



CITY OF CALGARY RECEIVED IN COUNCIL CHAMBER
MAY 26 2014
ITEM: <u>NM-26</u> <u>distr'n C-U</u>
CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

May 23, 2014

Dear Councillor,

This letter is written in response to the forthcoming Notice of Motion #CC 661 (R2009-05) to be put forward by Ward 13 Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart. The Notice of Motion is seeking to limit the number of pets that Calgarians can keep in response to a recent incident in which 33 dogs were seized from deplorable and unsanitary conditions.

The Alberta Animal Rescue Crew Society (AARCS) is pleased that the City of Calgary will be discussing animal welfare issues in our city. Ms. Colley-Urquhart's goal of reducing animal cruelty and suffering is directly in line with the mission of AARCS. AARCS primary goal is to eliminate animal cruelty and homelessness and to assist communities to achieve healthy and respectful relationships with animals by promoting responsible and compassionate guardianship. (For more information on AARCS, please visit <http://aarcs.ca/>)

Please take notice that it is AARCS' view that the proposed by-law amendments will have a negative impact on animal welfare in the City of Calgary.

As stated in the motion the concern relates to public safety. It is AARCS' view that the proposed by-law amendments will not address the issue of public safety of citizens and their pets. The incident, which the Councillor is responding to, was recently published in the Calgary Herald and other media agencies, which reported the situation was the result of hoarding behaviour. Hoarding is a mental illness and one cannot legislate against conditions resulting from mental health problems, we must work with social agencies, city services, and educate the public to recognized symptoms and report concerns.

It is the view of AARCS that a limit on pets per household would not prevent hoarding situations from occurring.

Further, the individual involved in the incident was a known breeder, and therefore under the proposed amendment would not be subject to the proposed bylaw amendments. She did not license any of the 33 animals therefore was not in compliance with current by-laws. Thus, we ask how would the outcome have been different should pet limits been in place?

It is explicitly stated in the proposed bylaw amendment that a limit on pets per household will not apply to residences with business licenses. It is the view of AARCS that a limit on pets per household would not prevent problems as a result of the breeding animals from occurring.

There is no evidence that larger numbers of licensed pets occupying a single residence can increase the risk of health and safety issues to the residents, surrounding community and animals themselves. If the Councillor does have evidence, AARCS would be quite interested in reviewing it with the Councillor.

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