT displaying ID tag

Communicating Our Message



INTER-AGENCY
COMMUNICATION WITH
CLEAR GOALS AND
OBJECTIVES



INCREASED SOCIAL MEDIA
PRESENCE – FACEBOOK,
TWITTER, AND INSTAGRAM



PUBLIC SERVICE
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Questions

