



Report Number: C2018-0211

Meeting: Regular Meeting of Council

Meeting Date: 2018 February 26

NOTICE OF MOTION

RE: Emotional Support Animals within Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw

Sponsoring Councillor(s): Cllr Gondek

WHEREAS the City of Calgary has a responsibility to ensure the well-being of its citizens and monitor the ways in which its policies impact residents' quality of life and health;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Alberta holds the primary responsibility for health care and policies related to treatment options for physical and mental health;

AND WHEREAS there is an overlap between health care policies developed by the Government of Alberta and the day-to-day reality of patients in an urban setting;

AND WHEREAS the medical profession has acknowledged that prescription of medication for mental health issues can often be augmented or replaced by alternative forms of therapy (Kruger and Serpell 2010);

AND WHEREAS the City of Calgary presently has no ability to recognize or certify non-traditional animals for the purpose of emotional support, a categorization that is the responsibility of the Government of Alberta;

AND WHEREAS research provides evidence that animal companions have positive impacts on physiological symptoms of stress and anxiety, including the ability to divert attention away from what is causing the stress and/or anxiety (Johnson 2010; Leaser 2005);

AND WHEREAS dogs and other animals have long been part of treatment for a wide range of people, including military personnel with PTSD, children who have been abused and adults with mental illness;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct Administration to work with Alberta Health Services to determine a mutually agreeable solution for the categorization and/or certification of emotional support animals within the City of Calgary, including provisions for appropriate care of such animals within urban settings;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct Administration to report to Council through the SPC on Community & Protective Services no later than 2018 Q3.

References

Johnson, Rebecca A. 2010. Psychosocial and therapeutic aspects of human-animal interaction. In *Human-animal medicine: clinical approaches to zoonoses, toxicants, and other shared health risks*, ed. Peter M. Rabinowitz and Lis A. Conti. Maryland Heights, MO: Saunders/Elsevier.

Kruger, Katherine K. and James Serpell. 2010. Animal-assisted interventions in mental health: definitions and theoretical foundations. In *Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Guidelines and Foundations for Practice* (3rd Edition), ed. Aubrey H. Fine. San Diego, CA: Elsevier Inc.

Leaser, Andrew. 2005. See Spot Mediate: Utilizing the emotional and psychological benefits of "dog therapy" in victim-offender mediation. *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution* 20(2): 943-980.