



Subject: Animal Licencing Service Review

Report Number: OPD 21-44

Department: Operations and Development Department

Submitted by: Geno Vanhaelewyn, Chief Building Official

Meeting Type: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday, October 25, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

THAT report OPD 21-44 Animal Licencing Service Review, be received as information;

AND THAT the Town's animal licencing program is amended to remove cat licencing starting in 2022 (Option 3);

AND THAT the current Animal Control By-Law and Rates and Fees By-Law be amended to remove the requirement to licence cats starting in 2022 (Option 3);

AND THAT Staff be directed to bring a report to Council in 2023 regarding the status of options and cancellation of the dog licencing program for 2024 (Option 3).

BACKGROUND

Animal Control By-Law 2021-013 requires all pets (cats and dogs) to be licensed within the Town. This initiative supports community health and safety, provides a program that returns lost pets to their owner, provides funding for the municipal dog park, controls the population and promotes animal adoption.

At the April 26, 2021 Council meeting the following resolution was carried:

Resolution # 2021-212

Moved By: Councillor Parker

Seconded By: Councillor Gilvesy

THAT Staff be directed to bring a report to Council regarding the status of options and cancellation of the cat and dog tag program.

DISCUSSION

Many municipalities in Ontario licence dogs and some licence cats. The purpose of licensing is to identify and re-unite lost pets with their owners, control pet population and to remind pet owners of rabies vaccination requirements. Licensing programs have been the most effective way to communicate, verify and provide this service.

An overview of the Town's animal licensing program is provided below in the following sections; licensing fees, administration and budget.

LICENCING FEES

The current licensing fees for the Town are provided in the table below along with comparators of neighbouring municipalities.

2021 Licensing Fees

Municipality	Fees for Dogs & Cats	Early Purchase Fee	Late Purchase Fee
Woodstock	Dogs Only	Intact- 30 S/N- 15	Intact- 30 S/N- 15
SWOX	Dogs Only	Intact-20 S/N- 20	Intact-25 S/N- 25
Tillsonburg	Yes	Intact-25 S/N-20 <u>CATS</u> Intact-22 S/N-17	Intact-42 S/N-37 <u>CATS</u> Intact-27 S/N-22
Norwich	Dogs Only	Intact-30 S/N-20	Intact-50 S/N-50
Brant County	Dogs Only	Intact-40 S/N-25	Intact-40 S/N-25
Norfolk County	Dogs Only	Intact-39.25 S/N-25.50	Intact-44.75 S/N-33
Bayham	Dogs Only	Intact-30 S/N-30	Intact-50 S/N-50
St. Thomas	Yes	Intact-55 S/N-30 <u>CATS</u> Intact-35 S/N-10	Intact-60 S/N-35 <u>CATS</u> Intact-40 S/N-15
Brantford	Dogs Only	Intact-60 S/N-30	Intact-75 S/N-45
London	Dogs Only	Intact-56 S/N-32	Intact-64 S/N-40

Town licencing fees for dogs are competitive compared to other municipalities particularly if pet owners take advantage of discounted early renewal fees. Cat fees are higher compared to others that licence with very few neighbouring municipalities licencing cats.

ADMINISTRATION

The sale of licences is administered by DocuPet (70%), Local Pet Stores (17%) and the Customer Service Centre (13%).

Since 2019, the majority of administration for animal licencing for the 3100 +/- registered pets in Tillsonburg is completed by DocuPet. DocuPet is a contracted service that provides customer notifications, process licences, supply/issues identification tags, maintains licencing database, maintains website, deigns marketing/Facebook ads, etc. for a cost of \$3.91/licence sold. Customer communication mail outs such as follow-ups/reminders/notices are produced and mailed out by DocuPet at a cost of \$1.43/ea.

The DocuPet program is subject to a five year contract ending in 2024. The program has eliminated most of the administration and proven to be very efficient and affordable for residents.

Statistics related to the number of pets licensed in the Town are identified in the following table.

Annual Animal Licences

Output Measures– Quantity		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Animal Licences Issued	Cats	1221	1024	971	978	990
	Dogs	2101	2272	2512	2232	2110
Total		3322	3296	3483	3210	3100

BUDGET

The 2020 licencing financials for the program are broken down as follows:

2020 Licencing Program Financials

Licencing Revenue	55,302
DocuPet Administration	(18,078)
Animal Control Subcontractor	(9,018)
Contribution to the Dog Park	(358)
By-Law Enforcement	<u>(27,848)</u>
Total	0

Recently, some municipalities have ventured to cancel their animal licencing program. In consultation, the main reasons were related to high cost of administration, IT complications, low uptake in the program, social media resources for returning lost pets and the perception from residents that they do not receive adequate services for the annual fees they pay for licencing.

In 2018, staff identified the expensive administration/resources and IT challenges to run the program similarly noted by those municipalities that are now venturing out of the program. The introduction of DocuPet was presented to administer the program which almost eliminated administration by staff and allowed fees for licencing to remain competitive.

CONSULTATION

Staff consulted with the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers Association and neighbouring municipalities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

In review of the program; the value of service and financial impacts were key components and are broken down into potential options for Council's consideration.

OPTION 1 – CANCEL DOG AND CAT LICENCING PROGRAM IN 2022

Cancellation of the licencing program for 2022 as per the current By-Law and contracts would result in the following charges and loss in revenue:

DocuPet Contract - early termination (2 yrs):	\$25,696
Estimated Annual Loss of Revenue (2020 Actuals)	\$37,224

In order to consider cancellation of the licencing program for 2022 the DocuPet early termination would have to take place in November which would have to be paid out at the time of termination. This amount has not been budgeted for in 2021 and would directly impact the current 2021 budget.

The annual loss of revenue of approximately \$37,224.00 would result in a direct increase to the tax levy for 2022 and going forward as there are no measurable financial efficiencies.

This option is not recommended mainly due to the immediate/short term financial implications.

OPTION 2 – MAINTAIN EXISTING LICENCING PROGRAM WITH REVIEW IN 2023

Licensing program to remain unchanged and continue as per the current Animal Control By-Law and Rates & Fees By-Law with a follow-up report to Council in 2023 to review the status of options and cancellation of the licensing program for 2024.

This option would also allow staff to analyze the overall effects other municipalities may encounter in the near future as a result of cancelling their licensing program.

It is anticipated that the revenue and expenditures in the coming years would be similar to the 2020 figures provided in this report.

OPTION 3 – CANCEL CAT LICENCING PROGRAM IN 2022 AND REVIEW DOG LICENCING IN 2023.

Cancellation of the cat licensing program for 2022 as per the current By-Law and contracts would result in the following charges and loss in revenue:

DocuPet Contract Amendment:	\$ 0.00
Estimated Annual Loss of Revenue (2020 Actuals)	\$13,675.00

The annual loss of revenue of approximately \$13,675.00 would result in a direct increase to the tax levy for 2022 and going forward as there are no measurable financial efficiencies.

The dog licensing program to remain unchanged and continue as per the current Animal Control By-Law and Rates & Fees By-Law with a follow-up report to Council in 2023 to review the status of options and cancellation of the dog licensing program for 2024.

This option is recommended as a potential phased exiting approach with minor short term financially impact. Removing cat licensing in 2022 while maintain dog licensing would allow staff to analyze the overall effects other municipalities may encounter in the near future as a result of cancelling their dog licensing program.

CORPORATE GOALS

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

- ☐ Lifestyle and amenities
- ☒ Customer service, communication and engagement
- ☐ Business attraction, retention and expansion
- ☐ Community growth
- ☐ Connectivity and transportation
- ☐ Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

Goal – The Town of Tillsonburg will strive for excellence and accountability in government, providing effective and efficient services, information, and opportunities to shape municipal initiatives.

Strategic Direction – N/A

Priority Project – Short Term – Municipal Service Review

ATTACHMENTS

None.