

NEWS RELEASE

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Public input sought on new Animal Responsibility Bylaw

Summary

Residents have the opportunity to provide their feedback regarding a new Animal Responsibility Bylaw on the City's online public engagement forum, Get Involved Nanaimo, until December 11, 2020.

The bylaw was developed following recommendations from an Animal Control Service Review conducted earlier in 2020. The findings of the review recommended an amendment to the existing Animal Control bylaw to focus on the importance of responsible pet ownership and to incorporate the following provisions:

- removing reference to "Restricted Dogs" since it is no longer best practice (and not practicable) to target;
- changing "Vicious Dog" to "Aggressive Dog";
- modernizing sections to reflect current best practices on standards of care;
- requiring every owner of a cat to provide the cat with identification;
- requiring every cat that is permitted to go outside be spayed or neutered; and
- prohibiting cats to be at large in a public place or on another person's property, unless it is under the immediate charge and control of the owner or other person responsible for the animal. Please note: under this provision, cats would still be allowed to be outdoors on the owner's property.

Once the bylaw was drafted, City staff reached out to stakeholder organizations who were affected by the bylaw to provide feedback. Suggestions were compiled, feedback incorporated and then forwarded to the Municipal Solicitor for review. The bylaw was then presented to Council for feedback at the November 9, 2020 Governance and Priorities Committee of which a motion was passed to forward the draft bylaw to Council, for consideration of first three readings. At their November 16, 2020 meeting, Council passed a resolution to delay readings of a new Animal Responsibility Bylaw so public input could be obtained.

Interested residents can visit www.getinvolvednanaimo.ca/animals-in-nanaimo to learn about the bylaw, ask questions and provide their input.

Strategic Link: Providing an updated Animal Responsibility Bylaw and a forum for feedback supports Council's priorities of Environmental Responsibility and Governance Excellence.

Key Points

- Public feedback on the proposed Animal Responsibility Bylaw will be taken until December 11, 2020.
- Once the public engagement period has concluded, the feedback will be compiled and submitted as part of a report to Council in early January 2021 for their consideration.

Quotes

"Citizens are invited to provide their feedback now through December 11. We recommend that you review the frequently asked questions and read through the information and links posted to the Animal Responsibility Bylaw feedback page on Get Involved Nanaimo to get a comprehensive understanding of the bylaw."

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