



## Committee of the Whole Report

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**Report Number:** ML2022-001

**Meeting Date:** June 7, 2022

**Title:** Stray and Feral Cats

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

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### Recommendation(s):

**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 be added to 2023 Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing services budget submission for consideration;

**That** the necessary Amending By-Law be brought forward to Council for adoption; and

**That** these recommendations be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

**Department Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Financial/Legal/HR/Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Administrative Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background:**

On September 7, 2021 Council received a deputation from Christine Lanz attached as **Appendix A**. The deputation requested that Council instruct MLE staff to investigate how best to protect the accessibility/vulnerability of Kawartha Lakes communities from trap, neuter and release/relocate (TNR) cat organizations that operate within municipal communities. Concerns raised include lack of community notice that a TNR organization is operating in the community area and examination of the practices and training that these organizations are using.

Ms. Lanz further requested that TNR be regulated to create a unified approach that involves the community communication that is based of scientific evidence, best practices, education/training, input from current colony caregivers and examples of what has been successful in other communities. Ms. Lanz suggested that By-Law 2017-039, Being a By-Law to Regulate Animals in The City of Kawartha Lakes, now repealed by 2021-072, be amended.

At the Council Meeting on September 21, 2021, Council adopted the following Committee of the Whole recommendation:

### **CW2021-193**

**That** the deputation of Christine Lanz, **regarding the process to address the feral cat population**, be received and referred to staff for review and report back.

**Carried**

This report addresses that direction.

## **Rationale:**

The issue of feral cats and feral cat colonies has been to Council in the past. Currently, trap, neuter(spay) release and monitoring (TNRM) of cat colonies is on the rise and organizations are operating in Kawartha Lakes and surrounding area. This report will also suggest process changes and amendments to the Animal By-Law. Council should also be advised that this report will impact Animal Services and the 2023 Pound Services Agreement. (Current agreement expires December 31, 2022.)

### **Past History:**

Report CAO2006-003 – This report requested that all existing by-laws relating to cats and exotic animals be repealed and alternative draft by-law would be prepared and presented to the Corporate and Human Resource Services Committee.

Report CAO2006-024 – This report was a follow-up to Report CAO2006-003, recommendation CHR2007-052 and a deputation regarding stray cats. The report recommended that as time permits staff explore other approaches to feline control of a lesser manner.

Council Resolution CR2007-347 – Ed Call, of the Victoria County Humane Society, spoke in favour of a Cat By-Law.

Report CAO2007-049 – This report was regarding the regulation of cats in response to Council recommendation that staff consider other approaches to feline control. The report also discussed a significant increase in staff hours required by MLEO if a cat by-law was implemented. (Ref. CHR2007-053 and CR2007-358)

Report CAO2008-024 – In this report staff recommended that the Victoria County Humane Society and the Victoria Haliburton Pineridge District Health Unit be approached regarding initiating a public education program for the health and safety of cats similar to the program in place for dogs.

In 2010, through CR2010-1183, Council resolved that City staff explore partnerships with the Kawartha lakes Humane Society, veterinarians and other interested community members to: (a) raise awareness about issues faced by stray cats; (b) educate the public about the importance or responsible cat ownership; and (c) provide options for the City for dealing with the issue of stay cats in our communities and;

### **Stray Cat Task Force**

In late 2010, a Stray Cat Task Force was formed to discuss the stray/feral cat issues, programs, animal services and the first meeting was held on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2011. Members on the committee included a municipal Councillor, Director of Development Services, Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement (MLE), MLE Officer, members of the Humane Society, a member of the Haliburton Kawartha Pineridge District Health Unit, Local Veterinarian and members of the public.

The Stray Cat Task Force discussed trap neuter and release (TNRM) pilot programs, education and supporting partnerships, with a mindset that any program would be managed in house as part of the Municipal Law Enforcement Division portfolio.

Ultimately, an early version of the Animal By-Law was created which included provisions to allow for feeding of stray or feral cats. The by-law changes did not include regulation that prohibited cats from being at large off of their owner's properties, licensing or TNRM as a solution to address stray or feral cat concerns.

Through Report **DEV2013-006** staff reported to Council that Municipal involvement in the operation of a municipal (internal) TNRM program should not occur due to a number of factors. The factors included consideration of our large land area, a large number of estimated feral cats (approximately 25,000), the estimated costs to operate an **internal** program (approximately \$400,000 in 2009 dollars), the lack of dedicated resources such as general operations staff, veterinarian clinics, facilities to house the captured feral cats (while waiting and recovering from surgery) and equipment such as cages and capture devices. These factors created the need for a financial strategy regarding funding the program and ultimately Council decided that a municipal operated TNRM program was cost prohibitive.

The staff report advised Council that there are communities in the City of Kawartha Lakes experiencing ever-increasing issues with stray cats; Council resolved that City staff explore partnerships with the Kawartha Lakes Humane Society, veterinarians and other interested community members to:

- (a) raise awareness about issues faced by stray cats;
- (b) educate the public about the importance of responsible cat ownership; and
- (c) provide options for the City for dealing with the issue of stray cats in our communities.

Ultimately, a joint information pamphlet was created, samples attached as **Appendix B**.

### **Current Practice - By-law 2021-072 being a By-law to Regulate Animals**

The City of Kawartha Lakes has an animal control by-law wherein regulations include:

- prohibition of animals from being at large;
- licensing for dogs;
- a process for order to restrain, used when a dog is involved in an attack;
- pilot project for backyard chickens (2021-2023); and
- prohibitions for exotic animal ownership.

The animal control by-law does not provide any direct regulation of domestic cats (stray or feral), licensing of cats, stray or feral management programs, and regulation of the groups who wish to care for cat colonies and/or utilize trap neuter and relocate (TNRM) programs. The municipality does not provide any direct budget/staff resources or process to manage the stray/feral cat population or TNRM programs.

In the late summer and early fall of 2021, the Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing (MLEL) met with community members that included the deputant, representatives from the Humane Society Kawartha Lakes (HSKL), associated public members and veterinarian services. These conversations resulted in a request to amend By-law 2021-072 being a By-Law Regulate Animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes and to appear to speak to the newly formed Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group about establishing a municipally supported trap neuter and release (monitoring) program. The Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group have requested MLE staff support their program proposals and bylaw recommendations.

Municipal Law Enforcement staff have reviewed By-law 2021-072 being a By-Law to Regulate Animals and have added draft amendments, which are attached as **Appendix C** and discussed further in this report.

## **Organizations**

TNRM programs and organizations have been operating in our communities for years, these organizations are primarily self funded, rely on donations to operate and operate with minimum of regulation. Larger TNRM groups have been created, they are organized, they may be registered charities, have established dedicated operational standards and have created their policies with the support and guidance of the Ontario Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals<sup>1</sup> and Toronto Humane Society.

Organizations that operate in our municipality may include:

- Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM
- Barn Cat Co-op (Uxbridge area)
- Minden Cat Angels
- Dorset Rescue Kittens
- Operation Catnip (Peterborough)

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<sup>1</sup> In 2019, the **Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act** replaced the **Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) Act**.

## **Exploring Partnerships**

Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing staff have been approached and are participating in meetings with a community group called the **Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM** (Trap, Neuter, Release and Management). Municipal staff have had discussions with the community group, who provided information which includes their Mission Statement and Mandate as well as back ground, which is attached as **Appendix D**.

The **Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM** is a group that came together two years ago, which includes HSKL Board members, staff and volunteers as well as citizens who are passionate about caring for feral cats within the City of Kawartha Lakes. The group established a Mission Statement and Mandate (included below) most of which has been based on the successful TNRM programs currently operating. All members of the group have taken the TNRM course through Community Cats Toronto and are recognized by the Toronto Humane Society. Members of the group have implemented TNRM in areas of the City of Kawartha Lakes including Bobcaygeon and Fenelon Falls and have seen great results in the reduction of strays and ferals, especially after a number of years.

**Mission:** To create and implement a TNRM program in the City of Kawartha Lakes.

### **Mandate:**

1. Establish a committee to investigate TNRM and its implications in the City of Kawartha Lakes.
2. All members of the Committee must have taken the Community Cats Toronto TNRM course.
3. To find local cat colonies (ongoing) and to find caretakers for these colonies. Caretakers are encouraged to take the Community Cats Toronto TNRM training. However, if they are unable to, training (education) on proper care of colonies will be provided by the Committee.
4. The committee will meet as required to update members on developments and to plan for future actions.
5. Endeavour to locate funding sources to acquire materials needed to run the program.

6. Work on the City By-law "A By-law to regulate animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes" to allow for a TNRM program to be established and accepted by the City.
7. Help reduce feral cat over-population and euthanasia, which has a societal impact, through the TNRM program.
8. Educate and build awareness among cat owners and caregivers about the many resources available for TNRM program and colony management. Educate the public about the benefits of a TNRM program.
9. Support the ongoing welfare of colonies in the City of Kawartha Lakes through collaboration including possibly providing traps (with a \$ deposit per trap, amount to be determined) and shelters, food, workshops, etc.
10. Establish links with other active local and regional TNRM groups.
11. Get community veterinarians on board that will provide their services at affordable rates.
12. Get a facility for recovery after surgery and before placement in appropriate colonies or barns, having separated strays from ferals that can be successfully adopted into homes.
13. Implement a Pilot TNRM program in conjunction with the City of Kawartha Lakes and the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes. It will be stressed that colony management will be governed by strict protocols regarding feeding and monitoring.

The Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM, is a local group who wishes to create a funded relationship with the HSKL and the municipality and further the group has expressed interest in the creation of a pilot program to continue their TNRM work locally. A trap, neuter, release and management (TNRM) pilot program, if established would be used to educate the public regarding strays and feral cats (cat colonies), spaying, neutering, feeding, housing and veterinary care. In situations, when a feral cat colony is recognized by TNRM, the program would be engaged and a caregiver established to monitor and interact.

The Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group plans to move forward with creating relationships locally with Veterinarians to establish spay/neuter clinics (low cost or donated service). Currently, members who have been actively working in the area with known cat colonies have been transporting the cats to the Toronto Humane Society at their own personal costs (TNRM to Toronto started March 2021<sup>2</sup>), they participate in TNRM management course and receive a free spay/neuter service. This service is limited to a small number of cats at a time. A number of local veterinarians have

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<sup>2</sup> **Appendix E** represents approximately 170-200 cats and includes 5 individual TNRM stories.

expressed interest in supporting this program locally, which will lower some cost to the Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group. The TNR cats in this program are often returned to their colonies of origin.

In some colonies, Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM members have trapped cats and kittens, that are then spayed/neutered and once socialized these cats are placed with various agencies, such as the Humane Society for adoption. Kittens are also fostered into private homes.

As cat colonies are discovered, the Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM staff will keep accurate records and will share the records with the HSKL and Municipal staff. As budget and time permits, feral cats will be spayed and neutered, vaccinated and ear-tipped and returned to the colony. The colony caretakers will be required to keep a record of the number of cats in their colonies. The goal, is to see that the colonies are reduced in size, and eventually closed. The process of attrition is at play with colonies that are managed properly as the cycle of reproduction is halted.

## **Funding**

The City of Kawartha Lakes and the Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Division currently does not provide any budget towards TNRM groups (feral or stray cats). The local TNRM groups currently rely on donations to support their efforts and are unfunded by the municipality, they are requesting financial support.

The impact of the TNRM program has seen a minor reduction in queries and complaints that impact the resources of the Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Division. While the impact is minor, Council may consider that our City is growing, with people moving here from areas like Toronto and Durham Region, which have established programs and policies that deal with stray and feral cats. As our population grows, the call for regulation of cats will increase and programs that control them will be needed.

The fundamental aspects of a TNRM program suggests that people should not permit their domestic cats to roam free, that cat owners should be responsible to spay/neuter their domestic cats and that stray/feral cat colonies should be managed to monitor health and reduce population.

The TNRM groups rely on donations to the cover costs that include:



- Education material (post cards, pamphlets<sup>3</sup>, signs)
- Transportation (fuel, vehicle, insurance, travel)
- Spay/neuter clinics
- Feral cat shelters<sup>4</sup>
- Traps, cages and tools
- Temporary housing (surgery recovery space, awaiting adoption space)
- Food
- Veterinarian care
- Euthanasia (in worst case health issues)

### **The Committee's Interaction with the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes (HSKL)**

Currently, the HSKL is providing support to TNRM groups. The HSKL has taken in stray cats and ferals over the years, spending donated money on spaying, neutering and veterinary costs. It is reported that 90% of the cats taken in by the HSKL are strays and ferals. The Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group is able to receive donations through/from the HSKL. The amounts in this fund are not predictable, so it could conceivably be depleted in assisting the volunteers with the costs of food, litter, transportation, medications, vet bills, etc.

As cats and kittens have been trapped over the past year, HSKL has helped with providing some cage space for the adoptable cats and kittens, at times being overwhelmed. Unfortunately, this cage space is finite and HSKL can not be the one and only depository for these adoptable cats and kittens. Fortunately, the HSKL has established connections that reach Province wide and to other rescue organizations to provide assistance. The HSKL also has a contractual agreement with the municipality to provide pound services. The HSKL website may be utilized for educating the public on feral cats and feral cat colonies and promoting the Pilot Program, should it be established.

### **Pound Services Agreement**

Council is advised that pound services have been historically established with the HSKL and that the Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Division currently has an established multi year budget supported agreement with the HSKL to act as the pound

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<sup>3</sup> Sample Education Pamphlets includes MLEO pamphlet 2013 - **Appendix B**

<sup>4</sup> Feral cat shelters are constructed out of Rubbermaid totes and insulated to protect the cats from the winter conditions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJLJ7zazsf8>

for animal control. This Pound Services Agreement expires December 31, 2022. This service agreement does not currently include cats, but provides a fee description that includes fees for cats. Consideration in a future agreement will be to expand services to include TNRM initiatives, which is being discussed in this report. Separate from this report, staff are starting to discuss a new procurement process to ensure that the pound services will continue beyond December 31, 2022. A new Pound Services Agreement will be required prior to January 1, 2023. Staff recognizes that the relationship with the HSKL has been built over many years and has been very successful, and staff would like to continue to build upon this success and access to services as a single source.

### **Interaction with Local Vets**

The HSKL and the Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group are currently working to establish working agreements with local veterinarians to provide low cost spay/neuter services or clinics for feral cats. The Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM members have been actively trapping cats and kittens and have been transporting them to the Toronto Humane Society, which provides spaying and neutering for free, for the group members who have taken the TNRM course. Knowing that the Toronto Humane Society can only take a limited number of cats, contributes to the discussion and raises local awareness with local veterinarians who are in favour of a TNRM program. Setting up low cost community spay/neuter clinics is part of the purpose to request Council support a stray/feral pilot project in the municipality.

### **Licensing**

In review of municipal by-laws from other communities that license household domestic cats, staff have found that urban cats are more likely to belong to domestic households and that rural cats may belong to a domestic household, but the greater numbers are more likely to be farm cats with characteristics that would define them as partially or fully feral.

The Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM has requested that Council consider, along with suggested Animal By-law amendments, creating a licensing program for urban domestic cats. Further to licensing, that urban cats be restricted from being permitted to be at large. Included in the chart below are details listing municipalities that regulate cats. Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing staff have not completed a public survey.

Staff researched domestic cat licensing in other municipalities and found the following:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>At large restrictions (yes/no)</b>	<b>Licensing (yes/no)</b>	<b>Period Valid</b>	<b>Fee</b>
<b>Toronto</b>	Yes	Yes	Annual	\$50 sterilized \$60 unsterilized
<b>Guelph</b>	No	Yes	Annual	\$25
<b>Newmarket</b>	Yes	Yes	Annual	\$35
<b>Sudbury</b>	No	Yes	Annual, multi year, lifetime	\$30 sterilized \$46 unsterilized 3 years - \$71 s. \$117 uns. Lifetime -\$177 s. \$280 uns.
<b>Stratford</b>	Yes	Yes	Annual	\$20 sterilized \$50 unsterilized
<b>Brampton</b>	Yes	Yes	Annual	\$10 sterilized \$20 unsterilized
<b>Barrie</b>	Yes	Optional/Voluntary	Annual	\$56.36
<b>Penetanguishene</b>	Yes	No	-----	-----
<b>Kingston</b>	Yes	Yes	Annual	\$15 sterilized \$30 unsterilized
<b>Clarington</b>	Yes	Yes	Annual	\$25 sterilized \$40 unsterilized
<b>Orillia</b>	No	No	-----	-----
<b>Peterborough</b>	Yes	Yes	Annual	\$25 sterilized \$30 unsterilized
<b>Uxbridge</b>	Yes	Optional/Voluntary	Annual	\$20
<b>Township of Scugog</b>	Yes	No	-----	-----

## **Animal By-law Amendments**

Council could choose to adopt an annual licensing program (domestic cats belonging to an urban household), that would collect an annual fee for domestic cats in urban areas (excluding rural, farm and colony cats). Based on the Licensing Chart on page 11 of this report, the licensing fees could be set at \$20.00 for spayed/neutered cats and \$30.00 for intact cats, a lifetime tag option similar to dogs could also be provided. (During the pilot project the fee will be free and registration voluntary). The revenue from licensing domestic cats will initially be zero, during the pilot project as time will be dedicated to education and collection of owner information. Licensing fees, when collected would be used to offset staff costs, the pilot project, and complaint response of MLEL Officers. If Council was to adopt a Licensing program, the Animal By-law in addition to the amendments discussed in Option One and attached in Appendix C would require the following additional amendments:

Licensing Section 2.00 of By-law 2021-072, being the By-Law to Regulate Animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes

- 2.01 Registration: Every owner of a dog that has reached the age of 28 weeks **or domestic cat in an urban area** shall make application to register the animal with the City for either an annual or lifetime tag within 30 days of acquisition of the animal by its owner or by another person acting on the owner's behalf.
- 2.02 Expiry of Annual Registrations: The annual animal registration of the dog **or domestic cat** expires on December 31st of every calendar year.
- 2.03 Registration Procedure: A dog **or domestic cat** shall be registered at any municipal service centre, or in any other manner adopted by the City by providing the necessary information, paying the prescribed fee, and submitting a copy of a current certificate of immunization against rabies. It is an offence for an owner of a dog **or domestic cat** to provide false information about the **animal** being registered.
- 2.04 Altered Dogs and Domestic Cats: Any person who is registering an altered dog **or domestic cat** for the first time shall be required to provide proof that the animal has been altered in order to be eligible for the reduced fee.

- 2.05 Issuance of Tag: Upon registration with the City, a dog **or domestic cat** will be included in the dog identification system by means of the issuance of a tag.
- 2.06 Ownership of Tag: Every tag that is issued remains the property of the City, and no tag shall be sold except with the written consent of the City.
- 2.07 Wearing of Tag: Every tag that is issued shall be kept securely fixed on the animal at all times when the animal is in a place other than the dwelling of its owner.
- 2.08 Transfer of Tag: No tag shall be transferred to or displayed on any other animal other than the animal for which it was issued, except with the written consent of the City.
- 2.09 Replacement of Tag: An owner of a dog **or domestic cat**, or another person acting on the owner's behalf may obtain a replacement for a tag that has been lost or destroyed by paying the prescribed fee as outlined in the Fees By-Law.
- 2.10 Exemptions: The requirement for annual registration set out in section 2.01 does not apply to dogs **or domestic cat** in a:
- a pound or shelter;
  - b veterinary hospital or clinic;
  - c kennel which holds a valid licence from the City; or
  - d pet store;
  - e Police Dogs; and
  - f **feral cats or cats that are part of a registered cat colony.**

### **Resident Self Regulation**

While the Animal By-Law has been amended a number of times prior to the current version, it does not provide any options to guide residents who wish participate in TNRM programs or for direct regulation of TNRM programs/groups. However, the Animal By-Law does offer an exemption to allow a person to feed stray/feral cats.

In consultation the Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group, staff has received the request to amend the Animal By-Law to include a new provision that restricts owners from permitting their domestic cats from being at large in urban areas. Cats who are not confined to their properties may roam and cause problems with neighbours. If they are not spayed or neutered, they continue to have kittens and the

cycle is never broken. Not only do the cats suffer from starvation, disease, injuries from being hit by cars, attacks by other animals or cruel humans, people who are not the owners of these cats have to deal with their negative behaviours. Every spring and fall the HSKL is overrun with kittens, this is due to people not spaying and neutering their cats, kittens being surrendered or found stray. There is an enormous cost and burden to the HSKL, which is operated primarily with donations. Other problems with cats permitted to be at large and allowed to roam are as follows:

- they get into the trash;
- they climb on people's cars or outdoor furniture, hang around yards or porches, sleep in sheds, garages or under porches;
- they dig in the garden leaving their deposits which can carry disease to humans;
- they fight, Caterwaul;
- spray when mating to mark their area; and
- they hunt injure/kill wildlife

### **Stray vs Feral**

One of the issues that has been mentioned in the context of a TNRM program is how the municipality may define a stray or feral cat. While stray and feral cat is not defined in By-law 2021-072, being a By-law to Regulate Animals (the Animal Control by-law), staff have considered the following terms to define Stray and Feral cats:

- **"Feral Cat"** means a cat that is found within the City of Kawartha Lakes that has no owner, lives exclusively outdoors, is not socialized, does not allow itself to be handled or touched, and usually is extremely fearful or resistant to human contact;
- **"Stray Cat"** means a domestic cat that is found within the City of Kawartha Lakes who has been abandoned but is socialized to human contact; this may be similar to a feral cat;

The Animal Control By-law does currently provide some discussion using the terms stray and feral. The feeding of stray or feral cats is permitted.

**"Attractant"** means any substance which could be reasonably expected to attract a wild animal or animals or does attract wild animals, strays, feral or abandoned animals;

**"Feed or feeding"** means the deliberate act of furnishing, or making food or other substances available which is likely to be consumed by wild animals, strays, feral or abandoned animals;

**"Wild Animal"** means all mammals, birds and reptiles, other than domestic animals, including feral cats and wild dogs.

5.02 **Feeding of Wild Animals:** No person shall intentionally feed wild animals or leave food or attractants of any type, in any form and in such a manner as to attract, be accessible to wild animals, feral or stray domestic animals.

5.03 **Exemptions:** Section 5.01 does not apply in the following situations:  
(3) The leaving of food for a colony of stray or feral cats.

### **Urban vs Rural**

In considering Trap, Neuter, Relocate and Management (TNRM) programs, the location of cat colonies will become important in conversation and in the determination of where best to utilize resources. In the writer's opinion, the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes and the TNRM groups generally divide stray and Feral cat colonies into two location categories which are urban and rural (farm). In review of By-law 2021-072, being a By-law to Regulate Animals, the by-law does not separate the two general geographies or provide regulation based on geography.

Urban and Rural is defined in other municipal bylaws and as follows:

**Urban:** means a lot located in a village, hamlet, town or subdivision that is less than 1 (one) hectare or 2.471 (two point four seven one) acres in size; and

**Rural:** means a lot that is greater than 1 (one) hectare or 2.471 (two point four seven one) acres in size and may include agricultural properties.

Rural properties that may house farm cats (feral or not) will be exempt from the by-law requirements to license and exempt from the at large provisions of the Animal By-Law. Rural cat colonies are able to be registered and may receive assistance from a colony caregiver.

## **Options:**

Conversation regarding stray and feral cats has been before Council numerous times since 2006, with various results that include receiving the reports and public education. Council has the option to receive the report and take no further action.

If Council decides on an option below, planning and implementation will occur in 2022 and the budget requested will become part of the 2023 budget process and if approved, utilization and the overall program will start in 2023.

**Option One** – Council could consider amending the Animal Control By-law by adding regulations to prohibit domestic cats in urban areas from being permitted to be at large and enhancing permissions for individuals to care for feral cats and/or cat colonies. The Animal Control By-law amendments are highlighted in **Appendix C**. These amendments will address some of the concerns brought forward by the individuals and groups consulted. For example:

- defining stray and feral cats,
- defining rural and urban designations,
- recognition of colonies and colony caretakers,
- require TNRM groups to advise the municipality and the HSKL of cat colony locations and trapping programs, including advising area residents when operating in the immediate area (50m).

The data collected by Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing from complaint response will be utilized to identify feral cat colonies and stray cats that do not have owners. This data as a mapping resource, could be shared with the HSKL or TNRM groups.

In this option, staff will also create a 2022 survey for public consultation, the purpose of which, will be to gather information which may be used to create a future licensing program, location of stray and feral cat colonies, enhancing MLEL working agreement with HSKL, creating a municipally monitored TNRM program, budget and a regulatory approach to monitoring the TNRM groups operating in the municipality.

This option will require that the new 2023 Pound Services Agreement will include impounding cats found to be at large in urban areas. However, this option will not provide a supporting budget or a municipal structure to directly support TNRM programs.



This option is not being recommended due to the cost of equipment such as traps and cages and the requirement of additional training of Municipal Law Enforcement Officers to trap and impound cats found at large. The lasting effect of the pandemic and increasing complaint numbers is currently impacting MLEO resources and has resulted in a back log of unresolved complaints. Adding this additional service will increase demand on staff resources, and will require two additional staff at a cost of approximately \$140,000.

**Option Two – Recommended Option,**

Using the by-law amendments, prohibiting domestic cats from being at large (from a known address) and including the addition of provisions for voluntary licensing (future fee) as well as the survey suggested in option one, Council could approve a two (2) year pilot program, which would allocate a budget to Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing in 2023 to directly support a new Pound Services Agreement including services related to TNRM.

The Pound Services Agreement (currently set to expire at year end) when reintroduced for a new term, could be designed to include impound services for cats found at large (from a known address), funding for cat colony care and spay/neuter operations for stray feral cats. A pilot program would provide direct guided support to trapping and TNRM programs, provide kennel and recovery space for cats trapped and/or recovering after neuter/spay surgery. The TNRM program when implemented as part of the 2023 Pound Services Agreement, could be used to support the Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group and/or other similar organization, which will collect data on known cat colonies, colony locations, impounded cats, estimated cat population numbers, establish public training and education for individual who wish to volunteer, establish low cost local spay and neuter clinics for stray feral cats as part of their TNRM programs.

In this option, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers will not be utilized to trap any cats (owned, stray or feral). Enforcement will be reactive to complaints received and Officers in their role will be limited to attending known addresses to provide domestic cat owners with education, warning and/or legal action for violation. This response is considered to impact staff resources in a very minor way as it is anticipated that complaints will be few.

In this option – Staff also considered the cooperative program benefits and budget impact:

- Education material (post cards, pamphlets<sup>5</sup>, signs)
- Transportation (fuel, vehicle, insurance, travel)
- Spay/neuter clinics
- Feral cat shelters<sup>6</sup>
- Traps, cages and tools
- Temporary housing (surgery recovery space, awaiting adoption space)
- Food access
- Veterinarian care
- Euthanasia in worst case health issues
- Access to OSPCA and PAWS agents

The current Pound Services Agreement with the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes costs \$45,000 per year and is set to expire December 31, 2022. Staff anticipates that a future Pound Services Agreement beyond 2023 will increase in cost.

If Council was to choose this option, the annual budget for animal services would increase to approximately \$85,000 (this increase includes an anticipated Pound Services Agreement increase) with approximately \$25,000 dedicated to the pilot project and TNRM. The budget would be reconsidered at the end of the pilot project and a follow up report to Council, impacts considered for the 2025 budget, program permanency and/or cancellation of the program.

### **Other Alternatives Considered:**

Staff considered recommending to Council that implementing a community based education program in support of a Trap, Neuter(spay), Release and Monitor (TNRM), by distribution of pamphlets and provision of information of the municipal website would be a minimal cost solution that would simply raise public awareness. In considering this option, staff reflected on the history of animal services, public education, the restructuring of the OSPCA welfare services and the number of times that the issue of stray/feral cats has been before Council since 2005. Staff, is of the opinion that the issue of stray and feral cats in the municipality is a growing concern and as the municipal population increases these concerns will surface more often. An education based program has been utilized in the past 2010-2013 and it served to raise community awareness, but did little to reduce the concerns raised about the cat

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<sup>5</sup> Sample Education Pamphlets includes MLEO pamphlet 2013 - **Appendix B**

<sup>6</sup> Feral cat shelters are constructed out of Rubbermaid totes and insulated to protect the cats from the winter conditions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJLJ7zazsf8>

population and had no statistical way to measure success. Staff is not recommending this alternative.

## **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 the Guiding Principles fundamental to the 2020-2023 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan, which are to foster and strengthen Partnerships and Collaboration with the external organizations on projects and services.

## **Financial/Operation Impacts:**

The current Pound Services Agreement with the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes costs \$45,000 per year and is set to expire December 31, 2022. Staff anticipates that a future Pound Services Agreement beyond 2023 will increase in cost.

**That** staff be directed to start the procurement process to establish a Pound Services Agreement that is reflective of current services and new requirements established in this report, effective January 1, 2023.

Pound Services Contract (\$85,000):

- \$60,000 Pound Services Agreement; and
- \$25,000 support to TNRM program;

Along with financial support for a Pilot Program, an unused small portion of the HSKL building in Lindsay (rented pound space) may be converted for housing cats/kittens that are recovering from spay and neuter surgeries. MLEL staff have an existing contract with the HSKL in Lindsay, to house and care for stray animals (mainly dogs). This space consists of 12 kennels, used mainly for municipal impound dogs and dogs that are

quarantined during an attack. On a monthly basis the kennels have utilization availability which could be repurposed as a flexible use by Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing, the HSKL and TNRM groups.

**Consultations:**

Procurement

Legal

Clerk

Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes

Haliburton, Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit

Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM group

## **Attachments:**

### **Appendix A** - Deputation from Christine Lanz



Deputation from  
Christine Lanz

### **Appendix B** – Educational Pamphlets



MLEO - Feral Cat  
Pamphlet.pdf



HSKL - Feral Cat  
Pamphlet



Community Cats  
Pamphlet

### **Appendix C** - Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM – draft Animal By-Law



2021-072 A Bylaw  
to Repeal and Repla

### **Appendix D** - Kawartha Lakes Community Cats TNRM, Mission Statement and Mandate, estimated budget



ML2022-001  
Appendix D.pdf

### **Appendix E** - Represents approximately 170-200 cats and includes individual TNRM stories



ML2022-001  
Appendix E.pdf

**Department Head email: [critchie@kawarthalake.ca](mailto:critchie@kawarthalake.ca)**

**Department Head: Cathie Ritchie**