



Council Report

Report Number: ML2024-002

Meeting Date: March 19, 2024

Title: **Feral Cat Trap Neuter Return Manage Pilot Project and Kennel Services**

Description: Council update regarding the Feral Cat Trap Neuter Return pilot project, and the expiration of the Kennel Service contract with the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes.

Author and Title: Aaron Sloan, Manager, Municipal Law Enforcement & Licensing

Recommendations:

That Report ML2024-002 **Feral Cat Trap Neuter Return Manage Pilot Project and Kennel Services**, be received;

That staff initiate an RFP process to establish a new Kennel Services contract(s) that provide base level services, including but not limited to, temporary sheltering of stray dogs, temporary sheltering of stray domestic cats and a Feral Cat Trap Neuter Return program, each as individual independent services; and

That the Feral Cat Trap Neuter Return (TNR) and domestic stray cat pilot project be temporarily suspended.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

At the Council Meeting of June 7, 2022, Council adopted the following resolution:

CR2022-194

That Report, ML2022-001, Stray and Feral Cats, be received;

That Council support Option Two, within Report ML2022-001, which is to establish a Stray and Feral Cat Pilot Project with a two (2) year term starting in 2023;

That By-Law 2021-072, being a By-Law to Regulate Animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes, be amended to permit the Stray and Feral Cat Pilot Project, as outlined in Report ML2022-001 in Appendix C and to include licensing of cats;

That the amount of \$85,000.00 be added to 2023 Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing services budget submission for consideration; and

That the necessary Amending By-Law be brought forward to Council for adoption.

CW2022-132 On June 7, 2022, Council received a deputation from:

Janice Jones-Skinner, Chairperson of the Kawartha Lakes Community Cats Trap Neuter Return Manage (TNRM) Committee, who spoke in favour of the recommendations outlined within Report ML2022-001, relating to stray and feral cats. Ms. Jones-Skinner provided an overview of the how the proposed Stray and Feral Cat Pilot Project will complement the work of the Kawartha Lakes Community TNRM Committee; and,

CW2022-133: Martin Field, member of the City of Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee, who spoke in favour of the recommendations outlined within Report ML2022-001, relating to stray and feral cats. Mr. Field provided an overview of how the proposed Stray and Feral Cat Pilot Project will complement the work of the City of Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee.

Council supported staff in a cooperative approach in conjunction with the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes (HSKL) to support a TNRM feral cat, domestic cat licensing, and pound services. The expanded services started January 2023.

This report is being provided to Council as an update with regards to the TNRM Stray and Feral Cat Pilot Project, domestic cat licensing and emergent changes to how the municipality manages stray animals within the pound services agreement, including the impact of the loss of the HSKL pound services facility.

Rationale:

On November 28, 2023, the municipality received an email from the Executive Director of the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes. In part, the email thanks the municipality for our many years of being a municipal partner, a partner who values proactive approaches to animal services in our municipality. However, reflecting on the recent struggles relating to people and pet populations, the HSKL has experienced unprecedented strains in part due to the pandemic and requests from others in the community. As a result, the HSKL will be shifting their focus to concentrate on outreach programs to better serve the community.

“HSKL under the direction of the Board of Directors, will not be renewing the 2022-87-OP Animal Kennel Provider and Associated Services contract in its entirety.”

In December 2023, prior to conclusion of the agreement, staff met with the HSKL Executive Director and the President of the Board of Directors. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the current agreement, clarify the correspondence and to request a three-month extension into 2024. The extension request was granted by the HSKL.

The City’s animal services led by the Municipal Law Enforcement & Licensing Division, have had a 20 year long standing connection to the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes and to other local kennels for the provision of Kennel Services. However, over the years the kennel service providers have reduced in number to only the HSKL.

These historical service agreements did not include kennel services for domestic cats, or animal services to include Trap Neuter Return Manage (TNRM) initiatives, which were recently added in the 2023 agreement with the support of the HSKL and others in the community.

Recognizing that a future kennel services agreement, in conjunction with the TNRM Feral cat pilot project would be detailed as a new type of contract agreement staff created a public Request for Proposal (RFP). In 2022, staff noted that the kennel service agreement would expire at the end of 2022, so proceeded with the creation of the RFP to be ready for 2023. A single response to the RFP was received.

Early in 2023, the services of the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes (HSKL) as the successful proponent were approved, and this approval expanded their service provided to the municipality. No other kennel operator or similar agency responded to the RFP.

Specifically, the contract relationship with the HSKL was modified to include new criteria for cats as a one health model was established for the intake of kennel animals to

protect the health of the facility. Historically the kennel services agreement was negotiated as a three-year service agreement with an option to renew for an additional two-year period (5-years). However, the HSKL requested to modify the term of the kennel services agreement to 1 year with the option of four, one-year renewals and three one-year renewals for the TNRM. Greater detail can be found in report ML2022-001 attached as **Appendix A**.

Animal Kennel Services

To continue to provide animal kennel services, the HSKL has approved a three-month extension to the Kennel Services agreement, which will conclude March 31, 2024.

In December 2023, Staff reviewed the current animal kennel services agreement and sent requests for interest (RFI) out to all the registered kennel operators in the municipality, veterinarian clinics and border municipalities/agencies to gather information about their kennel services and to see if they have interest in assisting with our municipal kennel services. Early in January 2024, the RFI closed, prompting staff to move forward with an emergency procurement for kennel services. Staff received four responses, and these responses are being reviewed. The RFI process will inform the establishment of a prequalified service roster. A Request for Proposal (RFP) will proceed at a later date.

Council should note that if the municipality does not locate a dedicated kennel facility to house stray domestic animals, there will be a disruption to the animal kennel services. Managing stray animals and kennel services will no longer be possible without a facility to house them. This will create some difficulty internally and externally, as the public have an expectation regarding the by-law regulation, that basic kennel services are provided. Further, other agencies such as the Police, Fire Services and Human Services occasionally utilize the municipal kennel facility when emergency/operational needs warrant it.

Staff are working to secure kennel services specific to dogs prior to March 31, 2024. However, kennel services directly related to TNR and domestic cats will be temporarily suspended. To be clear, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers will continue to provide investigative response and investigative services for violation of the animal control By-Law 2021-072, being a By-Law to Regulate Animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes. For example, if a dog is reported to be running at large, the City will continue to enforce the municipal by-law.

Trap Neuter Release Management – Feral Cats

The TNRM pilot program operates as part of the current kennel services agreement with the HSKL. Continuance of TNRM at this time is not possible and will end March 31, 2024.

During the TNRM pilot program, the HSKL have been able to access low cost spay/neuter services or clinics for feral cats. The program is not accessible to domestic and/or owned cats. The HSKL supported members have been actively trapping feral cats and feral kittens and have been transporting them to a clinic in Newmarket, which provides spaying and neutering services at a reduced cost. Staff have created a supporting information pamphlet for public information which is attached as **Appendix B.**

Currently, the TNRM Pilot Program has **spayed and neutered 11 felines**. All felines were returned to their original colony, and none have entered the adoption stream. As, an intact female and her offspring can produce many kittens each year, approximately 4-6 kittens, who can theoretically reproduce 4-6 kittens each, which compounds yearly, this leads to many feral cats (colony birth and deaths may impact). The current cost for this service to the municipality is approximately \$5,000 of the \$25,000 yearly allocated budget.

Domestic Cat Licensing

In 2022, staff provided in ML2022-001 the option to license domestic cats. Council received the report and resolved to amend By-law 2021-072, being the By-Law to Regulate Animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes. A copy of the by-law is attached as **Appendix C.**

The pilot project began in 2023 to collect data and track domestic cats in the municipality.

In 2023, approximately **10** domestic cats have been registered and licensed with the municipality. The revenue from licensing totals \$716.50.

In 2023, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers investigated **26** occurrences that involve one or multiple cats running or straying at large.

Domestic Cat Health

Domestic Cats when captured are transported to the kennel and held for three days. If an owner does not claim the animal, within this three-day period, it may be adopted out to the KLHS or to another owner. In some instances, such as declining health, the cat if unclaimed may be euthanized. During the animal's short stay (3-days) as a kennel

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animal, the animal is assessed to determine general health (injuries, disease, fleas etc.). A kennel animal may require veterinarian care.

Veterinarian care has been administered to 29 domestic cats **Veterinarian Care: total direct costs (does not include staff time or vehicle use) = \$10,353.51.**

If a domestic cat requires veterinarian care due to a medical issue an appointment is made and the Municipal Law Enforcement Officer provides transportation. Often vet appointments are needed as emergent issues occur, and vet care is often subject to appointment availability or by emergency need. The distance to the various locations adds time to staff involvement. The veterinarian services used during this pilot project are as follows:

Veterinarian Locations	Staff hours (travel)	Visits	Wait time (estimated hours)	Total Hours
Three Island Vet, Bobcaygeon	1 hr	3	3	6
Fenelon Animal Clinic	0.75 hrs	1	1	1.75
Omeme Veterinary Hospital	1	4	4	8
Morris Veterinary Hospital	0.5	1	1	1.5
Kawartha Animal Hospital	0.5	1	1	1.5
Kawartha VT Emergency Peterborough	1.25	2	2	4.5
Cavan Hills Veterinary Services	1	12	12	24
			Sub Total	47.25
			Staff time other kennel services	30
			Licensing and data entry	20
			Total	97.25

*Staff typically work approximately 1900hrs. per year. 97.25 hours accounts for approximately 5% of one FTE officer.

Impact to Staff

Since the implementation of the TNRM and domestic cat pilot project early in 2023 Municipal Law Enforcement have managed approximately 680 animal related issues, that include all animal licensing, all animal control regulation for the animal being at large and injured animals which require veterinarian treatment (includes dogs).

Domestic cat issues have accounted for approximately 26 cat issues that require staff to respond as a call to service.

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The data needed to allocate time commitment and budget to Municipal Law Enforcement was not available prior to the pilot program start. Even with these unknowns, the MLE support of the pilot project has gathered this data for 2023. Primarily, the MLE impact to budget and time (detailed in the previous chart) was to be absorbed within the MLE business unit with other on-going work. Staff impacts are determined by the staff time needed to run the operations, such as data entry, transportation time, vehicle cost, veterinarian care both emergency and non-emergency, and investigative time.

Budget Impact	Time (Approx.)		Cost (Approx.)
Data entry	20 hrs	MLE staff	\$540.00
Transportation (Kennel)	30 hrs	MLE staff	\$1200.00
Transportation (Veterinarian)	47.25	MLE staff	\$1890.00
Veterinarian Fees		invoices	\$10,353.51
TNRM (spay, neuter)		HSKL	\$5000.00
Daily Care, Additional Days, Surrenders		HSKL	\$37,519.62
Rental (lease of building) HSKL	12 months	\$1633.34	\$19,600.08
	Total (inclusive of estimates)		\$76,103.21

***Daily care, additional days will increase as year-end is finalized.**

Conclusion

The current TNRM pilot project for feral cats, licensing and control regulations for domestic cats was set to conclude at the end of 2024. Normally at the conclusion of a pilot project, staff would bring results and recommendations to Council for additional direction or program permanency. Considering that only 10 domestic cats have been licensed and staff have responded to 26 stray or domestic cat issues, the early indicators are that the pilot project has not achieved intended results. Bearing in mind the unanticipated interruption to kennel services for both cats, dogs and TNR services, has caused staff to evaluate what services can be provided in the immediate term. The immediate term will see the pilot project suspended effective March 31, 2024. Staff will revisit TNR and domestic cat licensing in the future, when support service providers and kennel facilities are stabilized, conversely if stable services are not located, the service will be recommended to be discontinued.

In the immediate term, kennel services specific to dogs is proposed to continue; however, the response to the City's emergency procurement was very limited and the future RFP responses will determine the future service level. Council will be updated, if

a kennel services contractor is not secured, which will generate further discussion with regards to animal control service generally.

Options

Option 1 (Staff recommended), Suspend the TNRM pilot project and domestic cat regulation including licensing. This option is a return to basic animal services inclusive of dogs only. This option will result in the start of an RFP process to establish a new kennel services agreement at a base level service, that focuses on dogs, reuniting animals with owners, and community health and safety. A return to base services may result in a service that is more appealing to local operators of kennels, veterinarians, or other businesses. Also, a base service may reduce potential respondents' hesitancy to enter into an animal kennel services agreement. Many of the kennel services in the area limit their businesses to dogs and have no wish to increase their services. Further, staff is of the opinion, that a return to the basic animal services program for dogs, will renew community interaction and may foster new business relationships with local kennel owners, and result in efficiencies and savings. The RFP for kennel services may attract future service providers, who may express interest in an expanded service that includes cats. The future RFP process may be expanded to separately:

- request a response to the provision of kennel services for domestic cats.
- management of the feral cat TNRM program.

Option 2 – (Not recommended), The HSKL is funded via the current kennel services agreement to operate the feral cat TNR program. This agreement expires March 31, 2024. The HSKL have indicated that they are interested in continuing to receive funding that is specific to the operation of the TNRM Feral Cat project, however the kennel agreement blends the TNRM pilot project with the kennel services agreement. Obligation of staff to follow the procurement procedures and policy for services, does not permit a selective response to the agreement. The TNRM program, could be removed from the Kennel Services agreement process and moved to a separate RFP process, in which the proponents can make a business case to receive the funding. Separating the service types within animal services RFP is being investigated, however is not available currently.

The TNRM feral cat project is an option for the municipality and is not required by legislation or regulation. Other Alternatives Considered:

Cancel – Staff considered suggesting to Council that the pilot project and animal services related to cats could be immediately cancelled to allow for the redeployment of resources such as a kennel services provider, public education, veterinarian support and various staff supports. This option was not suggested, as locating a kennel services provider takes priority and future resources may be located to support. Staff is recommending a return to basic level kennel services which are scoped to dogs; however, the overall program is under review and staff may return to Council with additional program alternatives when support service providers and kennel facilities are stabilized.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

For reference the four strategic priorities within the 2020-2023 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan are:

1. Healthy Environment
2. An Exceptional Quality of Life
3. A Vibrant and Growing Economy
4. Good Government

This report aligns with continuous the concept of improvement and innovation as we strive to streamline and simplify by-laws, policies, and processes.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The current Kennel Services Agreement with the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes costs \$85,000 per year and will be terminated effective March 31, 2024. Staff anticipates that a future RFP for Kennel Services in 2024 may change in scope, but notes that the 2024 budget has been approved, and that this budget will be the funding source for the emergency procurement of continued base kennel services. Un-used budget will be returned at year end to balance the animal service program generally.

Staff are currently in an RFI process and plan to move forward with the procurement process to secure a Kennel Services Agreement that is reflective of and encompasses services and new requirements established in this report.

Kennel Services Contract (\$85,000) currently budgeted as follows:

- \$60,000 Kennel Services Agreement; and
- \$25,000 support to TNRM program (program cancelled or suspended).

Consultations:

Supervisor, Financial Service, Procurement
City Clerk
City Solicitor

Attachments:

Appendix A - Report ML2022-001



ML2022-001 Stray
and Feral Cats.docx

Appendix B – Feral Cats Information Brochure



feral cat
brochure.doc

Appendix C - By-Law 2021-072 Being A By-Law to Regulate Animals in The City of
Kawartha Lakes



2021-072
Consolidated A Bylaw

Department Head email: critchie@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: C. Ritchie, City Clerk