



Origin

Motions of Regional Council from April 2009, September 2011 and Community Council February 2013 requesting staff consider:

- increasing fines for owners of dogs, who while running at large, attack another dog or person, to a minimum of \$1,000 and also hold owners responsible for expenses incurred as a result of the attack;
- providing stricter enforcement of the muzzle order and provide stipulations that an owner of a vicious dog which has attacked prevented from owning another dog;
- leashes for dogs be restricted to 2 metres in length and no retractable/extendible leashes be used;
- revisit sections of the by-law that apply to barking and noise violations; and
- legislation be put in place to prohibit the feeding of water fowl on all lakes within HRM.

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Fines

- April 1, 2008, Regional Council increased all Animal By-law A-300 fines from \$100.00 to \$200.00.
- New fine amounts are weighted with an emphasis on safety.

Violation	Existing Fine	Proposed Fine	Ticket Amount*
Unlicensed dog minimum	\$200.00	\$100.00	\$237.50
Running at large minimum	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$352.50
Failing to comply with Orders minimum	\$200.00	\$300.00	\$467.50
Animal attack minimum	\$200.00	\$300.00	\$467.50
Dangerous dog that attacks minimum	\$200.00	\$600.00	\$812.50

- Fines are consistent with other municipalities based on the jurisdictional scan.

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Victim Expenses

(veterinary costs or property damage costs)

- A judge has the authority to order restitution of expenses incurred as a result of an offense.
- Victims also have the option to take private action in the courts.
- Currently Halifax has no enabling legislation to address the recovery of victim expenses. The Halifax Charter would require an amendment to enable the municipality to enact such by-law provisions.

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Leashes and Tethering

- Our current by-law has no leash length restrictions. Based on decisions of the courts regarding running at large violations and a jurisdictional scan, recommendations include an amendment requiring a leash not exceed 3 meters and be held securely by a person.
- Tethering is considered an animal cruelty issue and is regulated under the Animal Protection Act. The agencies responsible for the enforcement of this Act are NSSPCA, HRP and RCMP.

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Muzzles

- Prior to Animal By-law A-300 the legislation did not include Muzzle Orders as an option for enforcement. Since the introduction of this legislation 50 Muzzle Orders have been issued.
- Muzzle Orders have proved to be an effective strategy to address certain aggression issues.
- Proposed amendments include increasing the fine amount for failing to comply with Muzzle Order from \$200.00 to \$300.00.

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Dog Ownership Ban

- Currently there is no enabling legislation that would address the banning of a person from owning a dog. The Halifax Charter would require an amendment to enable the municipality to enact by-law provisions.
- A judge has the authority to transfer ownership of a dog that is the subject of an offence. This step however would not prevent the accused from obtaining another dog.
- Current legislation permits the seizing of animals and/or the issuance of fines which has proven to be effective.

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Noise

- Our current by-law deems a dog to be barking excessively if it barks repeatedly for a period of 20 minutes or more.
- New provisions replace the 20 minute threshold with a rule similar to the Noise By-Law stating "it is an offense to unreasonably disturb the quiet of the neighborhood ..."
- This amendment will assist Animal Services in situations not previously addressed such as dogs barking at a regular time of day for a shorter period of time.

Feeding Waterfowl

- Currently the feeding of waterfowl or pigeons at site specific locations owned by HRM is prohibited.
- New provisions include a general prohibition including all birds and restricts feeding waterfowl at lands adjacent a lake.

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Registration: New Options

- Expiry dates of annual licenses are 12 months from date of issue.
- Microchipping allows a lifetime license opportunity.

	Lifetime (requires microchip)	Annual
*Unaltered Dog	\$200.00	\$50.00
*Spayed/Neutered Dog	\$75.00	\$15.00
*Senior citizens, upon presentation of Government issued identification confirming age 65 years or greater	Discount 50%	Discount 50%
Dangerous Dog Registration	\$300.00	\$100.00
Prohibited Animals licensed under subsection 10(4) of A-300 within 90 days of April 1, 2008 and which have been continually licensed	\$150.00	\$50.00
Service Animal	No Charge	No Charge

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Staffing

- Staff complement is seven full time Officers with service 7 days a week from 9:00 am – 8:00 pm and “on call” service from 8:00 pm to 9:00 am.
- Officers respond to 9000 service requests annually.
- Calls for Service are meeting 95% of service standards response criteria.
- No recommendation for increase in compliment is forth coming.

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Livestock

- The proposed Animal By-Law now includes provisions to address issues of stray livestock;
 - impounding and boarding fees,
 - option to issue “Orders” to provide remedies to fencing issues,
 - inclusion of an animal “at large” violation.

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Housekeeping Amendments

- Enhancements to the power of a Peace Officer to capture and seize prohibited animals and critically injured cats.
- Cat offences are moved from the Nuisance By-law and placed in the Animal By-law so regulations of all animals are under one by-law.
- Clarification that the owner of a seized animal may consent to its destruction.
- “Service animal” replaces “service dog”.
- Expand “animal attacks” from dogs only to “all animals”.

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Community Engagement

- Staff has consulted with the NSSPCA, the Halifax Shelter Keeper and the Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association (NSVMA) regarding all proposed amendments.

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Recommendations

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Adopt By-law A-700, replacing By-law A-300, including housekeeping and general amendments:
2. Adopt amendments to By-law N-300, Respecting Nuisances to include those provisions regarding cats within By-law A-700; and
3. Adopt the amendments to Administrative Order 11, regarding fines, fees and non fee related items.

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