

CITY OF CALGARY IN COUNCIL CHAMBER MAY 2 6 2014 ITEN 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 safely. 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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TMENT: The proposed amendment to the bylaw would, however, punish the tens of thousands of responsible pet owners within the city. Driving law-abiding citizens to break the law in order to keep their pets. This in turn will decrease licensing compliance and ultimately reduce revenue and drive up costs within Animal Services Department.

Before we consider how other cities handle animal control, we must review who we are benchmarking ourselves against. Toronto may have pet limits, but they have not addressed the issues at hand and overall have a poor reputation, poor rapport with their citizens and low licensing compliance. According to a KPMG audit the recommendation is for Toronto to model themselves after Calgary and not vice versa. Calgary should look to maintain its position as a leader in Animal Care and Control, which basis is on collaboration with like-minded agencies, spay/neuter initiatives, public education and avoid a heavy-handed approach by legislating through arbitrary controls.

We recommend staying on the path of the Responsible Pet Ownership Model that Calgary is famous for across North America. We were once a leader in Animal Control Practices through the Responsible Pet Ownership Committee, a city which other city have looked to model after. We also recommend this committee be re-instated to re-build the partnerships with local interest groups and concerned citizens.

AARCS would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of the above points with you and to provide the insight of our years of experience in animal rescue and welfare. We have appreciated our close working relationship with City of Calgary and specifically Calgary Animal Services and hope that this collaborative effort will grow stronger in the future.

In closing, AARCS recommends that Notice of Motion #CC 661 (R2009-05) is not put forward by Ward 13 Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart on May 26, 2014, or at any point in the future.

Sincerely yours,

CITY OF CALGARY

IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

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Clarissa von Stetten, President

Alberta Animal Rescue Crew Society (AARCS)

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