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- I have read and understand that my name and comments will be made publicly available in the Council agenda. My email address will not be included in the public record.

First name (required) Kevin

Last name (required) BYRNE

What do you want to do? (required) Submit a comment

Public hearing item (required - max 75 characters) RPO - 6 dog off-leash limit damages local small businesses

Date of meeting Dec 8, 2021

Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

The change in RPO bylaws slated for January will restrict and detrimentally affect the dog walking services that can be offered in Calgary. These changes were not discussed with pet care professionals, are not supported by research and are predominantly based on hearsay and anecdotal evidence. The changes will serve to restrict dog walking professionals, impact how dogs are handled when out on a pack walk and limit the services that walkers can provide. Areas that will be impacted include small business viability, small business longevity, public access to services, service area coverage and costs to businesses and clients across the board. Curbing irresponsible owners will always be difficult. That is the job of bylaw services and can be helped with ongoing education. What this RPO bylaw change actually does is target the people who make a living walking dogs and providing a service...exactly the people who already do the utmost to work within the rules at all times. It is requested that you as a City Council vote to support small businesses and responsible pet ownership and drop the 6-dog limit bylaw from the RPO amendment until such time as the City provides data that dog walkers are in fact causing a safety issue in our communities and is willing to fully consult with our industry and provide data to support such a decision.

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Dec 6, 2021

9:43:28 PM

I am reaching out to today regarding the recent amendment to the Responsible Pet Ownership bylaw as it pertains to the 6-dog, off leash limit. As you may be aware, this recent amendment placed a limit on the number of dogs a person can have off leash, in a city off-leash park, at one time. ***Previous Council recognized that for-profit dog walkers were not engaged as stakeholders at any time in the 2-year public consultation process. Acknowledging this, previous Council voted in favor of a Motion Rising providing time to consult with for-profit dog walkers as an industry group.*** Council realized there was a significant cascading impact of the bylaw amendment for many Calgarians including:

- The financial impacts of the 6-dog limit on professional (for-profit) pet care providers comprised of several hundred local, small business owners. The amendment was largely introduced to create health and safety restrictions for the public as they pertain to recreational pet owners.
- The 6-dog limit disproportionately disenfranchises women owned businesses and employees.
- The 6-dog limit will force local business owners to change their operations to account for the loss in revenue associated with the bylaw amendment. Changes might include a drastic increase in operating costs, significant price adjustments to make up for the loss of revenue associated with the City imposed cap, and a reduction of the workforce due to the impact on financial viability resulting in job loss for Calgarians.
- The increased cost of service in response to the 6-dog limit may make the service cost prohibitive for consumers which in turn could lead to a reduction in demand for services
- Reduced demand may lead to the dissolution of locally owned, small businesses due to the increased cost of doing business and lack of financial viability.
- The 6-dog limit will restrict the financial viability of a career in professional dog walking, limiting access to services for consumers and reduce access to jobs for Calgarians.
- Reduction in available, affordable pet care will result in increased problems for bylaw as pets who engage in regular services with professional care providers are, on a percentage basis, healthier, safer members of the community. Studies show that dogs who are well exercised and socialized are far less likely to generate barking complaints, be involved in altercations, dog bites and be found as stray animals; issues that result in animal service complaints.

Since the passing of the Motion Rising, stakeholders (for-profit dog walkers) have gathered as an industry group with the intent to work with the City's project team to:

- gain an understanding as to why the City felt the amendment was needed in the first place
- work with the City's project team to provide solutions that would address their concerns while avoiding impact to small businesses and lead to successful policy implementation

- develop a long-term working relationship with the city and bylaw services to create a positive culture surrounding pet ownership and ensure any safety issues are effectively addressed.

This is what we have learned:

- There was no public support in the ‘What We Heard’ Reports provided under the RPO review for a 6 dog off leash limit for dog walkers. When specifically asked about placing a limit on the number of dogs per person, only 5% supported such a regulation. In the Leger Report on page 46, the data is presented in a manner that would suggest 82% were in favor of this policy but if you look at the fine print and crunch the numbers, the support is only 5%.

- The City of Calgary RPO project team engaged many special interest groups during the RPO consultation process, but they did not engage the special interest group of dog walkers at any point during a 2-year engagement when the very essence and nature of their businesses were being impacted.

- *The City of Calgary RPO project team failed to consider the impact of the 6-dog off leash limit for:*

- 1. hundreds of for-profit dog walking businesses,*
- 2. thousands of responsible pet owners in Calgary,*
- 3. financial interests of dog walkers and responsible pet owners*
- 4. hundreds of predominantly female business leaders, nor*
- 5. the negative behavioural consequences this will have on thousands of the city’s dog population*

- We confirmed that The City of Calgary’s bylaw services has no data linking issues in off leash parks to for-profit dog walkers. There is no statistical data, no 311 call volumes, no man hours consumed, no volume of tickets issued attributable to dog walkers. The only information available to support this policy change is anecdotal. Anecdotal information without data cannot be measured.

- The City’s bylaw service and project team proposes a permitting system for for-profit dog walkers. It suggests a different standard of requirements than exist for other pet care professionals and designations. This is most clearly observed in the attachment of a requirement to enforce city licensing with clients. No other pet care professional is held to this requirement. Again, the standards they are suggesting are not based on experience or data.

- The City of Calgary broke every one of the engagements pillars it commits to during the RPO Bylaw Review as it relates to the 6-dog off leash limit.

(For further details on the information provided in our What We Learned section – please consult the attached Fact Sheet which pulls all the information relevant to for-profit dog

walkers from the multiple RPO Engagement Reports and provides the report and page number associated with the data)

The only consultation that took place between the RPO Project Team and our industry group/stakeholders was a survey that was limited in the questions it asked and was quite leading. Following the results of the survey, a permitting program was proposed, and we were advised of a tight timeline to respond. We feel the survey posed questions to justify the policies being proposed under this permitting process. The survey was not an honest attempt to collaborate with our industry. There was not one opportunity for for-profit dog walkers to have an open discussion regarding the permit program that we believe, but are not certain, is being presented to this current City Council. We wholly reject this permitting proposal. It appears to us that this solution was devised well before engaging in any consultation, and the consultation was strategically conducted to prevent resistance to a predetermined outcome. This is not good faith consultation and does not conform to the tenants of consultation as outlined by The City of Calgary.

A permitting process is completely unnecessary and business prohibitive. If an incident occurs, a bylaw officer can manage the situation with the individual, and just as easily keep track of repeat offenders. A permitting program is costly to City taxpayers. Current Bylaws appropriately and equally enforced across all dog park users, including for-profit dog walkers, are sufficient to achieve the goals the city has set out to establish a safe environment in off leash areas. What the RPO public engagement clearly demonstrated was a consistent and overwhelming demand for bylaw to provide increased enforcement at the off-leash parks. If Bylaw does not have the funds in the budget to meet the needs of Calgarians, we would request that Bylaw meet with City Council to address this funding issue rather than engage in bylaw reform for an issue that doesn't exist. If a lack of resources to enforce existing bylaws is the problem, then that specific issue needs to be addressed.

Bylaw services has suggested that the Chief Bylaw Officer, who we presume would have other considerable priorities and commitments, be responsible for approving hundreds of dog walking permits. We believe that it will take an inordinate amount of time to implement a permitting program. The Chief Bylaw Officer is an executive member of the City Administration, and the focus of an executive position would be on planning and strategy rather than becoming engaged in day-to-day activities. What makes even less sense is that the Chief has self-admitted to having no experience in this industry or the skills necessary to assess the skillset of a professional dog walker.

If bylaw services are checking for licensed pets at an off-leash park and find a dog walker to have unlicensed dogs with them, a ticket should be written for each unlicensed pet. The dog walker can then present the ticket to the owner. Under this approach, all members of the dog care industry are treated equally and fairly under the law and dog owners that use dog walkers to ensure they are acting as RPO are treated the same as all other municipal citizens. The instances where bylaw has been a helpful aide in reuniting any missing pets in our charge over 14 years' experience can be counted on one hand, the reality is the response times are too long and the red tape too cumbersome to be a useful tool. We as an

industry have far more effective tools in place for locating lost dogs including a network of dog walkers that engage in search and rescue. We provide this service to dog walkers and owners alike.

If the goal is safer off leash environments, it should be achieved through enforcement and the management of problem individuals in the off-leash areas. We are in full support of a broader, collaborative educational campaign (safe use) and fact-based restrictions (spay/neuter requirements) for shared off-leash spaces for all park users, not just for-profit dog walkers. The city has self-admitted there isn't enough experience or knowledge to successfully implement this program. The suggested permit creates a bottleneck at the Chief Bylaw Officer's desk.

As a community, dog walking professionals have a vested interest in maintaining clean and safe parks for their day-to-day use. Any perception that professional dog walkers are to blame for the misuse of shared public spaces is not the reality when it comes to the preservation of those parks in addition to other City resources. As a community, for-profit pet care providers are committed to working in a solutions-focused fashion with the City of Calgary bylaw department towards creating a safe and collaborative conversation that support small business and the responsible pet owning community.

The positive culture surrounding pet ownership in Calgary can be further enriched through the engagement with special interest groups to create plans that would lead to successful policy implementation. We genuinely look forward to a collaborative relationship with for-profit dog walkers and the wider pet care industry towards the development a long term, working relationship with the city and bylaw services.

We request that you as a City Council vote to support small businesses and responsible pet ownership and drop the 6-dog limit bylaw from the RPO amendment until such time as the City provides / has data that dog walkers are in fact causing a safety issue in our communities and is willing to fully consult with our industry and provide data to support such a decision.



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First name (required) **Carrie**

Last name (required) **Wagner-Meades**

What do you want to do? (required) **Submit a comment**

Public hearing item (required - max 75 characters) **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE December 08, 2021 at 9:30 AM IN THE COUNCI**

Date of meeting **Dec 8, 2021**

Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

**If the proposed bylaw goes through, I will lose half my income, the need for Professional Dog walkers is at a all time high at the moment with Covid and people getting more dogs,,, I have been a dog walker for 10 years and have never had any major issues at all with my dogs,,, like every business there are good and bad, so I am ok if dog walkers need a permit.
Please please do not set a limit for us.**



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First name (required) **Nicole**

Last name (required) **Hernandez**

What do you want to do?
(required) **Submit a comment**

Public hearing item (required -
max 75 characters) **Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw**

Date of meeting **Dec 8, 2021**

Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

Good morning,

As a self employed woman and dog walker of 14 years, I am very worried about the proposals in this new bylaw that will affect my business and my livelihood.

When I was made aware of these changes in September, as a precaution I capped both of my packs (I do 2 walks/day), at 6 dogs, to avoid any possible service disruption come January, should this bylaw pass. In the past 3 months it has become quite clear to me that I will be unable to continue to provide services with these restrictions at my current rates, and should this bylaw pass I will have to increase my rates to the point that I will be making my services unattainable to a large portion of our city's residents. While looking through all the information provided by bylaw, it has come to my attention that there is no merit in the decision to target for profit dog walkers. There is zero information to suggest that we as an industry contribute to issues at dog parks. In my 14 years in this business, I have never had a single interaction with a member of the public in which a dog in my pack has bitten/punctured a human or dog. I have, however, witnessed many interactions at dog parks in which a member of the public has an out of control dog who has injured another dog.

As a professional, I have a very high standard of obedience for the dogs that I walk. You could pull up beside me at a light and have absolutely no idea that I have 6, 8, or even 10 dogs in my van. There is no barking, no rough housing, and no fighting in my van. I can confidently walk 10 dogs, on leash, along icy pathways, and past barking dogs, with nobody pulling or reacting. I don't say this to be boastful, the majority of professionals in my industry have the same standards and level of control over their

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Dec 8, 2021

7:43:25 AM



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packs. I do, however, acknowledge that there are a few bad apples in our industry, as there are in any industry. I myself have reported dog walkers who are not following the bylaws that we have in place.

I believe the real issue here is not with for profit dog walkers, but with enforcement of the bylaws as a whole. I am at the dog park twice a day, every day. Every day, I see members of the public walking their dogs off leash along the bike paths.

I would welcome any bylaw officer or member of council to come join me for a walk, and I believe it will be quite clear that we as an industry are professionals who take the care and safety of our dogs very seriously.

Thank you for your time,
Nikki



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First name (required)

Val

Last name (required)

Johnson

What do you want to do?
(required)

Submit a comment

Public hearing item (required -
max 75 characters)

Permitting professional dog walkers to walk more than 6 dogs off leash

Date of meeting

Dec 8, 2021

Comments - please refrain from
providing personal information in
this field (maximum 2500
characters)

Please do not approve the request to walk more than 6 dogs off leash (in fact I would lower that). One person cannot respond to an unanticipated challenge, such as a dog running off as a result of a car backfiring, or whatever experience that dog may have. They will have all the other dogs to consider and will not be able to protect all of the dogs from harm. Just look at how many lost dogs we have in the city because they run off unexpectedly. Just look at the lost animal sites on Facebook. . . talk to your animal control. . . the shelters. These people who are asking for this are irresponsible and only thinking of themselves. Let the pet owners take them off leash. Dog walkers should have a limit of dogs on leash as well.

CITY OF CALGARY
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DEC 08 2021

ITEM: 7.1 CD 2021-1664

McIntosh
CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT