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ANIMAL CONTROL 2005



IN THE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

"A good animal care and control program is a community responsibility and should be budgeted as any other program or service available to citizens. It needs to go beyond the old-fashioned approach to animal control services, which consisted primarily of a dog catcher and a pound."

George L. Handy

Animal Control Management - A Guide for Local Governments

Published by the International City/County Management Association



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PROJECT REPORT

Animal Care & Control Services in the Halifax Regional Municipality

An Assessment and Recommendations for the Future

Prepared for:

**The Halifax Regional Municipality
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

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**Burlington, Ontario
June 1, 2005**

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A.1 BACKGROUND

Animal issues and animal control enforcement are high-profile activities that frequently result in complaints or concerns being expressed to elected municipal representatives. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is no exception. This continually prompts a review and a re-evaluation of the way animal care and control services are being delivered.

In order to obtain an outside review and assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of current delivery of animal control services HRM, the HRM issued a Request for Proposals (RFP #05-40, dated February 2, 2005). Such review was to include:

- An assessment of the current animal care and control By-laws.
- An examination and review of the contract between the HRM and the Nova Scotia SPCA (NS SPCA) for the delivery of animal control services.
- An assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the way animal control services are currently being delivered.
- To identify other options for service delivery.
- To recommend to the HRM the most appropriate service delivery option that would best meet the needs of the Corporation, the community and the animals in the community.

The contract was awarded to James H. Bandow & Associates in response to their Proposal.

We (James H. Bandow & Associates) used a wide array of approaches and examined a number of commonly used animal service delivery indicators to arrive at our conclusions. In addition to reviewing background materials and records provided to us by the HRM and the NS SPCA relating to past and present service levels, we solicited comments, observations and service evaluations from designated HRM management staff and from designated representatives of the NS SPCA who are the current service providers under a contract to the HRM. All information gathered has been taken into consideration in arriving at our recommendations.

Although we understand that financial issues and the potential for cost savings are issues of concern to HRM officials, our recommendations, while *cost-sensitive*, have not been *cost-driven*.

We appreciate that many factors - financial, political, and practical - may influence the HRM position to accept or reject any of our recommendations. We have nevertheless identified the animal service delivery model which - based on our review, assessment, analysis - will best serve the needs of the HRM and its residents, both human and animal.

A.2 THE RECOMMENDED MODEL FOR ANIMAL SERVICE DELIVERY

In response to our review and assessment of the current state of the HRM animal care and control service delivery, and our detailed review of other animal service models, it is our recommendation that the HRM would be best served by the following animal care and control delivery model.

We are recommending that all:

- 1. Enforcement services become the sole responsibility of the HRM, including management of By-law enforcement and the field service program, the hiring and supervision of all enforcement, dispatch and community outreach staff, supply of vehicles etc.**
- 2. Animal sheltering activities, including the receipt of stray and owned domestic animals identified in HRM By-laws, the release of stray animals to their owners and the disposition of unredeemed animals become the sole responsibility of the NS SPCA, provided that:**
 - 2.1 the current SPCA Metro Shelter at 5 Scarfe Court, Dartmouth is completely overhauled to meet currently accepted humane, effective and efficient animal sheltering concepts, or**
 - 2.2 the NS SPCA locates in a new facility that meets currently accepted humane, effective and efficient sheltering concepts, or**
 - 2.3 in the event the NS SPCA is either unable or not interested to take on the sheltering of municipal animals under contract to the HRM, that the HRM, in addition to providing field and By-law enforcement services, also consider building and operating its own municipal animal shelter. We have provided an outline for shelter requirements together with both capital and operating budgets for such facility, (Appendix#2).**

Our review and assessment of the way HRM animal care and control programs are delivered has identified a number of issues that appear to interfere with an effective and efficient service delivery model.

These include, but are not the only issues:

- Although a contract exists between the HRM and the NS SPCA which identifies specific service expectations (largely reactionary), there appears to be no Animal Care and Control Mission or Mandate that provides guidance for program initiatives or which forms the background to the contract.
- Although the HRM has identified numerous service deficiencies relating to staffing and complaint responses by the NS SPCA (some of which we confirmed as part of our review), and has asked that the NS SPCA address those deficiencies, there appears little that the HRM can currently do to correct those deficiencies.
- The NS SPCA Metro Shelter, which serves as the municipal pound under the contract has numerous, serious shortcomings that impact on service delivery.
- Incomplete NS SPCA staffing complements and high staff turnover make it difficult to provide timely and effective service delivery.

Since the HRM has the experience and know-how in By-law enforcement, and the SPCA has the experience and know-how in sheltering and caring for animals, we are therefore suggesting that the Corporation of the Halifax Regional Municipality, its residents and the animals of the HRM will be best served at this time if the delivery of municipal animal care and control services were to be shared as recommended above.

Although we have identified a number of deficiencies in the current SPCA Metro Shelter, we are confident, given a new and modern shelter and implementation of many of our recommendations, that those deficiencies can and will be overcome.

As outlined in Appendix #2, we recognize that construction of a new shelter facility is a costly undertaking. Consideration might therefore be given to a joint venture between the HRM and the NS SPCA, whereby the NS SPCA could be provided with capital fund assistance or be provided with municipal property for shelter construction in exchange for a long-term contract to undertake the operation of the HRM Municipal Pound.

However, in the event that the HRM decides to continue its current contractual relationship with the NS SPCA, the SPCA should be required to present a detailed Business Plan for the next five years.

We recognize that our recommendation will increase costs to the HRM. In fact, we have stated this in our comparison of the service delivery models. However, we have also made it clear, that our recommendations, while *cost-sensitive*, would not be *cost-driven*.

A.3 ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL BYLAWS

We have reviewed all current HRM animal control By-laws as well as proposals to harmonize the legislation and to enact cat control legislation.

In response we have included Guidelines for Legislation (Appendix #1) for consideration when a harmonized By-law is drafted.

A.4 SERVICE HARMONIZATION

We note that delivery of animal control services is currently the responsibility of three different HRM business units, as follows:

- Animal control activities are currently handled by Environmental Management Services, which has a contract with the Nova Scotia SPCA to handle By-law enforcement and animal sheltering services.
- Real Property and Asset Management, which handles park patrols.
- Financial Services, which handles the issuance of dog licences.

We are recommending that all animal care and control service components be harmonized and become the responsibility of Environmental Management Services. We are convinced that this will prove beneficial to animal care and control service delivery and increase the number of licensed animals.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background

1.1.1 *Review of Animal Care and Control Services in the Halifax Regional Municipality*

As part of its review of the way animal care and control services are currently delivered in its jurisdiction, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) contracted James H. Bandow & Associates in February 2005 to:

- Perform a comprehensive operational review and assessment of the current HRM animal care and control services program.
- Identify other service delivery options.
- Recommend the animal service delivery model that, in the opinion of the consultant, would best meet the needs of the HRM.

This report outlines the results of our review and includes our recommendations how the existing animal care and control program in the HRM might be strengthened to better meet animal care and control expectations.

We have taken the position that animal care and control programs should reflect the desire to integrate animals into the community by promoting and supporting an environment that permits humans and animals to co-exist in a way in which conditions that can adversely affect the health, safety and enjoyment of the community, are minimized.

1.1.2 *The role of animal companions in today's society*

Humans have lived with animal companions for at least 30,000 years and probably longer, and recent studies in North-America have confirmed that over half of all households have animal companions. Clearly, our relationship with animal companions is of significant importance or it wouldn't have lasted as long, nor would it be as widespread as it is today.

Some may argue that animals were originally domesticated to serve some utilitarian purpose and only gradually became companions. Be that as it may, the fact remains that animals eventually did become companions, and today most animals we identify as pets are companions first and workers second, if at all. While dogs that herd sheep, sniff out bombs or drugs, assist their disabled owners, or guard buildings, and cats that keep the

rodent population on a farm under control are highly valued for their 'work', their main contribution today is as companions.

Our quality of life and well-being are determined to a significant degree by the importance we attach to other people and other things, and the relationship between us and our animal companions are an integral part of this. Dr. James J. Lynch, in his book: *The Broken Heart: The Medical Consequences of Loneliness*, states: "We don't have pets in our lives to be nice. We have pets because we need them."

Pet owners who responded to a *Psychology Today* magazine survey said, not surprisingly, that the main benefit of having a pet was companionship and pleasure. The magazine asked both readers who owned pets and those who didn't to answer. Thirteen thousand replied, including enough non-owners (12%), to allow the magazine to draw some conclusions about differences between the two groups. The most significant difference was that pet owners reported being more satisfied with their lives, both past and present.

Other studies have recognized and confirmed the valuable role of animal companions to our health, including:

- Heart and stroke patients with companion animals experience improved recovery and longer lives;
- Companion animals ease loneliness, calm emotional turmoil, provide fun and cheerfulness and make people feel needed;
- Companion animals help to reduce stress;
- Contact with companion animals can lower blood pressure;
- Companion animals provide individuals with opportunities for social interaction.

Although many questions remain, the effects of animal companions on humans continue to be a fascinating discovery. Research continues to validate what people have known intuitively and have reported anecdotally for many years: pets are good for us, for our health, and for the health of our communities.

It is therefore in a community's interest to develop and support programs that build on this emerging evidence, and to enact legislation and promote programs which recognize that responsibly kept animal companions are a desirable feature of a community.

1.1.3 *The need for enlightened animal care and control programs and regulations*

One of the down-sides of having a large number of animal companions in our communities, is that conflicts arise from time to time. These can be between animal owners and non-owners, or between animal owners themselves, thus, the need for rules and regulations.

A variety of different animals are kept by people as pets or companions, with fish representing the largest number. However, since dogs and cats are the most visible of the animals kept as companions, and since they are the ones most frequently encountered in places where they have contact with humans which are not their owners, most animal care and control rules and regulations tend to focus on those two species. And while the majority of those animals, when responsibly controlled by their owners do not present problems, they are capable of causing nuisances and at times threats to the health and well-being of humans.

To be effective, animal care and control programs and By-laws need to reflect the reality that it is usually an animal's owner and not the animal itself which causes problems. Keeping in mind the benefits that animal companions bring to a community, any laws and programs need to reflect an understanding of the human/animal relationship and help in the creation of an environment where responsibly controlled animal companions are welcomed.

It is important therefore that such laws and programs reflect the specific needs of each community. As well, such programs and laws should only include those care and control concepts that have a reasonable chance for acceptance or enforcement.

Normally, the primary focus of municipal animal care and control agencies is public health and safety, while the main focus of animal welfare groups is animal welfare, which includes issues such as cruelty, neglect and abuse of animals. Nevertheless, while the welfare of animals is within the purview of Humane Societies, at times there are overlaps of concerns and responsibilities between animal care and control and animal welfare agencies. As well, experience has shown that there is a close link between the humane treatment of animals and the promotion and enforcement of responsible pet ownership concepts that minimize the threat to public health and safety.

Although the regulatory approach to resolve problems and concerns that are well understood is generally effective, unfortunately, when it comes to animal care and control problems, those are not always well understood. In fact, many animal care and control problems tend to have more than one cause. Those causes can interact with one another

and can impact on the severity of such problems. Because of their complexity, communities rarely agree on what to do about such problems, or recognizes the tradeoffs that might be involved. A regulatory approach is frequently called for because of the common belief that if we enforce a regulation, the problem will be solved. This approach does work occasionally, particularly where a problem has a known solution. However, at times some groups in communities do not agree with such approach, and in an effort to accommodate the diversity of viewpoints, programs and regulations may become so diluted that they cease to have any practical effect.

Making rules and regulations tends to be much easier than implementing and enforcing them. While symbolic, yet unenforceable regulations can offer short-term solutions - since they may be seen as 'doing something' about a problem -, they may also raise community expectations that can't be met in the long run. Such regulations can breed resentment to the point that compliance with other municipal regulations may be resisted.

1.1.4 *The issues*

"What can possibly be so complicated about catching a couple of dogs?". This is how one Councillor in one municipality saw the issue when we reviewed animal service delivery in that municipality. Unfortunately, this misconception of what the delivery of animal services entails, is still widespread. Many individuals fail to recognize just how many people, both pet-owners and non-pet-owners, are affected by the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of a municipal animal service program. Nor do they understand that the role of dogs and cats in people's lives have taken on new dimensions.

When this country was first settled, most people lived in rural or small urban communities, and dogs and cats had mostly a utilitarian role as herders and for rodent control. During those years, the main purpose of dog control was to protect farmers' livestock, and stray dogs were considered feral, and either captured or shot.

As urban communities grew in size and complexity, so did urban dog and cat populations. However, urban straying animals required a less drastic approach, since most animals were owned and straying rather than feral.

In some provinces provincial governments responded by providing broader scope and authority for municipalities to enact legislation on dog - and recently also on cat - registration, licensing and control.

However, even as recently as thirty to thirty-five years ago a lot of dogs were still found running at large in both urban and rural communities. They were often seen roaming in

packs, and while they were usually not dangerous, they were a public nuisance. In those days *roundups* by *dog catchers* were a common sight. A number of dog control vehicles would converge on a neighbourhood and dog control officers would try and pick up as many dogs as they could. Those caught were 'impounded' and taken to municipal pounds, which frequently looked worse than the poorest jails. Regrettably, very few of those animals were ever claimed by their owners, and most of them were euthanized. Thus pounds got the reputation as places "where they kill animals."

Because the emphasis was on apprehension of animals, to be hired as a 'dog catcher', applicants had to be physically fit, agile, and be able to catch and handle dogs. There was little emphasis on, and little perceived need for 'dog catchers' to have good people skills.

As we now know, this 'round-up and destroy' approach did not solve the stray dog problems. Although thousands of dogs were rounded up and removed from municipal streets, just as fast new ones kept appearing. Animal control agencies were caught in a vicious cycle of round-up and destroy. Not wishing to pay redemption fees or penalties, the owners of many of those impounded animals simply got new ones instead of redeeming their apprehended animals from the pound. And while redemption rates remained very low, many owners of those dogs continued their irresponsible behaviour. They got another 'free dog' which was subsequently also allowed to run the streets, so the cycle kept repeating again and again. During those years many municipalities annually euthanized more than 20% of their total estimated municipal dog population, without seeing a reduction of the problems.

1.1.5 *In search of solutions*

While most municipalities continued to focus on apprehending and impounding offending dogs, a few animal control agencies recognized that they were making 'a rod for their own back.' By picking up the problem dogs and euthanizing them, they were creating a market for more animals to enter their jurisdiction. In order to reduce the number of dogs winding up in pounds and shelters, some managers of animal control and animal welfare agencies started to more aggressively promote spay/neuter programs to combat what they termed the "pet overpopulation problem."

Other agencies believed that there really wasn't a 'pet overpopulation problem', but that the problem was that there were too many irresponsible owners, and that greater efforts needed to be made to go after those owners and to hold them responsible for their actions. As a result, some agencies called for amendments to By-laws that would provide greater restrictions on animal owners (leashing, restricting numbers etc.) while others called for increased fines for confirmed offenders.

Although those strategies reduced the number of dog packs and resulted in fewer dog roundups, there was still no significant impact on reducing the number of animals needing to be euthanized. Large numbers of unidentifiable dogs and cats still wound up in pounds and shelters. In fact, in some of the municipalities that had introduced higher pound-fees and penalties it further reduced redemption rates. Many owners whose animals had been picked up were often even more reluctant to redeem them. Not only was it now costing them more to get their dogs back, in addition they could also be subject to other fines or penalties. As well, the public continued to see Animal Control Officers as "dog catchers," whose only interest it was to pick up animals "so that they could be killed."

1.1.6 *A new approach*

Some animal service agencies continued to experiment with new and different approaches to reduce euthanasia rates. Today, those animal care and control agencies which are showing the best results in solving animal-related problems are using a strategy that appears to run counter to those who believe that penalizing offenders is the best way to reduce animal-related complaints.

Agencies which have consistently lowered euthanasia rates are those which have focused on strategies to integrate animals into their community, and which have enlisted the help of the community to make that happen. Their strategy is not to focus on stray animal impoundment, or on penalizing more owners, or on generating more fines, but instead to focus on returning animals home. However, since one of the main stumbling blocks to re-uniting more animals with their owners is usually a lack of proper identification on animals when they are picked up, this approach requires a fundamental review of the way we think about animal licensing. In order to more effectively reduce the number of unidentified animals, licensing legislation needs to provide an incentive for owners to permanently identify their animals. This means that licensing legislation and the fee structures need to be revamped so that owners are rewarded for doing 'the right thing', rather than being penalized for doing the 'wrong thing'.

Under such strategy responsible actions are rewarded and licensing is promoted for its identification benefits. Revenue generation from licensing becomes secondary to reducing euthanasia and program and sheltering costs. Under such system only pet owners who do not take the recommended step of permanent identification (and sterilization) pay full licence fees. Significant fee differentials are offered to dog and cat owners who show proof that their animals have been permanently identified by microchip, and owners who have their animals both sterilized and permanently identified with a microchip receive free lifetime licences for their animals.

This approach works best when coupled with the "free ride home" concept. Under this concept, every straying identifiable animal that is picked up is given a *free-ride-home*. No penalties and no pound fees are charged unless the owner is a habitual offender. Virtually every municipality which has adopted this approach has experienced a significant increase in redemptions and a significant decrease in euthanasia. Dog redemption rates of 70% to 80% have been achieved. But what is more important, better than 1/3rd of all straying animals are being returned home without the need for sheltering. That rate would probably be even higher if there was someone at home at the dog's address when it was being returned by the Animal Control Officer. This is a *win-win* situation. Apart from the cost-benefits to the agency for not having to shelter those animals, owners benefit because they don't have to go to the pound to redeem their animals, and animals benefit because animal shelters and pounds are just about the worst place for an animal because of the potential exposure to unhealthy animals. As well, there is a significant improvement in public appreciation and support for the animal service agency.

The foregoing represents just one example of an initiative undertaken by forward-thinking animal care and control agencies which recognize the value that companion animals bring to the community and the significant contributions they make to the lives of many residents.

1.1.7 *Defining Compliance*

Most pet owners are responsible members of a community and act accordingly. This means that much of an animal care and control agency's time and resources are focused on dealing with a relatively small, all-be-it problematic, section of the community.

Individuals who do not comply with animal care and control By-laws do so either inadvertently or deliberately. Those who *inadvertently* break the rules do so largely because of ignorance, and such ignorance may exist because:

- a) They don't know that a rule exists (*i.e., they just got a dog for the first time and don't know that they are required to register the animal with the municipality*).
- b) They know that a rule exists, but don't believe that it applies to them (*i.e., they thought that they didn't have to licence their dog because it never leaves their property*).
- c) They know that a rule exists, but are unaware that they don't comply (*i.e., they don't realize that failing to promptly remove excrement left by their dog in their backyard attracts flies, which interferes with the neighbours' barbeque*).
- d) They know that a rule exists, but don't know how to comply (*i.e., they realize that the dog barks in the middle of the night and disturbs the neighbours, but*

- e) *they don't know what to do about it).*
They are forgetful or indifferent.

Those who *deliberately* break the rules do so largely because:

- a) They think the rules are stupid, and not complying with them demonstrates that they don't agree with them.
- b) They don't like rules - period. They also deliberately bend or break other rules and regulations in an effort to challenge authority.
- c) They see some rules as a game of "catch me if you can."

It is important to understand that no By-law or regulation, no matter how enlightened or how well intended, will be universally accepted, and that is especially true when it comes to animal care and control regulations. Moreover, there are often distinct differences of opinion between those who own dogs or cats and those who don't.

Part of our review of the HRM animal care and control program has been to examine current HRM animal care and control legislation and enforcement practices. We have provided legislative Guidelines to be considered when the HRM Animal Control By-law is reviewed. Nevertheless, in updating its Animal Care and Control By-law, the HRM must accept that whatever the final version of the By-law, there will be opposition to some or all of its content, and some of that opposition may be vocal.

1.2 The Consultant

JAMES H. BANDOW & ASSOCIATES have been providing consulting and staff training and development services to public and private animal care and control agencies and associations since 1989.

1.2.1 Project Team Members

The HRM Animal Care and Control Services Review and Assessment Project was completed by the following team:

James H. Bandow, Senior Consultant

The project was managed and completed by Mr. James H. Bandow who is the Senior Consultant. He had responsibility for gathering the necessary documentation and meeting with appropriate HRM staff and with stakeholders. He directed the Project Team and prepared the Project Report.

Donald Mitton, Associate Consultant

Mr. Mitton reviewed and assessed the HRM animal control legislation as well as By-law enforcement and animal sheltering policies and procedures. His primary responsibility was the development of recommendations for a municipal animal shelter facility, including a capital and an operations budget for such facility.

Carl Bandow, Associate Consultant

Mr. Bandow reviewed and assessed the HRM animal control legislation as well as By-law enforcement and animal sheltering policies and procedures, with particular emphasis on licensing and IT. His primary responsibility was the development of recommendations for staffing teams for municipal sheltering and field operations.

1.2.2 Qualifications and relevant experience of team members

James H. Bandow

Background

James H. Bandow is the owner/operator and Senior Consultant of JAMES H. BANDOW & ASSOCIATES, a training and consulting company, specializing in animal care and control issues. The business was established by Mr. Bandow in 1989. Where appropriate, Mr. Bandow contracts with a number of Associates in cases where specific knowledge and/or skills are required.

Mr. Bandow was trained in small animal management in Europe and worked in small animal management in Germany, Denmark, the USA and Canada for 21 years. Prior to joining the animal care and control field in 1973, he owned and/or managed a number of animal production operations, and was involved in client training and product marketing and promotion

Education

Mr. Bandow received a *Certificate in Supervisory Studies* (1978), and a *Certificate in Management Studies* (1982) from Mohawk College, Hamilton, Ont., a *Certificate in Adult Education, Training and Development* (1984) from McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont. and a *Certificate in Helping Adults Learn* (1990) from Sheridan College, Oakville, Ont. As well, he has completed a number of specialized courses in administration of animal care and control agencies in the USA between 1975 and 1986.

Relevant Work Experience

- General Manager, City of Toronto Animal Control Services (1989 - 1999).
Department of Public Health, City of Toronto. He retired from the City of Toronto in 1999.
- Executive Director, Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (1985 -1989),
Ottawa, Ont.
- General Manager, Hamilton SPCA (1980 -1985)
(The Hamilton SPCA served under contract as the municipal Animal Care and Control Agency to all five municipalities in the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth, Ont.)
- Operations Supervisor, Investigator/Inspector, Hamilton SPCA (1973 - 1980)
- Owner/Operator of James H. Bandow & Associates (1989 - present)
Providing consultation and training services to the animal care and control field in North America.

Relevant Consulting Experience

1. 2004 - Town of Markham, Ontario.
Review and recommendations for an updated Animal Care and Control By-law.
2. 2004 - Town of Markham, Ontario
Review and assessment of animal care and control services provided by a private contractor to the Town of Markham, and providing recommendations how such animal service delivery could be improved.
3. 2003 - City of Ottawa, Ont.
A Service Audit of municipal animal sheltering services (pound services) provided under contract to the City of Ottawa by the Ottawa Humane Society.
4. 2002 - City of Ottawa
Development of a new City-wide Harmonized Animal Care and Control By-law following the amalgamation of 13 municipalities into the City of Ottawa.
5. 2000 - City of Thunder Bay, Ont.
Review and assessment of animal care and control services provided by the City of Thunder Bay, Ont., and identification of the appropriate service model for the City. Consulting included suggestions for more enlightened animal care and control legislation, recommendations for staff training and development, and design suggestions and recommendations for animal handling concepts for a new municipal animal service centre in Thunder Bay, Ont.
6. 1997 - The Region of Ottawa-Carleton
Review and assessment of animal care and control services provided by the 13 municipalities making up the Region of Ottawa Carleton, and review and assessment of the contractual relationship with the Humane Society of Ottawa Carleton covering the sheltering of animals.
7. 1993 - City of Oshawa, Ont.
Review and assessment of animal control services delivered by the City of Oshawa, Ont., and recommendations for restructuring and improvements of service delivery.
8. 1989 - 1990 - City of Winnipeg, Man.
Review and assessment of animal control and shelter services in the City of Winnipeg, Man. for the City of Winnipeg. The review included development of a new focus for the municipal agency together with implementation

recommendations, action plans, and a suggested new shelter design.

1990 -1992 - Completion of a staff Training Needs Assessment, and development, implementation and delivery of information and training sessions to support the proposed organizational changes, were part of that review.

9. 1988 - St. John's Nfld.

Review and assessment of municipal animal care and control services with appropriate recommendations to improve the delivery of such services in the City of St. John's, Nfld.

(Note: This review was conducted on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) while the consultant was CFHS Executive Director.)

Professional Affiliations

Mr. Bandow is a charter member and past president of *the Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario (AASAO)*, and is currently contracted as the Association's Executive Secretary and Journal Editor. He is a member and past president of the *Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (SAWA)* in the USA; a past director of the *Human Animal Bond Association of Canada (HABAC)*; a past director of the *Canadian Association for Humane Trapping (CAHT)* and is currently contracted as the CAHT Executive Director. He is a past member of the *National Animal Control Association (NACA)* in the USA, and of the *American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers*.

Recognitions

Mr. Bandow is well known throughout North America as a consultant, speaker and workshop facilitator on a wide range of animal care and control topics. In recognition of his contributions to the development and delivery of training programs for animal care and control professionals, Mr. Bandow was the second recipient (1983) of the annual ROSEMARY AMES AWARD, which was established in 1982 by the American Humane Association.

Throughout the years Mr. Bandow has received numerous service awards and recognitions from animal care and control agencies and organizations on both sides of the border, including the ARKANSAS TRAVELLER AWARD (1983), from then Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton for his contributions to training of animal control staff in Arkansas.

Donald R. Mitton, CAWA

Background

Donald Mitton is a contract Consultant of James H. Bandow and Associates with more than twenty-five years of experience in the management of municipal Animal Services. Mr. Mitton has been employed as Supervisor, Animal Services by the City of Toronto since 1998, and was employed in a similar capacity from 1977 to 1998 by the former City of Scarborough, Ontario.

Mr. Mitton has considerable experience and expertise as Project Lead in animal shelter design, creation of business cases, site selection, design and construction. He was involved in identifying sheltering needs and development of a facility plan for the Town of Markham as part of the Town of Markham Project, and developed the capital and operating budgets for the proposed sheltering facility. During his tenure with the City of Scarborough, and subsequently with the City of Toronto, he was responsible for the establishment and operation of two, state-of-the-art, animal care and control centres.

Education

Mr. Mitton holds the designation as a *Certified Animal Welfare Administrator* by the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (2004), and holds a *Certificate in Effective Supervision* from Centennial College (1981). Additionally, he has completed numerous specialized courses in administration and management of animal care, control and welfare agencies in the USA and Canada between 1977 and 2004.

Professional Affiliations

Mr. Mitton is Past President of the *Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario* (AASAO). He is Vice-president of the *Canadian Association for Humane Trapping*, member and former Vice-president of the *Society of Animal Welfare Administrators* (SAWA), and currently a member of the select committee on the SAWA Executive Director Certification Program. He is a member of the *National Animal Control Association* and past member of the *American Humane Association Leadership Forum*.

Relevant Work Experience

- Supervisor, Animal Services (1998 – present), Department of Public Health, City of Toronto
- Supervisor, Animal Services (1977–1998), Department of Buildings, City of Scarborough

Carl Bandow

Background

Carl Bandow is a contract Consultant of James H. Bandow and Associates with more than twenty-five years experience in the field of Animal Care and Control. Mr. Bandow has been employed as Supervisor, Animal Services by the City of Toronto since 1998. From 1993 to 1998, Mr. Bandow was the Administrator of the former City of North York's Animal Centre. Mr. Bandow also managed the Cruelty Investigations Department of the Hamilton Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) from 1985 to 1993.

Mr. Bandow has considerable experience and knowledge in enforcement, training, human resources, and animal management information systems project charters and upgrades. During the transitional period of amalgamating the six former municipalities into the new City of Toronto, Mr. Bandow was responsible for consolidating the budget and staffing.

Education

Mr. Bandow holds a Certificate in Supervisory Studies from the Ontario Management Development Program through Mohawk College (1985) and Level II Certificate in Management Training for Animal Care and Control Professionals from the American Humane Association (1985). Mr. Bandow is the only Canadian certified as an Application Specialist of the Chameleon/CMS Animal Management Information System (2004), and additionally, has completed numerous specialized courses in administration and management of animal care and control agencies in the USA and Canada between 1985 and 2004. Mr. Bandow is also a certified member in Health and Safety through the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (2003) and is a certified WHMIS Trainer through the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (1990).

Professional Affiliations

Mr. Bandow currently serves as Treasurer for both the Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario (AASAO) and the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping (CAHT). He has served as President of the AASAO twice, 1995-1998 and 2002-2004. Mr. Bandow is also a member of the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (SAWA).

Relevant Work Experience

- Supervisor, Animal Services (1998-Present)
Public Health, City of Toronto

- Administrator, Animal Services (1993-1998)
Legal Department, City of North York
- Manager of Investigations (1985-1993)
Cruelty to Animals Section, Hamilton S.P.C.A.

1.3 Methodology

While our review of animal care and control services provided to residents in the HRM is comprehensive, the review and assessment should not be viewed as a complete evaluation of all aspects of animal care and control services provided. Records for some of the service components we questioned were not readily available from the SPCA.

We are nevertheless confident that through our interviews, and through our review of the key performance indicators, we were able to gain sufficient insight into current delivery of animal care and control services in the HRM to permit us to make our recommendations.

All of the information we gathered has been examined and considered. We have reflected on our discussions with HRM designated individuals and with representatives of the Nova Scotia SPCA. We have considered what we learned from our review of the documentation provided to us by the HRM and the NS SPCA, and from our two visits to the NS SPCA Metro Animal Shelter in Dartmouth.

We have carefully reviewed the methods by which the HRM currently handles animal care and control issues, including the handling of stray and owned animals, animal and human health issues, bite cases, animal redemptions, adoptions, euthanasia, public education, investigations, By-law and enforcement efforts, complaint resolution and human resources and budgetary issues.

We are confident that this Project Report, which includes our findings, supportive data, recommendations, and the identification of what we consider to be the most appropriate, efficient and cost-effective animal service delivery model for the HRM, will help the HRM in its commitment to provide an effective and efficient animal service to residents in the municipality.

We wish to thank everyone with whom we had contact during this project for their cooperation, courtesy and candour.

We would like to especially thank the following HRM staff for promptly providing us with any requested information:

- Ms. Andrea MacDonald, Manager Animal Control, Taxi and Limousine Service of the HRM Environmental Management Services, who acted as the liaison on this project;

- Mr. Allan Waye, General Manager, HRM Department of Community Projects;
- Ms. Stefanie Turner, Regional Coordinator Animal Control Services,

We would also like to especially thank the following NS SPCA representatives for making time available to meet with us and for their cooperation and candour:

- Ms. Judith Gass, NS SPCA President;
- Mr. Terry F.T. Degen, Consultant to the NS SPCA;
- Ms. Cindy Lively, NS SPCA Metro Shelter Manager.

James H. Bandow & Associates respectfully submits this Project Report, and commends the Halifax Regional Municipality for its commitment to explore how it can best serve the needs of both human residents and domestic animals of the community.

WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

2. Assessment of current services

We set out to examine how animal services are currently provided by the Halifax Regional Municipality.

We used a number of perspectives, which included:

- The role of the HRM, which has the ultimate responsibility as the municipal service provider.
- The role of the Nova Scotia SPCA, which is responsible for field and By-law service delivery and the handling and sheltering of HRM animals under a contract to the HRM.
- General expectations of owners of domestic dogs, cats and other companion animals from an animal care and control agency.
- General expectations of non-animal owners from an animal care and control agency.
- Whether the services currently provided are meeting the needs of dogs and cats kept as pets or companions in the HRM.
- Generally accepted animal care and control service standards and whether those are included in the HRM animal care and control legislation.
- Generally accepted principles of animal handling and housing in municipal animal shelters (pounds) in North America.

Our goals and objectives included:

- To review core animal care and control services.
- To assess whether the current model of delivering animal care and control services in the HRM is appropriate, given the demographics of the municipality.
- To determine whether animal care and control services in the HRM are being delivered efficiently and effectively.
- To determine whether animal care and control services in the HRM are meeting the needs of residents of the HRM.
- To review current staffing levels and human resources issues.
- To review performance measures.
- To identify any animal service issues that we believe should be strengthened, added, eliminated or reduced.

2.2 Service delivery options

One of our goals was to provide an overview of the major animal service delivery models currently in use in Canada and to compare the advantages and disadvantages for each of those models from a municipal perspective, as we see them.

Our main objectives included:

- To provide a review of three primary animal service delivery models.
- To recommend the most appropriate animal service delivery model for the HRM based on our review and assessment of animal service needs in the HRM.

We recognize that financial issues and the potential for cost savings are issues of concern to virtually every municipality. As we have stated elsewhere in this Report, our recommendations, while *cost-sensitive* are not *cost-driven*.

We recognize that many factors - financial, political, and practical - may influence the HRM's decision to accept or reject our recommended service delivery model, or any of our specific additional recommendations to strengthen service delivery.

3. WHAT WE DID

3.1 We reviewed HRM Animal Care and Control Services By-laws, records, and other documentation

In order to determine the policies, procedures, performance measures and the current level of service provided by the HRM we requested a list of specific records.

We reviewed the following documentation received from the HRM or researched on the Internet:

1. The Halifax Regional Municipality Corporate Structure.
2. The Organizational Chart for HRM Community Projects which includes the Animal Control Section together with Taxis and Limousine Services.
3. The HRM Statement of Corporate Visions and Values.
4. RFP # 02-327 - A Request for Proposals for the delivery of Animal Control Services.
5. The NS SPCA Proposal in response to RFP #02-327.
6. The Halifax Regional Municipality Contract for Animal Control Services with the Nova Scotia SPCA (for RFP #02-327).
7. A list of current Animal Services staff including position descriptions and rates of pay.
8. Available job descriptions for Animal Services staff.
9. Available financial records for the HRM Animal Care and Control Services and the NS SPCA Metro Shelter.
10. The Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act.
11. The Control of Rabies Regulations made under Section 12 of the Nova Scotia Health Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c.195.

12. The following past, present and proposed animal care and control By-laws, Ordinances and Administration Orders:
 - ▶ HRM By-law D-100
 - ▶ HRM By-law N-200
 - ▶ HRM By-law P-600
 - ▶ Halifax County Municipality By-law 08
 - ▶ City of Dartmouth By-law W-201
 - ▶ Town of Bedford By-law 22931
 - ▶ Halifax County By-law 63
 - ▶ City of Halifax Ordinance 84
 - ▶ HRM Administrative Order #11
 - ▶ City of Dartmouth By-law E-300
 - ▶ Halifax County By-law 12
 - ▶ HRM proposed By-law A-300
13. Budget Highlights for HRM Animal Control for Fiscal 02/03; 03/04 and Fiscal 04 to 25/02/2005.
14. The Animal Control Services Monthly Report Data Analysis 1999 to 2004.
15. The Summary Statistical Information 2002 to 2004.
16. The Draft Animal Control Services Policy and Procedure Manual.
17. A document entitled: *Education Strategy - By-law Integration Q.& A - Nov. 22, 2004.*
18. A document entitled: *Animal Control Contract Performance Issues* dated March 5, 2004.
19. Various animal service-related draft forms produced by the HRM.
20. A document entitled: *Cat Occurences at HRM Regional Council since Amalgamation (1996).*
21. A document entitled: *HRM Animal Control Services Division - Outstanding Issues.*
22. Reports to Council on animal control matters.

24. A number of 2004/2005 press clippings re. animal issues in the HRM.
25. A Binder containing a variety of information including e-mails and other communications between the HRM and the NS SPCA.
26. Miscellaneous pieces of correspondence and e-mail.

We reviewed the following documentation received from the Nova Scotia SPCA:

1. A floor plan of the NS SPCA's Metro Animal Shelter at 5 Scarfe Court, Dartmouth, NS.
2. A copy of a completed Canadian Federation of Humane Societies 2004 Animal Shelter Statistics for the NS SPCA Metro Shelter.
3. A list of current animal control positions and rates of pay.
4. Copies of operational forms currently in use by the NS SPCA.
5. Financial data for the year 2004.
6. Revised Financial data for 2004.

3.2 We solicited information through meetings, e-mails and telephone calls

We met with and conducted information gathering interviews with a number of individuals from the HRM and from the Nova Scotia SPCA.

Discussions were held with:

- Andrea MacDonald
Manager, Animal Control, Taxi and Limousine Services
HRM Department of Community Projects
(Project Liaison)
- Allan Waye
General Manager,
HRM Department of Community Projects
- Stefanie Turner
Regional Coordinator Animal Control Services
HRM Department of Community Projects
- Judith Gass
President,
Nova Scotia SPCA
- Terry F.T. Degen
Consultant to the NS SPCA
- Cindy Lively
Shelter Manager
Metro Shelter, NS SPCA
- Devon Wadden
Animal Control Officer
NS SPCA

3.3 We inspected the Nova Scotia SPCA Metro Animal Shelter at 5 Scarfe Court, Dartmouth NS.

1. We made a cursory initial inspection of the Nova Scotia SPCA Metro Animal Shelter at 5 Scarfe Court, Dartmouth NS on March 8, 2005.
2. We made a more thorough follow-up inspection of the shelter on March 25, 2005. (Inspections were carried out in order to gain insight into the sheltering and enforcement activities provided by the NS SPCA as part of the requirements under the contract with the HRM).
3. We inspected one of the vehicles used by the NS SPCA to deliver contracted services under the contract with the HRM.

3.4 We identified the key issues

During our review of the documentation provided by the HRM and the NS SPCA, and through our discussions with HRM and NS SPCA designated staff and representatives, we identified a number of issues that form the most significant parts of this Project Report.

3.5 We examined examples of common animal care and control service delivery models

We examined examples of the three primary animal service delivery models currently found in Canada, and identified their advantages and disadvantages from a municipal perspective.

3.6 We developed recommendations based on our findings

Although we did a thorough review of the documentation supplied to us and a thorough inspection of the Metro Shelter of the NS SPCA, some of the requested documentation from the NS SPCA was not readily available.

We nevertheless believe that our review of the documentation and the information gathered during our meetings, discussions, and interviews have provided us with sufficient insight into the scope, efficiency and effectiveness of animal care and control services currently available to residents of the HRM. As well, we gained an understanding of the interests, concerns and abilities of the NS SPCA to deliver all, or part of the municipal animal services in the HRM.

3.7 We prepared a Discussion Paper and met with designated HRM staff to review our findings

Upon completion of our review and assessment we prepared a Discussion Paper in the form of a Draft Report. The Discussion Paper was circulated to designated HRM staff for their review. We subsequently met with designated HRM staff to discuss the Draft Report's contents to gather additional information and to clarify our findings and recommendations.

3.8 We finalized our Project Report

We subsequently made the appropriate changes to the Discussion Paper and completed the Project Report.

4. WHAT WE FOUND - A REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

4.1 The Contract between the HRM and the Nova Scotia SPCA

4.1.1 *Review of the Contract for Animal Control Services between the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Nova Scotia SPCA*

We reviewed copies of RFP # 02-327 (A Request for Proposals to deliver Animal Control Services), closing date March 6, 2003, as well as the NS SPCA Proposal response to RFP #02 - 327, and a copy of the current Animal Care and Control Contract which spells out the terms as follows:

The term of the contract shall be from September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2007 with the option to renew for three additional 1-year periods. The option to renew for years 5, 6 and 7 must be agreed upon by both the HRM and the SPCA.

We reviewed the delivery of services in terms of the requirements as layed out in the abovementioned contract. The following # numbers refer to comparably numbered sections in that Contract.

#1.4 ACDS Staff

#1.4.1 Employment of a Project Manager

Our Comments: At the time of our review, this position had just been filled. We were told by both the HRM and the NS SPCA that this position has had considerable turnover since it was established as part of the 2003 Contract. We were provided with the following information by the HRM about this position:

Sept. 2003

(Commencement of Contract)

Project Manager #1 is identified.

Sept. 2003

After 10 days on the job, Project Manager #1 only works part-time because of a family matter, and subsequently goes on sick leave.

Oct. 2003	The current Education Officer is appointed Acting Project Manager (#2).
Jan. 2004	The Acting Project Manager (#2) goes on maternity leave.
Jan. 2004	The new Education Officer is appointed Acting Project Manager (#3).
Jan. 2005	A new permanent Project Manager is hired (#4).
Feb. 2005	Project Manager #4 is off for one month.
March 2005	Project Manager #4 is not returning. The Education Officer who was previously in the position as Acting Project Manager (#3) is reappointed to the position.
March 2005	New Project Manager #5 is identified, but leaves in April 2005.
April 2005	New Project Manager #6 is identified.

There is no question that the Project Manager is a key position in assuring effective delivery of animal control services. The individual in this position has oversight of contract service delivery and is responsible for staff training and for liaison with the HRM Project Manager. Failing to have the position filled permanently, and the continual turnover has unquestionably negatively impacted on service delivery.

We suspect that there may be a number of reasons for the turnover. We believe that one of the key issues for this position are the reporting relationships. We were unable to obtain an Organizational Chart for the NS SPCA, but through discussions we learned that both the Animal Control Project Manager and the SPCA Shelter Manager report to the NS Shelter Director. However, we understand that the Shelter Director (who was not present during either of our visits to the SPCA) is a Volunteer Member of the NS SPCA Board of Directors, who is only available on a part-time basis, outside regular employment hours. This clearly is not an acceptable arrangement. Considering the size of the SPCA operation and the different agency responsibilities, it is essential to have a full-time CEO or Executive Director on-site with the appropriate background and experience to provide supervision, expertise, backup and support to staff.

In addition to supervising the day-to-day delivery of animal control services, the contract between the HRM and the NS SPCA also makes the Animal Control Project Manager responsible for liaising with the HRM

Project Manager. We have been told by the SPCA that from time to time there are direct instructions issued to the Animal Control Project Manager and staff from the HRM on specific issues. According to HRM staff, this direction has been necessary because of the frequent absence of an Animal Control Project Manager. The directions given include, but are not limited to, proper enforcement procedures, interpretation of animal-related By-laws and instructions on how to properly complete a Legal Referral Package. Such directions are in direct response to the lack of basic knowledge by animal control staff relative to animal control activities, and are essential to the interests of the HRM.

#1.4.2 Employment of specific designated staff.

Our Comments: Complied with.

#1.4.3 Approval of Hires

Our Comments: We were advised by the SPCA that this is being complied with.

#1.4.4 Educator

Our Comments: We understand that there has been turnover in this position as well. This has largely come about because the incumbent in this position appears to have been moved into the position of Acting Project Manager whenever the need has arisen. The position was vacant during our service review. Since the Education Officer is responsible for public outreach, an incumbent in that position is crucial to developing and delivering pre-emptive animal care and control and public safety-related programs. Every effort should therefore be made to assure that this position is filled as soon as possible by a qualified and motivated individual.

#1.5 Roles and Responsibilities for the ACSD Project Manager and the HRM Project Manager

Our Comments: Our Comments apply to all sections 1.5.1 to 1.5.8
Section 1.5 gives specific operational direction to the Animal Control Project Manager. Based on our discussions with both the HRM staff responsible for animal control and with representatives of the NS SPCA, and the number of documents we reviewed that identify concerns, mis-communications - at times in a confrontational manner - we believe that the current structure as outlined in the contract is working neither

effectively nor efficiently.

Although the SPCA is responsible under the contract for the delivery of animal control services, given the fact that the HRM can influence the approval and supervision of Animal Control field staff and the Animal Control Project Manager, we believe that the delivery of field services, including enforcement of By-laws, would be more efficiently and effectively executed if either:

- All field services, including By-law enforcement, came under the direct supervision and control of a full-time SPCA Metro Shelter Executive Director or CEO with appropriate management experience and a background in both sheltering and law enforcement, or
- All animal control field services, including By-law enforcement were directly operated, supervised and managed by HRM staff.

#2.0 Scope of the Work - Part 1 -Animal Control Enforcement Services

#2.1 to 2.3 These sections identify the scope of the enforcement work.

We have no comments.

#2.4 to 2.5 These sections set out service expectations and identifies the Animal Control Project Manager as the individual responsible that service expectations are met.

Our Comments: See our Comments under #1.5

#2.6 Hours of Operation.

Our Comments: It would appear that the SPCA is meeting the terms of the Contract.

#2.7 Call taking and Inquiries Approach.

Our Comments: The contract outlines specifics about the implementation, co-ordinating and supervision of handling public inquiries and requests for service. While appropriate guidelines have been developed, in the absence of a permanent Project Manager the important ongoing supervision appears to have been missing for much of the time.

#3.0 Scope of Work - Part 2 - Animal Control Pound Services

#3.1.1 Providing a Pound. This section calls for a facility that meets "all applicable Standards."

Our Comments: Although there are Guidelines for Kennel Operations published by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), and there are Animal Housing Standards published by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), the only specific minimum standards for Pounds in Canada are those in Regulation # 17 under the Ontario Animals for Research Act.

The NS SPCA Metro Shelter falls significantly short of all those Standards. The shortcomings are specifically addressed elsewhere in the Report.

#3.1.2 - 3.1.19 Specific Instructions to the SPCA re. operating hours, animal handling and fee collection.

Our Comments: It would appear that the SPCA generally meets the terms of the Contract relative to operating hours and animal handling. HRM staff has advised us, that according to a reconciliation of the information provided to the HRM from the SPCA database, applicable fees are not always collected in full on a regular basis. The HRM was reimbursed by the SPCA on one occasion when presented with this information, but we have been advised that this continues to be an issue.

#4.0 - #17.0 Termination - Conflict of Interest

We have no comments on any of those items.

4.2 Service Overview

4.2.1 Services provided by the HRM

Except for the administration of dog licensing and shared enforcement of dogs in parks with HRM Park Patrol, all other animal control services are currently delivered by the NS SPCA under a contract with the HRM.

The HRM is currently providing many of the animal care and control core services one would expect to find in a municipality the size of the HRM. Nevertheless, we have identified some service areas that could be strengthened, and some new services that the HRM might consider adding to its animal care and control services program.

According to the contract between the HRM and the NS SPCA, following are the services that have been contracted to be delivered by the NS SPCA:

- **Field Services:**
 - ▶ Enforcing all animal control By-laws.
 - ▶ Call taking and dispatch.
 - ▶ Responding to injured animal and animal-in-distress concerns.
 - ▶ Responding to aggressive dog complaints.
 - ▶ Responding to dog-at-large complaints.
 - ▶ Apprehending straying dogs.
 - ▶ Collecting straying dogs held by residents.
 - ▶ Responding to fail-to-leash dog complaints.
 - ▶ Responding to barking dog complaints.
 - ▶ Responding to complaints re: dog fouling on private or public property.
 - ▶ Investigating dog bites/attacks on humans and domestic animals.
 - ▶ Picking up of animal cadavers.
 - ▶ Investigating the keeping of prohibited animals.
 - ▶ Responding to safety issues relative to cats.
 - ▶ Assisting the police and fire departments when requested.
 - ▶ Taking appropriate corrective and/or legal actions as required.
 - ▶ Patrolling and responding to special assignments.

- **Sheltering and other Services**
 - ▶ Receiving, housing and caring for impounded animals.
 - ▶ Operating an animal lost and found service.
 - ▶ Providing access to veterinary services for impounded animals.

- ▶ Redeeming impounded animals to owners.
- ▶ Collecting fees.
- ▶ Conducting public outreach programs re: responsible pet ownership.

4.2.2 Services provided by the Nova Scotia SPCA - Metro Shelter

The Nova Scotia SPCA owns and operates a shelter at 5 Scarfe Court, Dartmouth. Part of that shelter is operated as the HRM Municipal Animal Shelter (Pound) and part of it functions as a traditional humane society. The shelter provides the following services:

- ▶ Receiving, caring for and releasing dogs under a contract with the HRM.
- ▶ Sheltering of animals that have been seized or found and which are not subject to HRM By-laws.
- ▶ Adopting out cats. (*Note: Cats are currently not covered by HRM legislation*)
- ▶ Adopting out dogs that have exceeded their redemption period as identified by the HRM By-laws.
- ▶ Functioning as the service centre from where animal control officers provide field and enforcement services under the contract with the HRM.

Surprisingly to us, the SPCA does not offer to routinely take in owner-surrendered animals, except under unusual circumstances. SPCA representatives told us that owner-surrendered animals are generally not accepted by SPCAs in Nova Scotia. However, most SPCAs in North America generally provide such service. While some shelters do not accept animals that are surrendered for euthanasia, they generally accept others, and make every effort to collect either a surrender fee and/or boarding fees when such animals are received.

While we acknowledge that dog and cat owners are responsible for their animals, including disposition of their animals, and that they should make every effort to find a new home for a pet they are no longer able to care for, at times such owners have few choices, and this can put some individuals in a very difficult position. In fact, refusal by animal shelters to accept owned animals encourages animal abandonment.

We would therefore recommend that this policy be reviewed. Receipt of owner-surrendered animals from individuals who are forced to surrender their animals for a variety of justifiable reasons should be a function of the Nova Scotia SPCA. However, since the SPCA has indicated to us that it is not interested to provide such service, the requirement to accept such animals should be mandated in any future contract between the HRM and the NS SPCA, and any potential costs should be reflected in future budgets.

4.2.3 Services provided by other animal welfare groups in the HRM

At least one other animal welfare group operates a shelter in the HRM. The *Bide-A-While Animal Shelter Society*, 12 Eaton Court in Dartmouth, is an animal welfare organization which receives dogs and cats, including owner-surrenders, and finds new homes for them. We were advised that the organization has a policy of not euthanizing any healthy animals. In 2004, the Bide-A-While Shelter Society took in 271 cats and 24 dogs, while adopting out 236 cats and 28 dogs, (4 dogs carried over from the previous year). All animals are sterilized before being placed in new homes. The organization also operates a pet sterilization program for animals outside its shelter. In 2004 the society was able to provide help to get 45 animals sterilized.

4.2.4 General comments re. animal care and control service delivery

We note that the HRM is still using the name 'Animal Control' over 'Animal Services' for its animal care and control unit. Changes to the more positive 'Animal Service', along with changing the name from 'pound' to 'municipal animal centre' or 'municipal animal shelter', are occurring throughout North America. Such changes are commonly accompanied by a more user-friendly appearance of animal service facilities, service vehicles and staff. This includes abandoning the traditional colours and design of enforcement staff uniforms and replacing them with 'warmer and friendlier' uniform shades and designs. Such steps are part of an overall strategy by animal service professionals throughout North America to rid animal care and control services of the negative public perceptions of "dog catching" and "pounds." Where the changes have been introduced, it has helped to make animal service agencies appear more helpful and user-friendly and has reduced staff confrontations with the public.

4.3 The current state of municipal animal services in the HRM

In order to determine the current state of the HRM Animal Services we reviewed and assessed a number of specific service components that are commonly indicators about the level and effectiveness of an animal service agency.

The components we examined were:

- 4.3.1 The Mission Statement.
- 4.3.2 How the SPCA does strategic planning and program development.
- 4.3.3 Records and other documentation that reflect agency activities.
- 4.3.4 The number and types of animals handled.
- 4.3.5 Shelter facilities.
- 4.3.6 Shelter and Field Service hours of operation.
- 4.3.7 Staffing levels.
- 4.3.8 Use of Volunteers.
- 4.3.9 Municipal legislation and enforcement.
- 4.3.10 Budget.
- 4.3.11 Animal licensing, registration, identification.
- 4.3.12 Public relations and community outreach.
- 4.3.13 Service evaluation.

During our review we particularly looked for issues with potentially significant impact on animal service delivery in the HRM.

Following is our review and assessment of the above components:

4.3.1 *Mission Statement*

It is said that: "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten." We noted that the HRM Animal Services does not have its own defined Mission Statement. In its absence, we tried to get a sense of the aims and objectives of the agency through the documentation provided, and through our discussions with HRM staff and representatives from the NS SPCA.

It would appear that enforcement of animal control related municipal By-laws is the main reason for the existence of the HRM Animal Control Services. Although we understand that the agency is interested in a pre-emptive approach to problem solving, the actual signs point to a primary emphasis on enforcement of HRM animal care and control by-laws.

It has been our experience that all agencies which deliver animal care and control related services need to clearly state their mission so as to minimize uncertainty by both staff and the public about the role of the agency and the services it provides. A clear Mission Statement also provides an appropriate bench mark to determine whether new services or programs fall within the agency's scope.

If the HRM wants its Animal Service Agency to be primarily law-enforcement oriented, it should state so up front, and that can best be accomplished by developing a Mission Statement that defines the agency's role and reason for existence. While it may be argued that the delivery of animal services represents only a very small segment of the HRM's overall service delivery, no agency or program is too small or too large to clearly articulate what it is all about. And since animal service delivery is often one of the most controversial municipal programs, a mission statement is especially important to insure:

- Unanimity of purpose.
- To provide direction to staff.
- To provide the basis for program development and implementation strategies.
- To serve as the focal point for the agency.
- To resolve divergent views about the agency, what it is all about and how programs should be delivered.

A statement of corporate values and visions exists in the HRM which states that "*the HRM exists to serve the needs and interests of its citizens.*" What is needed for the Animal Care and Control Agency is a Mission Statement that identifies what the public service needs are and how they are intended to be resolved. Such statement will provide the opportunity to articulate the agency's core values and create the benchmark against which program planning and evaluation takes place. It will also help to dispel public expectations about animal service delivery which often appear quite different from what is being delivered.

It is important to keep in mind that few other public issues can be as charged with emotion, or can get the public as upset, as animal issues. Failure to provide a clear definition of an agency's mission, and what the public can expect and why, can cause needless complaints to a municipality's management and to elected representatives. As well, without a clear mission statement, it is difficult to identify specific goals, or plan goal-specific programs that focus on delivery of service rather than on enforcement.

It also needs to be appreciated that the concern about an appropriate focus for an animal care and control service program does not automatically disappear or change when such service is contracted out. In fact, it becomes even more important. An outside contractor should know precisely what the municipality expects to accomplish through its animal care

and control service program. No matter who ultimately actually delivers that program, it will remain a municipal service, and the public will continue to hold the municipality responsible for the type and quality of service it receives.

4.3.2 Strategic planning

A clearly defined mandate, or mission statement, tells everyone how a municipality views animal care and control services and what the animal care and control service agency's role is. A mission statement also provides the focus for strategic planning, including the opportunity to develop specific programs with implementation strategies and program evaluation benchmarks.

Since the HRM Animal Care and Control Service does not have a Mission Statement, there are also no clearly defined plans or specific program goals for the future. Hence staff has no clear direction, and the community will not see animal care and control services as anything other than *'they pick up animals'* or *'they ticket people.'*

Indeed, upon review and assessment of the HRM animal care and control program it is clear to us that the agency's current work is largely being *reactive* to complaints and concerns. At this time there appears to be little in the way of pro-active problem prevention, either through education, community outreach, or through field service programs. We recognize that the NS SPCA, as part of its contract, requires to provide an Education Officer. During our service review that position had been vacant for more than 3 months, and has not had a permanent incumbent for any appreciable length of time since the contract commenced in September 2003. We recognize that at least one of the hoped-for-outcomes of having an Education Officer provide community outreach is a reduction in the number of animal care and control related complaints and offences. It is therefore essential that this position be filled as soon as possible with a qualified, motivated individual

As well, specific, measurable goals need to be developed for virtually all animal service related activities. Here are some examples what some measurable goals might look like:

- Increasing the number of licensed and permanently identified dogs by 20% during the next three years.
- Improving stray animal redemptions by 10% during the next year.
- Increasing adoption of unredeemed, adoptable animals by 5% during the next year.
- Decreasing euthanasia rates of dogs by 10% during the next three years.
- Decreasing the number of animal control complaints by 10% during the next three years through increased neighbourhood patrols and community outreach.

- Reducing the number of impounded, straying animals that need to come to the shelter by 10% during the next three years through implementation of a "Free Ride Home" program.

No matter how small or how large an agency, planning needs to be an integral part of agency management. It should be part of a comprehensive strategic system guiding the day-to-day management and operation of an agency toward achieving its mission. And since people support what they help to create, agency management must lead in a proactive way to foster the involvement and participation at the staff level. Otherwise, good plans will not get implemented.

In discussion with the NS SPCA representatives we learned of their 5-year Plan to rejig the delivery of animal control services. We understand that a new radio system has been acquired and that steps are under way to bring on staff with the appropriate skills to fit the new program delivery.

While such steps are laudable, we were advised that the proposed animal control delivery model is to be based on emulating ambulance services in Nova Scotia. We do not consider that a good model for the delivery of animal control services. Although they need to respond without delay when required, ambulance services are largely reactive. They respond to emergencies when needed. They are not on community patrol to prevent problems from occurring. Since the primary responsibility of a municipal animal care and control program should be to foster a municipal environment where animal control complaints and confrontations between residents and animals are minimized, the Fire Department, which is involved both in responding to emergencies and in fire prevention, would be a better model to consider.

The steps outlined by the NS SPCA to use the ambulance system as a model perpetuates the primary focus on a reactive, law-enforcement oriented complaint response. This impression is confirmed by the recent Job Advertisements for Animal Control Officers by the NS SPCA which focus, with few exceptions, on By-law enforcement.

If the primary focus of the HRM animal care and control program in the future is intended to be By-law enforcement - and the current contract appears to support the law enforcement focus - the HRM should state this in a Mission Statement and through specific Program directives.

4.3.3 Records

All records provided to us have been treated as confidential information.

4.3.3(a) Operational records

We were provided with samples of operational records by the NS SPCA which are being used on a daily basis in the shelter and by Animal Control Officers in the field. We were also provided with samples of record forms developed by the HRM. Those forms are in many cases more comprehensive than the ones currently in use. They should be circulated to staff for input and should subsequently be implemented as soon as possible.

4.3.3(b) Animal handling records

We were provided with animal handling records by the NS SPCA and by the HRM. Following is the data provided by the HRM. The numbers differ slightly from the record provided by the NS SPCA.

Dog Handling Statistics

	2003	2004	Variance
Impounded Number of dogs captured by staff or public	695	669	- 4%
Number of impounded dogs redeemed	330	251	
Percentage Redemption rate	47%	37%	-10%
SUB-TOTAL (Number of remaining dogs)	365	418	
Number of unredeemed dogs adopted	251	338	
Percentage adoption rate of unredeemed dogs	69%	81%	+12%
Number of dogs unredeemed dogs euthanized	114	80	
Percentage euthanasia rate of unredeemed dogs	31%	24%	-7%

Our Comments: Although we commend the NS SPCA for their excellent adoption rates, and their decrease in euthanasia rates, the return-to-owner/redemption rates are considerably lower than similar numbers in many municipalities across Canada.

For instance, dog redemption rates of 70%+ are no longer exceptions in municipalities where the focus is on permanent identification and on the "free ride home" program (the latter is a concept that is explained in section 4.5.5 of this report). As an example, in 2004, the City of Calgary impounded 5,078 dogs and had a return-to-owner rate of 88% (4,475), of which 40% (1,799) were driven directly home without ever seeing the inside of the municipal shelter. And while cat redemptions generally tend to be significantly lower than dogs across Canada, they nevertheless commonly are in the 5% to 8% range with some shelters redeeming more than 20% of their stray cats.

We wondered whether the fact that owner-surrendered animals are only accepted under unusual circumstances by the Metro Shelter had any impact on the low redemption rates. One of the questions we have is: How many of the un-redeemed dogs are being abandoned when their owners cannot find anyone to take them? We won't know that answer unless owner-surrendered animals are more readily accepted at the shelter.

As we have stated previously in this Report, we recommend that this policy be reviewed. Humane Societies, and municipal agencies that we are familiar with generally provide that service. We believe that receipt of owner-surrendered animals from individuals who are forced to give up their animals for a variety of justifiable reasons should be a function of the Nova Scotia SPCA. However, since the SPCA has indicated to us that it is not interested to provide such service, the requirement to accept such animals should be mandated in any future contract between the HRM and the NS SPCA, and any potential costs should be reflected in future budgets.

And since there is very little community outreach, how many owners are not redeeming their animals because they don't know about the shelter and its role in the community, or the service it provides?

Cat Handling Statistics

Although the HRM currently does not have legislative requirements for cat-related matters, we note that this issue is one that has had considerable discussion both at Council and in the community. We always recommend that cat control provisions be included in any animal care and control By-law and have made reference to this in our Legislative Guidelines (Appendix #1).

The following statistics, which were provided to us by the NS SPCA, are included here for information in order to foster a better understanding of the additional workload and corresponding resources that will be required when regulations for the control of cats are considered.

NS SPCA Cat Handling Statistics (As supplied by the NS SPCA)

	2004	%
Live stray cats picked up and received from the public	1642	---
Less: Number of stray cats redeemed by owners	1	0.06%
SUB-TOTAL	1641	100% of unredeemed cats
Plus: Number of owner-surrendered cats received	0	---
SUB-TOTAL	1641	---
Less: Number of unredeemed cats in shelter adopted to new owners	1206	73.5% of available unredeemed cats
Number of unredeemed cats euthanized	357	21.8% of available unredeemed cats
On hand	78	4.7%

4.3.3(c) Information and Technology

The Halifax Regional Municipality has produced an Animal Control software program that is to replace the PetWhere system currently in use by the Nova Scotia SPCA. At this time, we have been unable to review the proposed software package. The PetWhere software package was a free product offered to public and private non-profit animal care organizations. At this time, the Bosack & Kruger Foundation has discontinued their efforts to upgrade the software and the product is currently receiving technical support from Petfinder.

One of the most widely used shelter software programs throughout North America is the *Chameleon* software package, which from our perspective is one of the best on the market for both animal welfare and animal control applications.

Information and technology are now an integral part of enhanced lost and found and adoption programs. Uploading digital photographs to sites such as petfinder.com or petharbor.com through the Chameleon software package allows for the opportunity for the animal to be either redeemed in a shorter time frame or for a quicker adoption.

At this time the NS SPCA Metro Shelter is still using PetWhere for its record management and petfinder.com to showcase animals available for adoption from the shelter.

4.3.3(d) Policy and Procedure Manual

The Animal Control Services Policy and Procedure Manual is nearly complete. Since the NS SPCA did not have a policy and procedure manual, the HRM undertook the development of a manual to enhance service delivery and communication. We commend the HRM for developing the Manual. We like the way the materials and references are organized. Section 1 (*Personnel*), Section 2 (*Pound*), and Section 3 (*Administration*) have been reviewed by Animal Control staff and their feedback implemented. Although procedures for the final section of the Manual (*Enforcement*) has as yet not been implemented, the existing materials already form the core of appropriate training and reference work for employees. We understand from HRM staff that the delay in implementing this section was caused by the fact that it was being developed in conjunction with the HRM Corporate Enforcement Strategy. This has now been completed, and together with *Investigation* and *SOT training* is ready for immediate implementation. We understand that the ACS staff of the NS SPCA was invited to the training sessions and that some attended.

We have the following recommendations:

- ▶ The completed sections should be formally introduced to Animal Control staff by SPCA management. The draft Enforcement section, exclusive of the Corporate Enforcement Strategy which has already been implemented, should be reviewed and implemented as soon as it becomes available.
- ▶ Appropriate staff should be involved in the review of any proposed procedures, and, where necessary, advice from outside individuals or agencies should be sought (i.e., dealing with vicious/aggressive animals);
- ▶ Since a Manual should be a *living document* that needs constant review and updating, a combined staff/supervisory committee should review the Manual once a year and recommend changes in policies and procedures as they become appropriate.

4.3.4 Shelter facilities and equipment - General

It has been suggested that '*you never get a second chance to make a first impression*'. Aesthetics and initial first impressions are quite important to public perception and confidence in any agency including animal shelters. Landscaping, building maintenance, parking availability, professional signage and a clean, bright, odour-free and inviting interior goes a long way to convince visitors to a shelter that they are not entering an "animal jail." The location, appearance and maintenance of such a facility, sends a clear message to shelter visitors about the way a municipality views the role of animals in the community.

In order to encourage the public to redeem lost and impounded animals, the design of a shelter must be visitor-friendly and provide visual confirmation that animals are provided with facilities and care that are appropriate and befit companion animals. As well, clean and attractive vehicles that are designed to humanely and securely accommodate animals in transit, and properly attired, friendly, caring, helpful and knowledgeable staff, who is problem solving oriented, go a long way to dispel the 'dog catcher' and 'dog jail' images.

Municipal animal shelters are no different from other municipal buildings from which a municipality delivers services to the community. They require constant attention and funds to maintain them. Unfortunately, too often animal service facilities rank very low on the list of priorities for municipal funding, and it is easy for shelters to deteriorate rapidly. Where services are delivered by a private contractor, it is frequently difficult for a contractor to receive capital improvement funds from a municipality.

Shelter management needs to step back periodically and take a critical look at their facility or have the public critique it.

4.3.4(a) The Metro Shelter location

The HRM municipal animal shelter (Pound) is located in the animal shelter owned and operated by the Nova Scotia SPCA, located at 5 Scarfe Court in the Burnside Industrial Park in Dartmouth. While we have been assured that there is ready public access to the shelter, including access by public transit, we cannot comment about the shelter location and whether it is conducive to visits by the public.

4.3.4(b) Shelter layout and design

Although the face of the NS SPCA Metro Shelter looks modern, it cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be described as a modern facility that reflects today's approach to shelter design and animal management. There is no doubt in our mind that the current facility makes efficient and effective shelter operation and animal handling difficult. The NS SPCA Representatives agreed with our observations, and with our suggestion that a well designed, modern facility would probably result in a notable reduction in shelter maintenance and expedite animal handling.

Given the design and layout of the shelter building, we were surprised to learn that the shelter is actually less than 15 years old. Not only is the facility design outdated, based on our experience of working with shelters right across North America, the shelter was outdated when it opened its doors for the first time.

At this time the entire facility is barely adequate in virtually every aspect of shelter management to meet today's needs and activities. Because of its poor design, it makes it extremely difficult to provide proper upkeep and maintenance.

Here are but two examples.

1. Since there is no corridor system, and one room leads into another in some sections of the shelter, this requires dogs to be moved through cat holding areas.
2. There are insufficient drains in animal holding areas and they are located in the centre of each holding area. Given kennel configurations and lack of proper floor sloping it is impossible in some areas of the shelter to properly dispose of dog urine from the kennels. In one room, we noticed that towels needed to be placed on the floor to channel urine flow.

Considering that this is a public facility which is supposed to encourage residents to visit and redeem their lost and impounded animals, and which is supposed to attract the public to adopt unwanted animals, it is surprising what is being accomplished in spite of the condition of the facility.

From our perspective, upgrading of the facility is virtually impossible without gutting the entire building and rebuilding the entire inside of the building shell. Considering that the shell will not be large enough to effectively accommodate the needs of the SPCA and the municipal animal control section, and considering what it would cost to retrofit, closing this shelter and building a new one is probably a better use of resources.

Whatever the decision, something needs to be done to provide more appropriate facilities and a decision can come none too soon. Whether the decision is upgrading or construction of a new facility, it is important to avoid a similar fiasco by engaging the services of an architect who has had experience in animal shelter design and whose work can be examined through site visits.

4.3.4(c) *Animal housing*

The previously identified design flaws in the NS SPCA Metro Shelter also impact on animal housing.

Dogs:

Kennel design and animal separation, lighting and ventilation, wall, ceiling and floor surfaces, are just some of the inadequacies of the current facility that need special attention. Dog kennel sizes (32" x 62" and 44" x 86") are satisfactory for short-term housing. To give dogs an opportunity for exercise and activity, dogs are either placed in a fenced-in activity area outside the shelter or walked by volunteers.

Cats:

Cat cages are stainless steel 24" x 28" x 28" and are mounted on movable dollies. In addition to rooms identified specifically for cat housing, cats are also being housed in other areas of the shelter which were originally not designed for animal holding, including the shelter "board room."

Following is a list of the primary animal housing flaws:

- Inappropriate animal flow through the building since holding rooms are interconnected. No corridor separation of rooms.
- Uneven levels of ventilation.
- Extremely poor placement of drains.
- No access to high-pressure hoses inside each of the kenneling areas for cleaning (a mobile pressure washer is available).
- Floors in kennels show cracks and are not properly sealed.
- Animals are housed in areas designed for people (i.e., Board Room).
- Some of the fluorescent light fixtures are without proper covers.
- Because of the type of light fixtures and openings in the ceiling, it is impossible to do a proper cleaning of walls and ceilings in animal holding areas.

4.3.4(d) *Feed storage*

Although efforts are made to keep feed stored off the floor, the facility does not have adequate and appropriate, vermin proof feed storage facilities.

4.3.4(e) *Vehicles and equipment*

The NS SPCA Animal Control Unit operates with a fleet of three vehicles, a 1999 Chevrolet S10 Extended Cab, a 2000 Chevrolet Extended Cab and a 2003 Mazda B3000. Given the size and human population of the HRM, the number of Animal Services staff, the number of investigations, and the number of animals picked up by Animal Service staff, we believe that three vehicles are adequate to meet the requirements of the current contract. At the time of our visit we were able to inspect one of the vehicles. The vehicle did not have any built-in animal holding cages. Although it was equipped with a cab-cover over the loading area, the vehicle had not been adapted specifically for animal service work. The cab height prevents an Animal Control Officer from standing up in the loading area. We would expect that this makes lifting of bad-tempered large dogs very difficult. The inside floor and sides of the loading area were unsealed and the floor was not equipped with rubber matting to improve footing. Heating and cooling for the animal holding area was achieved by opening the sliding window behind the driver. The vehicle was outfitted with a couple of loose cages, a dog restraining pole, a net, assorted ropes, leashes, gloves etc. The vehicle was not equipped with an animal stretcher.

We recognize that purpose-built vehicles are expensive. However, we would nevertheless suggest that serious consideration should be given to the use of Vans instead of pick-up trucks when any of the above vehicles need replacing. Vans offer much greater flexibility for animal care and control work. As well, we would encourage the SPCA to outfit the vehicles with proper stretchers to pick up and carry injured animals when needed and to replace the fishing nets, currently carried in the vehicles with proper animal capture nets that have been specifically designed for animal service work. Good nets are important tools that make bird, small animal and cat capture easier, more effective and more humane.

The vehicle we saw was without any markings or identification, and gave no indication that it was either an SPCA or a municipal animal care and control vehicle. We understand that all the animal control vehicles are unmarked. While there may be occasional advantages to have an unidentifiable vehicle, properly marked vehicles raise public awareness of the animal care and control agency or humane society and the services being provided. Since vehicles are one of the most visible parts of an animal care and control program, we would urge that proper vehicle identification receive immediate consideration, since both agencies are losing the potential for public recognition.

4.3.5 Animal Health Care

4.3.5(a) Basic Health Care

Even the best animal shelter or pound is an inherently unhealthy place for animals. Animals enter from different locations with unknown medical histories and often little or no past vaccinations against diseases. Animals that have recently been exposed to (and are therefore able to spread) a disease, may show no initial symptoms upon examination during a disease incubation period. While it is impossible to prevent the spread of disease in a shelter, it is possible to reduce the spread.

The need for good health care protocols is crucial, and the rationale for it is twofold:

- 1) To uphold a shelter's responsibility to care humanely for animals, and
- 2) To maintain the reputation of the agency as a well-run agency and resource.

Shelter animals must be housed in a way that minimizes stress, provides for their special needs, affords protection from the elements, provides adequate ventilation, and minimizes the spread of diseases and parasites. Keeping species like dogs and cats in the same room, or moving one species through areas where the other is housed, -as is currently the case at the NS SPCA shelter - causes undue stress to the animals and is not an acceptable practice.

We understand that the SPCA's Metro Shelter currently has neither a Certified Veterinary Health Technician (VHT), nor a Certified Animal Care Technician on staff. Animals picked up and received at the shelter are examined for symptoms of injury, sickness and disease by shelter staff, who, although they may be experienced in handling animals in an animal service setting, have had neither the background nor the training of a VHT. Animals, which in the opinion of staff require medical attention are either taken to one of the veterinary clinics which has an arrangement with the NS SPCA to treat animals, or seen by the contract veterinarian during his weekly visit to the shelter.

Although a 'superficial' physical examination is sufficient to identify many illnesses in progress, a shelter should be equipped to provide or have access to some more sophisticated analysis. Areas that are generally included in many basic shelter animal health programs begin with (but are not limited to):

- Temperature and vital signs.
- General physical examination.

- External parasites and treatments.
- Internal parasites; fecal examinations, and de-worming.
- Routine vaccination protocols for all incoming animals.
- Basic grooming needs/concerns.

A small separate clinic to handle such procedures should be basic requirements in any animal shelter. Currently the SPCA's lay Animal Care Attendants vaccinate and provide other health procedures under makeshift conditions in an area identified as "the kitchen."

4.3.5(b) *Veterinary services*

Although the NS SPCA does not have any Veterinary Health Technician on staff, it has a contractual agreement with the local Carnegie Animal Hospital for consulting and support. We were advised by the SPCA that a veterinarian makes weekly visits to the shelter to inspect the animals in the shelter and to provide assistance and/or information to staff where appropriate.

4.3.5(c) *Emergency services*

We understand that emergency services are currently provided on a 24-hours-a-day-7-days-per-week basis. One of the important functions of a municipal animal service agency is to be the safety net for the emergency care of dogs and cats that have been injured. It is important that policies and procedures reflect the need to ensure prompt and appropriate treatment for such animals, and that all staff required to handle such animals are trained in emergency procedures and the handling of injured animals.

4.3.5(d) *Sterilization program*

A Spay/neuter program is operated by the NS SPCA. All adopted animals are sterilized. As well, the NS SPCA also provides financial assistance to needy pet owners in the community to have their dogs or cats sterilized.

4.3.6 *Isolation/Observation/Quarantine*

One room in the shelter is currently identified as an isolation/observation/quarantine for dogs and another one for cats. The rooms are commonly used to house animals suspected of, or diagnosed with, signs of illness or disease. We were advised that no animals have as yet been admitted to the shelter for isolation as potential rabies suspects.

4.3.7 Euthanasia of shelter animals

All dogs and cats that are identified for euthanasia are either taken to a local animal clinic operated by licensed veterinarians under an agreement with the NS SPCA, or euthanized in the shelter by the visiting veterinarian during weekly shelter visits.

We commend the NS SPCA for its decision to have shelter animals euthanized by veterinarians only.

4.3.8 Wildlife and farm animals

All wildlife and farm animal concerns are handled by the appropriate provincial departments.

4.3.9 Shelter and Field Services - Hours of operation

4.3.9(a) Shelter Hours

Animal shelters should generally have operating hours that are convenient to the public, enabling them to easily deliver or redeem lost animals, surrender owned animals (the latter is not a service provided in the HRM), adopt animals or receive assistance or advice. Following are the operating hours of the SPCA shelter:

Nova Scotia SPCA Metro Shelter Hours:

Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday:	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday	12:00 noon - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday	11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Closed Mondays and on the following Statutory Holidays:

New Years Day, Good Friday, Canada Day, Remembrance Day and Christmas Day.

Hours for Animal Control Redemptions (as identified in the contract):

Monday to Friday:	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sundays and Holidays	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We were advised by the SPCA that the public is accommodated to redeem their animals until at least 9:00 p.m., since the Dispatchers and Animal Control Officers are on shifts until 9:00 p.m.

Our Comments: Although the HRM represents a large geographic area, the shelter hours provide opportunities for anyone within the HRM boundaries to access the shelter. The shelter hours should not be a deterrent for owners to redeem their stray or impounded animals, and the shelter's weekend and holiday hours are conducive to visits from potential animal adopters.

4.3.9(b) Telephone Answering Service

During operating hours (9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) telephone calls are answered by SPCA staff, while animal control calls received after hours are received by the HRM 911 Communications Centre and forwarded to an Animal Control Officer on-call.

4.3.9(c) Field Service Hours

Field services are provided from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and one officer is available for call responses between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. We reviewed field service activities by examining the following *Animal Control Services - Monthly Report Data Analysis* :

Animal Control - Monthly Report Data Analysis

	2003	2004	Variance 2003/2004
No. of alleged By-law violations	3997	3132	- 22%
Animal-related Service Requests	876	681	- 22%
TOTAL	4873	3813	- 22%
Complaints resulting in enforcement actions	1730	964	- 44%
Complaints considered not valid/No enforcement action required	2267	2849	+ 26%
No. of dogs impounded by animal control officers or captured by residents	695	669	- 4%
No of impounded dogs redeemed (Redemption percentage)	330 47%	251 37%	-10%

Our Comments: We noted a significant drop in field services from 2003 to 2004. Most notable are the 22% drop in recorded complaints and the 26% increase in complaints that did not require an enforcement action.

Those changes are significant, and would be a welcome trend if it was a continuation of a trend observed in previous years. However, this does not appear to be the case. We can only speculate that the overall drop in activities is related to staffing and/or enforcement issues rather than positive trends toward more responsible dog ownership.

4.3.10 Staffing

4.3.10(a) Overall Staffing Complement

The SPCA provided us with the following list of staff positions assigned to look after the contract with the HRM:

- 2 Dispatchers
- 2 Animal Control Officers
- 2 Pound Staff
- 1 Educator (position not filled)
- 1 Manager (position not filled)
- 3 Animal Control Officer positions open(being advertised)
(2 of those positions are intended to be part-time positions with one individual responsible for the Hubley, Timberlea, Peggys Cove area and one position to be responsible for the Musquodoboit Harbour area of the HRM.)

Our Comments: Because of the ongoing staff turnover, we are unable to confirm that all the above positions actually had incumbents at the time we concluded our Service Review.

4.3.10(b) Field Staff

When we assess field services, it is helpful to determine the number of total staff dedicated to field activities relative to the number of human residents served. This exercise allows us to evaluate workloads, anticipate response times, and measure realistic levels of service. The National Animal Control Association (NACA) recommends that the

average number of field officers for agencies providing a comprehensive animal care and control program, should be one officer for every 16,000 to 18,000 persons. Unfortunately, few agencies are able to provide that level of service. Given the current HRM animal care and control field staff numbers, it would suggest that the service ratio in the HRM is approximately one officer per 70,000 population, once the three open Animal Control Officer positions are filled. As previously stated, two of those positions are intended to be part-time positions with responsibility for rural areas with a very low complaint rate. This could mean that the service ratio in the urban areas of the HRM will conceivably be greater than the one to 70,000 ratio.

We are not convinced, given the required service hours, that three officers are sufficient to provide timely, effective service for those areas of the HRM where most complaints originate. We were advised by the NS SPCA that staff had done a complaint-origin study. Unfortunately, the documentation of what would be very useful data, was not captured.

Based on the documentation we were able to review and on our discussions, we believe that the current field staff complement is already quite lean in delivering field services. We are concerned that moving two permanent positions will leave only three permanent officers to handle the remainder of the HRM. We suspect that is insufficient, and that this will impact negatively on service delivery, particularly on complaint/call response time. Given the current hours of operation, we suggest that a minimum service ratio of one officer per 50,000 population should be considered, with five officers instead of three assigned to the main urban areas of the HRM.

Considering the time and effort required to fully train staff, turnover has, without question, a negative impact on effective and efficient service delivery. Since only one of the field staff has more than five years experience, we would anticipate that this individual is spending considerable time training others.

Given our discussions with SPCA representatives, we are not certain that we have all the facts to allow us to comment on the reasons for the high staff turnover. But one thing is certain, given the high turnover the remaining staff needs to pick up the slack, and the eventual price will be burnout or a lack of motivation to do a good job.

4.3.10(c) Shelter/Pound Staff

Records provided show a staffing complement of two dispatchers and two pound staff. The reported intake for the year 2004 was 669 dogs. The maximum holding time for redemption is 72 hrs, after which time the dogs are turned over to the SPCA and become the SPCA's responsibility. If all impounded/stray dogs were held for the maximum time of 72 hours (under special circumstances this could be up to 30 days), 0.5 FTE's would

be required simply to maintain impounded dog populations in the shelter. In reality, some of those animals do not stay for the maximum time, but are redeemed at various times during the redemption period.

669 dogs held for 72 hours = 2,007 dog/shelter days, divided by 365 days = 5.5 dogs on average in the shelter per day x 20 minutes for feeding, cleaning etc. = 110 minutes = approximately 2 hrs. per day. Estimating the time required for intake and release etc., and considering that the 1,642 stray cats received during 2004 are currently not covered by HRM legislation, the current number of staff assigned to pound duties is adequate.

4.3.10(d) *Position Description and Salaries*

We requested, but did not receive the current position descriptions for any of the animal control positions from the NS SPCA. We reviewed the two draft position descriptions for Project Manager and Animal Control Officer prepared by the HRM. However, those are apparently not the descriptions used by the NS SPCA. We did review the recent Job Advertisements for three Animal Control Officers, as posted by the NS SPCA.

Following are the annual salaries for staff employed by the NS SPCA as reported to us by the NS SPCA

Project Manager:	\$24,000 to \$30,000
Dispatcher:	\$20,000
AC Officer:	\$20,000 to \$30,000
Educator:	\$24,000 to \$30,000
Shelter Manager:	\$25,000
Receptionist:	\$18,000
Animal Attendant:	\$15,000 to \$18,000

Given the area of responsibilities and skill sets required as outlined in the Job Postings, we believe that the salary range for Animal Control Officers is in line with the identified required qualifications and responsibilities. Since we were unable to obtain a list of required qualifications and responsibilities for the other positions, we cannot comment on the appropriateness of the salary structure for them.

4.3.10 (e) *Performance Review and Training*

We were verbally advised by the NS SPCA that regular performance reviews are part of their staff development program. However, given the high staff turnover and the fact that we only had a brief interview with one of the Animal Control Officers we cannot determine

to what degree, or how extensively this is being carried out.

Staff performance reviews and goal setting are an important integral part of staff training and development. We recommend that regular annual performance appraisals and personal goal setting be implemented. For new staff such appraisals should take place every three months during the first year. Animal care and control is a very difficult field in which to achieve much personal satisfaction beyond the feeling that animals have been helped. Although a 'pat on the back' from a supervisor is always appreciated, it should not be seen as a substitute for feedback resulting from a more structured performance review that evaluates an individual against goals that have been previously jointly established by the employee and the supervisor.

We noted in the NS SPCA's Financial Summary for 2004 that only \$127.50 was spent on training for the entire animal control section during 2004. We were told that training is largely 'on the job'. Since there is little opportunity in the Maritimes to attend animal care and control training sessions, consideration should be given to establish a budget amount which gives at least one staff member (perhaps on a rotating basis) the opportunity to attend at least one training session outside the Maritimes, either in one of the New England States or in Ontario. Unless there is commitment to retain staff, which includes some investment in employees, individuals will see animal care and control work as a stop-gap measure, or as a stepping stone to get somewhere else, and that does not benefit service delivery.

4.3.10 (f) *Staff Interviews*

In addition to soliciting information about the shelter from the Shelter Manager, we interviewed one Animal Control Officer who happened to be in the shelter during our second visit to the shelter, and who had been on the job for just over one year. The Officer had been told by the NS SPCA to answer our questions frankly and completely. We found the individual courteous and very open about his role and his responsibilities in the agency, why he worked in animal control services, his perception of the NS SPCA, what he liked about the job as well as his frustrations. While we did not have an opportunity to join him in the field, his comments provided us with further insight how the animal control unit functions.

4.3.11 *Municipal Legislation and Enforcement*

4.3.11(a) *Review of Existing Legislation*

We reviewed the following past, present and proposed animal care and control By-laws, Ordinances and Administrative Orders:

- ▶ HRM By-law D-100
- ▶ HRM By-law N-200
- ▶ HRM By-law P-600
- ▶ Halifax County Municipality By-law 08, Section 7
- ▶ City of Dartmouth By-law W-201
- ▶ Town of Bedford By-law 22931
- ▶ Halifax County By-law 63
- ▶ City of Halifax Ordinance 184
- ▶ HRM Administrative Order #11
- ▶ City of Dartmouth By-law E-300
- ▶ Halifax County By-law 12
- ▶ HRM proposed By-law A-300
- ▶ Municipal Government Act

We also reviewed the draft Enforcement Procedures for the final section of the HRM Animal Control Services Policy and Procedure Manual as mentioned in Section 4.3.3(d), which have not been implemented as yet. We understand that Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Manual have been reviewed by the SPCA and that they have provided their feedback. It is further our understanding that those sections have been implemented. Section 4, dealing with enforcement is being developed in conjunction with Corporate initiatives for Investigative and SOT Training. SPCA Animal Control Enforcement Staff was invited and participated.

4.3.11(b) *Legislation and Community Outreach*

Most pet owners generally behave responsibly, but some either inadvertently or deliberately fail to comply with generally accepted standards of responsible animal care and control, requiring some type of action from Animal Control Services.

There is ample evidence that voluntary compliance with legislation is more effective - especially long-term - than enforced compliance. And while enactment and subsequent enforcement of a By-law are generally considered the tools of choice for most municipalities, as a pet-owner-behaviour-change technique, that approach is flawed.

law enforcement dollars are often inadequate, much of By-law enforcement is 'complaint driven'. This re-enforces the perception that such By-laws are of little significance, thereby further undermining their effectiveness.

It stands to reason therefore, that enactment of any new or revised By-law - especially one that includes some aspects that may be seen as controversial by some individuals - needs to be accompanied by an aggressive program of awareness raising and attitude changing.

Some aspects of animal care and control By-laws are often perceived as negative. It is important that people come to understand that the primary purpose of such By-laws is to create an environment that permits people and companion animals to co-exist in a community with little conflict. When pet owners have a better understanding why compliance with rules and regulations not only benefits their community but also benefits their own animals, there is a greater chance that they will comply voluntarily.

As an example, registration of dogs and cats should not be perceived as "just another way for the municipality to have its hand in the public's pocket," but should be seen as an insurance policy which improves the chances for a lost or escaped dog or cat to be returned home by the animal care and control agency. And leashing a dog in a park, where leashing is required as a public policy, should not be seen as an unreasonable demand but as a compromise that allows both people and dogs to enjoy such parks without having to worry about unpleasant confrontations.

If people are only vaguely aware about the reasons for rules and regulations, they may see them as an imposition and may choose to ignore them. On the other hand, if they are made to understand why such rules exist, there is a much greater chance that they will comply with them voluntarily. For instance, a problem like excessive barking is more likely solved by an approach that provides owners of noisy animals with appropriate information and guidance instead of a heavy-handed enforcement approach.

Most people have a strong bond with their animal companions. If the owners of companion animals have a better understanding of the rules and regulations and what is expected of them as animal owners, and why, there is a greater chance of voluntary compliance.

We have provided Guidelines for Legislation (Appendix#1) which should be considered when a harmonized By-law is being developed, and any significant changes to existing legislation should be gradually implemented, particularly where such provisions may have controversial aspects.

As an example, we would suggest that any provisions dealing with the control of nuisance cats on private property be implemented immediately when an amended By-law comes into force, but that any mandatory registration or licensing provision for cats be phased in over a three-year period. Consideration might be given to allowing cat owners to register their animals free of charge during the first year, charging appropriate licence fees during the second year but delaying enforcement of the licensing provisions until the third year.

Moreover, we strongly recommend that such phasing in of any significant changes in legislation be accompanied by an effective public outreach program that explains why such aspects have been included in the By-law, how they will benefit animals, their owners and the community, and how enforcement will proceed.

We recognize that municipal legislation usually reflects the interests and needs of a local community, and have reviewed the aforementioned legislation as part of our overall animal service review and assessment in light of current trends and developments in animal care and control in North America.

Animal Care and Control By-laws now commonly also incorporate animal care and control aspects such as cat control, minimal humane care - including provisions for appropriate shelter - and dealing with aggressive and biting dogs.

In light of the recurring focus on breed-specific legislation as a method to reduce serious dog bites, we have provided two background papers (Reading #2 and #5) which support our reasons why we believe that the inclusion of breed-specific bans is neither a useful tool to prevent dog bites, nor is it easily enforced. We believe that inclusion of breed-bans requires serious consideration before such provisions are included in By-laws.

4.4 Budget

Since our mandate was to review the operational side of the HRM's Animal Service, we only did a cursory review of the budget.

The contract fee for the NS SPCA to provide animal control services is \$473,366 annually.

We reviewed the NS SPCA Financial Statement for 2004 provided to us by the NS SPCA. The statement shows income and expenditures for both the NS SPCA humane society function as well as for the animal care and control services function provided under the contract with the HRM. Our cursory review revealed significant discrepancies between the contract amounts identified as having been paid by the HRM, and the contract amounts identified by the NS SPCA as having been received from the HRM.

Like most other municipalities, the HRM is clearly looking for the most cost-effective animal service delivery possible. Given our examination of the budget documents provided to us by the HRM, and our comparisons with budgets of other municipalities we have worked with, it would appear that the HRM is budgeting a significantly lower amount for animal services than many communities of similar size. This amount may or may not be sufficient. However, a detailed financial analysis of all animal care and control expenditures would be needed to confirm whether the HRM is getting maximum value for each dollar spent.

On the other hand, it is difficult to determine total costs of HRM animal care and control service delivery because of the division of program components as follows:

- Overall program monitoring is provided by the HRM Community Projects Department.
- Shelter and field services are provided by the NS SPCA under a contract that has a specific dollar amount allocated.
- Licence sales are handled by the HRM Finance Department, but licensing enforcement is animal control's responsibility.
- Dog-related parks issues are generally handled by the HRM Real Property and Asset Management Department.

We nevertheless estimate that the total amount to provide animal services is less than \$2.00 per capita, which is significantly below what other municipalities of comparable size allocate to animal care and control service delivery.

As is the case with most municipal programs, in this era of perennial budget deficits, the most common obstacle to providing a comprehensive and effective animal care and control program is the problem of funding. Unfortunately, animal control services is frequently one of the first programs to see funding reductions. However, given the importance of effective animal care and control to public health and safety, this may be a shortsighted decision. As was pointed out by George L. Hancock, in the publication *Animal Control Management - A Guide for Local Governments*, published by the International City/County Management Association: "A good animal care and control program is a community responsibility and should be budgeted as any other program or service available to citizens. It needs to go beyond the old-fashioned approach to animal control services, which consisted primarily of a dog catcher and a pound."

We recognize that such critical variables as the geographic area served, differences in programs, in legislation etc. all impact on each agency and therefore affect the allocation of funds for animal care and control programs. It is ironic that some municipalities are

usually able to fund programs that react to specific animal control problems, but that won't necessarily solve them, yet are usually unprepared to provide sufficient funds for pre-emptive programs that will ultimately result in fewer By-law violations, fewer public complaints, and reductions in the cost of operating the municipal animal centre (pound).

4.5 Animal Licensing, Registration and Identification

4.5.1 Current Licensing Initiatives

Records show that the HRM currently licenses in the neighbourhood of 7,500 dogs annually. Considering other municipalities of similar demographics, we estimate that the total dog population in the HRM is somewhere between 41,000 and 67,000, and that the cat population is between 57,000 and 94,000 animals depending on which formula is used to predict the populations.

The two formulas we used to predict populations were:

1. There is one dog for every nine people and one cat for every 6.5 people (a formula that is used in some urban communities).
2. An adaptation of the 2002 US Pet Ownership and Demographics formula applied to the HRM, which means: $144,000$ households in the HRM $\times 0.39$ = the number of dog-owning households $\times 1.2$ dogs per dog-owning household = $67,392$ dogs; and $144,000$ households in the HRM $\times 0.50$ = the number of cat-owning households $\times 1.3$ cats per cat owning household = $93,600$ cats.

Only a census will provide a more accurate picture of dog and cat populations in the municipality. Without census data, it is always difficult to project dog and cat populations in a municipality.

With few exceptions, most municipalities commonly license between 55% and 60% of their estimated dog population. Using the lower population estimates for the HRM (41,000 dogs), and the lower of the percentage licensed (55%), this would mean that the number of licensed dogs should be at least somewhere around 22,550. And even considering the 2004/05 low average licence fee of \$14.54, this would still translate into potential revenues of \$327,877. ($41,000$ dogs $\times 55\%$ = $22,550$ \times $\$14.54$ = $\$327,877$)

If our dog population estimates are close to being accurate, this would mean that the number of licensed dogs in the HRM currently only represents approximately 18% of the dog population. Although licences are offered through a number of veterinary clinics, the NS SPCA and the HRM, there appears to be no specific municipal initiative at this time that is specifically aimed at increasing the number of licensed dogs.

4.5.2 *Why we license Dogs*

Before fee schedules and licensing initiatives are decided upon, a municipality needs to consider *why* it is licensing dogs.

When Canada was still largely rural, and dogs were primarily 'working animals', dog licensing was intended as a tax on dogs. Collected by municipalities, the revenue was used to compensate farmers for sheep losses (later expanded to include other livestock) caused by straying dogs. And a dog tag was issued when the dog tax was paid. That tag was required to be on the dog, not only to show that the tax had been paid, but also to help identify owners of dogs that caused livestock damage.

As more people moved into urban centres, and the role of the dog changed from a work animal to companion, so did the role of the 'dog tax'. The 'dog tax' was now collected primarily to provide the services of a 'dog catcher' who was generally responsible for resolving nuisance dog complaints. As well, the scope of dog control legislation was broadened by provincial governments, resulting in greater authority for municipalities to enact By-laws that provide for broader pet registration and control.

Public resistance to dog licensing, and a general lack of appreciation for the purpose of licensing are still widespread. Owners of unlicensed dogs commonly offer one of two excuses why their dogs are not licensed. They either suggest that they should not have to license their dog unless owners of other pets - particularly owners of cats - are required to do likewise, or they believe that their dog should not need a licence if it never leaves its property. Unfortunately, in most municipalities - and this is also a fact in the HRM - the majority of apprehended straying dogs that require sheltering still do not bear any form of identification.

4.5.3 *Licensing Strategies*

Today we find three basic approaches to dog licensing.

4.5.3(a) *Licensing is revenue driven*

This approach focuses on having the entire animal care and control program funded from revenues generated from animal licensing and other shelter activities. License fees are set accordingly and significant efforts are made to collect them. In Canada, the best-known example of a municipality which employs this approach, is the City of Calgary, Alta.

Given the current relatively small number of licensed dogs in the HRM, if this approach was taken in the HRM, current licence fees would need to be increased by nearly \$100.00.

Such increases would probably cause even more dog owners to take a "catch me if you can" position, and this in turn would require additional staff to handle the higher level of enforcement needed.

4.5.3(b) *Licensing is identification driven.*

This strategy considers licensing as a way to identify owners of straying animals so they can be returned home quickly, and preferably without needing to be sheltered. This results in reduced sheltering costs, reduced euthanasia, and a more positive image for the animal care and control agency. This approach is being adopted by an increasing number of agencies across North America. And in order to maximize this strategy, microchip implantation, which permanently identifies animals, is integrated into the licensing structure.

Some municipalities now offer licence discounts for owners who can show proof that their animals have been micro-chipped. Others go even further by providing a *free lifetime licence* for any dog that has been both sterilized and micro-chipped.

This strategy is promoted to dog owners as an 'insurance' that will provide every legally identified and licensed dog with at least one "free ride home" annually unless the dog has been identified as continually running at-large. A *Free Ride Home* approach recognizes the value of animals as companions to their owners, reduces the need to shelter stray animals (which also reduces sheltering costs) and reduces potential health risks to the animal because it does not need to be taken to the shelter. Such strategy also reflects positively on the municipality as a caring community service provider which recognizes the contributions animal companions make to the lives of many residents.

This approach is based on the principle that rather than penalizing owners for *doing the wrong thing*, owners get breaks for *doing the right thing*.

4.5.3 (c) *Licensing is driven by historical activities*

"We've always licensed dogs," is what people tell us. Since dog licensing has been around as long as people can remember, it continues in the same vein. Every once-in-a-while fees are increased, but in most cases there is no particular valid reason for the increase or the amount chosen. In some municipalities summer students or other temporary staff are employed in door-knocking campaigns to sell licences. While that usually increases the number of licensed animals, any increases in revenue are frequently offset by the additional costs incurred by the door-knocking campaign.

Probably one of the most frequent questions we hear about dog (and cat) licensing from owners is: "What do I get for my money?"

Responsible pet owners will certainly tire of buying a licence every year which appears not to provide any tangible benefits and which helps fund the control of problems that they do not cause, unless greater efforts are made to increase compliance with licensing requirements.

4.5.4 Licence Fees

Following is the HRM Dog Licence Fee Structure:
(Fees for new dogs are prorated for the year)

Category	Standard Rate	Senior's Rate
Unaltered dog	\$30	\$24
Unaltered and vaccinated against rabies	\$25	\$20
Spayed/neutered dog	\$15	\$12
Spayed/neutered and rabies-vaccinated dog	\$10	\$8
Kennel Registration	\$100	\$100

We have reviewed the Licence fees of the HRM and have the following comments:

We support the fact that the HRM dog licence fee structure provides a discount for those dogs that have been vaccinated against rabies and/or have been sterilized. Commonly there are at least two reasons why licence differentials are offered for sterilized animals:

- i) The differential (no matter what the amount) rewards owners who have their pets sterilized. It acknowledges an owner's commitment to the concept of responsible pet ownership (fewer litters/better animal health etc.)
- ii) The differential is sufficiently large that it provides an economic incentive. It permits an owner to recover the cost of the surgery within a short period of time. After sterilization costs have been recovered, an owner realizes annual savings because of reduced licence fees.

- In the HRM, the licence fee reduction is \$15.00 (50%) for sterilized dogs. Unfortunately, we were not able to obtain a breakdown of the number of licences issued in each category in the HRM, so we cannot comment on what impact the discount currently has on licensing. We are nevertheless suggesting that the licensing differential is currently not large enough to be viewed as an economic incentive for owners to get their animals sterilized.
- Records for the period April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005 indicate sales of approximately 7,500 licences for \$109,051 (Average licence fee: \$14.54). We have difficulty reconciling the licence fee structure with the comparatively low average licence fees. In order to develop appropriate licensing strategies, accurate data is important. We are therefore recommending that the HRM licensing system be required to show sales and revenue breakdowns for each licensing category.
- We understand that dog licences are available from the HRM and from a number of outlets (certain veterinary offices and the SPCA). We further understand that veterinary offices are compensated at the rate of \$3.00 per license sold, but that the NS SPCA has not received similar compensation.
- We suggest that a base fee of \$30.00 is not high enough to generate sufficient revenue to make the animal control program completely funded by licensing revenues. If that is the aim, a long term strategy needs to be developed how that might realistically be achieved.

The HRM should nevertheless expect a higher compliance rate. However, given public aversion to government fees and taxes, to make this happen will require a specific program to encourage compliance. Promoting the "free ride home" as a benefit of licensing might be one such strategy. (See 4.5.5)

- We recommend that the HRM give consideration to increasing the basic licence fee for an unaltered dog to \$45.00, and to offer a more substantial discount for animals that have been sterilized. (i.e., Unaltered dog \$45.00, Sterilized dog \$10.00 = discount of \$35.00 annually).

As well, serious consideration should be given to provide a financial incentive in the licensing fee structure for animals that have been permanently identified by microchip. Getting more animals permanently identified will increase return-to-owner rates of straying animals, which in turn will reduce sheltering costs because the need to shelter identified animals will be minimal. And - most importantly - significant increases in micro-chipped animals will ultimately result in a reduction in the number of animals needing to be euthanized.

4.5.5 Free Ride Home

We believe that an animal service program should serve the needs of the community as a whole. And since animal companions are considered part of the community, it only makes sense that they should be treated accordingly. Probably the greatest problem for all municipal animal shelters is to locate the owners of animals that are not properly identified. A 'free ride home' for identifiable animals is a positive program that says to the community: "we will help you get your animal back home in a hurry, providing you help yourself and your animal by making sure that it is identified, preferably with both, a permanent microchip ID which can't be lost or removed, and an externally affixed tag." Animal owners should be shown that the licence system can work in their favour, like an insurance policy that helps having their escaped animal promptly returned home.

When the 'free ride home' program for identifiable animals is adopted in conjunction with a significant public awareness campaign and an appropriate licence fee structure, there is no reason why owners of unidentified, straying animals that are apprehended should not be required to pay the full cost of sheltering those animals. After all, they would have an alternative.

Proponents of the "free ride home" concept point to this program as a tangible benefit of licensing. Under this program all licensed straying animals that are impounded get at least one free ride home annually without the owner having to pay an impound-fee. Unlicensed stray and impounded animals also get a ride home, but that ride is not free unless the owner purchased a licence on the spot.

Unless or until dog owners recognize that there are benefits (free rides home etc.) derived from licensing their animals, (both dogs and cats), and that responsible behaviours, such as having their animals sterilized and permanently identified, are rewarded through licence discounts and through other services, licensing will be seen as 'just another tax'.

Considering that the HRM is reviewing its entire animal care and control program, we recommend that the issue of licence fees and a licensing compliance strategy receive a full and careful review.

4.5.6 Public Relations and Community Outreach

Municipal animal control agencies have traditionally been placed in an adversarial stance with pet owners. This has happened because most municipal animal care and control legislation has historically placed restrictions on pet owners.

While some agencies continue to follow a strict enforcement strategy, others have gradually shifted away from a strict law-enforcement focus. There are a number of reasons for this. The main one has been the recognition that there are significant positive aspects to pet ownership and that these can be promoted along with a controlling function. As well, emerging scientific evidence is proving the many public health and social benefits of companion animals. Consequently, animal service agencies are rethinking how they are dealing with complaints about animals. They are making efforts to reduce the punitive approach to problem solving and replacing it with strategies that focus on finding ways to integrate animals into the community.

Many of those strategies can be very positive. They provide an opportunity for sensible By-law enforcement where more individuals come to understand the reasons for and the value of animal care and control services.

However, such change does not come about automatically. Programs need to be designed in line with an agency's mission statement, and efforts need to be made to reach out to the community to promote such concepts. The shift from being reactive - focusing primarily on complaint response and resolution - to becoming pro-active - focusing on promoting integration of dogs and cats into the community and promoting responsible behaviour - is not always easy, nor will it be supported by everyone in the community. Agencies need to develop strategies on how to let the public know what is happening.

Literature and information sheets need to reflect that new approach. There are currently very few animal care and control information sheets available to the public from the HRM. This is a shortcoming that needs to be addressed. Using the model of the HRM handout on dog defecation, similar ones need to be produced to provide information on such things as other ownership responsibilities, shelter location and hours; the value of licensing, etc. It would be helpful to have all handouts, stationary, uniforms, vehicles, etc. designed with a common appearance so that they are readily identifiable as Animal Care and Control Services.

In an effort to reach out to their communities, many municipal animal service agencies are now involved in such activities as "Responsible Pet Ownership Week," "Animal Shelter Appreciation Week," "Days in the Park" and "Neighbourhood Fairs," where the emphasis is on encouraging pet owners to learn more about community expectations and how they can work with animal service agencies to achieve those expectations. It also means that agency promotion and information needs to become more upbeat and user-friendly.

Another pro-active initiative is the creation of "dog parks." A dog park is an area specifically designated for the use of dogs and their owners. Most are managed by users in cooperation with local government, but some are privately operated. They range in size

from one-quarter acre to more than 50 acres, some with fencing, some without. However, all dog parks share one common purpose: to provide an area - especially in urban parts of municipalities - where dogs can run free from restraint, legally and safely. Animal Care and Control Agencies with dog parks in their communities - even those agencies charged with enforcing leash laws - say that having a well-managed place where dogs can run off-leash actually helps them encourage responsible dog ownership.

Creating a dog park requires the involvement and cooperation of many diverse groups that are affected by such project, including animal care and control agencies, municipal government officials, dog owners, and citizens residing near a proposed park. If public parks, or parts of such parks are being considered for off-leash areas, officials from the municipal agency responsible for public parks also need to be involved.

A dog park is not only a secure place for dogs to engage in the vigorous exercise essential to their well-being, for some city dwellers - especially seniors - a dog park may also provide their only chance to interact with other people and their dogs. And because a well-socialized dog is less likely to develop behaviour problems, such as aggression or excessive barking, such parks also tend to reduce associated neighbourhood conflicts.

But even after a planned dog park wins the support of dog owners and non-owners alike, building and maintaining a fenced area within an existing park can incur considerable costs, costs some municipalities are not prepared to fund, in which case the park users themselves must underwrite the cost through fund-raising and donations. (For more on dog parks see Reading #5)

Of course the most visible and most influential indicators of an agency's role in the community are the appearance of the agency's shelter, its vehicles and the appearance and actions of its staff. These issues have been discussed elsewhere in the report.

4.6 Service Evaluation

There are numerous indicators that help to measure effective performance of an animal service agency, and those are generally program-based. It was not apparent to us that any specific program objectives - other than re-active response to complaints and By-law enforcement - have been established in the HRM. Since no established, measurable service parameters - other than the requirement to respond to complaints and enforce municipal animal care and control legislation - have been established, it is impossible to evaluate service delivery. From a public perspective, most service deficiencies are based on individual anticipation of what animal care and control services should do. As we have stated in other sections of this report there is a need for the HRM Animal Care and Control Services to clearly articulate to the community what services it provides, when it provides

them and how it provides them, and to make it clear which services it does not provide.

Establishing a performance evaluation program should be the next step immediately following the establishment of a mission statement. Development of specific program goals and strategies should include appropriate, specific benchmarks for evaluating programs and performance. Examples of such benchmarks might include:

- Increasing the number of licenced dogs by 5% by Dec. 31, 2007.
- Delivery of a minimum of 20 bite-prevention programs to schools annually.
- Delivery of a minimum of six presentations with a focus on animal care and control program awareness to community groups annually.
- Completing a minimum of six street patrols per shift and identifying addresses where there is evidence of unlicenced dogs on premises.

OPTIONS FOR ANIMAL SERVICE DELIVERY

5.1 Characteristics of a successful Animal Care and Control Program

Regardless of the service delivery model used to deliver animal services, responsible municipal animal care and control programs must be designed to ensure that neither companion animals nor wild animals create a health and safety risk to human or animal residents of a community.

Component services generally include, but are not limited to:

- Animal By-law enforcement.
- Pick-up, receipt and housing of stray, homeless and unwanted companion animals.
- Programs for reuniting found animals with their owners.
- Adopting and disposing of unredeemed and unwanted animals.
- Nuisance wildlife complaint resolution.
- Rabies prevention.
- Aggressive animal containment.
- Public education and outreach programs that focus on responsible pet ownership.
- Reducing animal nuisances, such as noise and odour.
- Pro-active programs on population control (sterilization) and permanent identification of owned cats and dogs.

Key factors essential to the success of all community animal care and control programs include:

- Adequate funding and support from government.
- Public understanding of, and easy access to the services provided.
- The availability of a skilled and trained workforce.
- Cooperation - and ideally support - from other animal-interest and animal-welfare agencies and groups in the community.

Although animal care and control programs can be delivered in a number of ways, delivery commonly follows one of three basic models. At present each of these models is successfully employed in a number of municipalities in North America. These models are listed here, together with their advantages and disadvantages from a municipal perspective as we see them. The decision as to which is the most appropriate service delivery model for any community at a given point in time should include not only an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the models themselves, but also a review of key issues such as available resources, public needs, political realities etc.

5.2.1 MODEL #1 - ALL SERVICES ARE DELIVERED BY THE MUNICIPALITY

In this Model all animal services (animal sheltering and By-law enforcement) are delivered by public employees working in a municipal animal care and control agency that generally functions in a relevant department of a municipal government (Public Health; Environmental Services; Community Services; By-law Enforcement; etc.)

This model is currently used by a number of municipalities in Canada, including the Cities of Calgary, Alberta, Vancouver, British Columbia, Winnipeg, Manitoba and the Cities of Toronto, Hamilton, Mississauga, Brampton, Burlington, Whitby, Oshawa, and Thunder Bay in Ontario, among others.

Advantages from a municipal perspective:

- Direct control and immediate accountability by the service provider and ability to address problems immediately.
- Potential for direct public input and potential for a higher degree of acceptance/credibility for law enforcement.
- Potential advantage to attract qualified staff, since salaries and benefits generally tend to be higher than those offered by nonprofit or small private contractors.
- Symbolic importance given to animal services when seen as part of a core group of services provided directly by local government.

Disadvantages from a municipal perspective:

- Cost related issues. Wages and benefits in the public sector tend to be higher than those in comparable nonprofit or private service sectors. Municipal purchases of

vehicles, supplies and services usually have to meet specific municipal guidelines and criteria which may increase operating costs.

- Possible negative public perception. There may be real or perceived perception of duplication of some municipal animal services, particularly in a community where a local Humane Society and/or other animal welfare agencies are providing animal welfare programs.
- Difficulty in Long Range Planning. Due to the volatility of municipal budgets and priorities, there is a potential for a "lowest-acceptable" approach.

5.2.2 MODEL #2 - ALL SERVICES ARE DELIVERED BY A PRIVATE CONTRACTOR

In this model all animal services are delivered by a private contractor with contract oversight and performance monitoring provided by a designated municipal official.

A private contractor may be:

- A private sector animal care and control service provider or company.
- A charitable or nonprofit agency like a Humane Society.

Private sector animal service providers currently deliver animal services in a number of municipalities in Ontario. Most of those are small, rural communities, where there are often fewer or less varied demands for animal services.

The Towns of Markham, Richmond Hill and Newmarket and the City of London Ontario are some of the larger Ontario municipalities where animal services are currently being delivered by contracted, private sector animal control service providers who own and operate their own shelters. Most often private sector service providers own their own sheltering facility, but on occasion they may subcontract with a veterinarian or private kennel for sheltering space and only provide field services.

Charitable or not-for-profit agencies like Humane Societies, usually operate out of their own shelter.

In addition to the HRM, such arrangements exist in Prince Edward Island, Regina, Saskatchewan and in the Ontario Cities of St. Catharines, Guelph, Chatham, Welland, Oakville, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls, among others.

Advantages from a municipal perspective:

- Costs. Since wages in the private and charitable/nonprofit animal service sectors generally tend to be lower than those in the public sector, services may be delivered at lower costs.
- Potential for benefits of tangential or value-added services, particularly where the contractor is a humane society.
- Potential for reducing or eliminating the need for capital investment where the contractor owns its own sheltering facility.
- An "arms length" relationship on animal-related issues. Although this may at first glance be true, in reality this is still a municipal service no matter who delivers it, and elected municipal officials and/or designated staff will still need to deal with these issues.

Disadvantages from a municipal perspective:

- Costs. Although initial service costs quoted by a private contractor may be less than the cost of providing the same service by the municipality, there is the potential for early escalating costs, particularly where a contractor is quoting for the first time. Such cost increases can occur:
 - ▶ Because of initial honest miscalculation of costs by the private contractor.
 - ▶ Because the private contractor intentionally provided a low initial bid to deliver services in order to get "his foot in the door."
 - ▶ Because private agency employees are able to achieve near equity with civic employees working in similar positions (i.e., in the Public Works Department, etc.) through collective bargaining, and the contractor had not taken that potential into consideration in his proposal.
 - ▶ Depending on the shelter facility used by the contracting agency, there may be future requirements to assist with capital costs to upgrade or renovate the contractor's shelter facilities.
- Loss of direct control of the program with potential for a more complex system of accountability. Although at first glance the headaches often associated with operating a municipal animal service agency may have disappeared when the services are contracted out, when there is public dissatisfaction or concern about a private agency's operating procedures, direction, change in philosophy etc., the public will still

insist that program responsibility rests with the municipality and will therefore demand that the municipality solve the problem.

- Operating at arms length makes it much more difficult to get immediate action or response to solve a problem and this can further aggravate situations.
- Reliance on inter-agency communication and cooperation. Unlike Model #1, cooperation between both agencies is not only desirable, it is essential.
- The municipality has no direct control over the contracting agency's staff.
- Potential loss of municipal identification as the service provider.
- Less public input and possibly access, since the contracting agency has its first obligation to its owners, members or governing structure.
- The potential for conflict and blurring of missions, particularly where the contractor is an animal welfare agency with a greater focus on animal welfare and possibly less on enforcement aspects of animal control issues. A municipal animal service agency's primary focus is the best interest of the public and public health and safety issues, while an animal welfare's primary focus is on animal welfare issues.
- Where the contractor is a private sector operator, there may be less concern about finding solutions to problems if these could result in a potential loss of revenue.

5.2.3 MODEL NO. #3 -

SERVICE DELIVERY IS SHARED BETWEEN A MUNICIPALITY AND A PRIVATE CONTRACTOR

This model provides a combination of public/private delivery of animal services. The municipality is responsible for all "field services, including By-law enforcement" while the "sheltering of all animals and related services" are provided under contract by a private contractor, usually a humane society.

Under this arrangement the municipality commonly provides enforcement of animal care and control legislation and other field services, including capture of stray animals, investigation of animal bites, animal licensing, responding to animal noise and odour complaints, etc., while the sheltering contractor receives, cares for, releases, adopts out and euthanizes the municipal animals. Such arrangement can provide many of the benefits identified in Models #1 and #2, and can eliminate some of the identified disadvantages

Where the contractor is a humane society, that organization continues to operate as an animal welfare agency, providing services such as animal cruelty investigations, animal rescue etc.

Such arrangement exists of in the Ontario Cities of Ottawa, Sarnia, and Kingston, for example, and was the model in the former City of Toronto prior to amalgamation.

Advantages, from a municipal perspective:

- Not having to build, or maintain an animal sheltering facility.
- The most visible part of service provision is under the direct control of the municipality.
- The ability to promptly respond to changing needs.
- Greater flexibility. It reduces the all-or-nothing reliance on a single agency of Model #2 and keeps the municipality involved should issues arise that threaten the continuation of the contractual relationship with the sheltering contractor.

Disadvantages from a municipal perspective:

- Costing issues. Depending on the contract between the parties, the potential for overlap exists which may drive up costs. The need for two telephone systems to meet the different organizational needs, vehicles used by each agency for different purposes - dual supervision and management and the need to maintain separate municipal space for field operations, are just some issues that have the potential to increase costs.
- Loss of control over animal sheltering. Although the contractor handles the sheltering of municipal animals, this is still part of the municipal service delivery, and when the public is not satisfied about a sheltering issue, such complaints still require response from a municipal official.
- Reliance on inter-agency communication and cooperation. Unlike Model #1, cooperation between both agencies is not only desirable, it is essential under this type of arrangement.
- The potential for "buck passing" may delay prompt service response. Although the role of each agency may be clearly defined in a contract, when it comes to staff interpretations things are not always as clear, particularly when both agency work in the field.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Recommended Model for Animal Service Delivery in the HRM

6.1.1 *The Current Situation*

Our review and assessment of the delivery of the HRM animal care and control program have identified a number of deficiencies that appear to interfere with effective and efficient program delivery under the current service delivery model, whereby all service delivery is contracted out to the NS SPCA. It is of course impossible to be all things to all people, and since public service expectations for such a program tend to vary considerably, some criticism should be expected.

We identified a number of issues that appear to impact on service delivery. These include the following:

- The primary focus of the contract relates to reactive responses to complaints and concerns.
- The HRM has three business units that are involved in the delivery of animal control services. These are:
 - ▶ Environmental Management Services - handles the contract with the NS SPCA re. By-law enforcement and shelter services.
 - ▶ Real Property and Asset Management - handles park patrols.
 - ▶ Financial Services - Issues licences.

There appears to be a need for a collective purpose, with a Mission Statement that forms the background of the service and provides guidance for program initiatives.

- Although the HRM has identified numerous service deficiencies relating to staffing and complaint responses (some of which we identified as well as part of our review), and has asked that the NS SPCA address those deficiencies, there appears little that the HRM can currently do, short of withholding contract funds, to correct those deficiencies.
- The NS SPCA Metro Shelter, which serves as the municipal pound under the contract, has numerous, serious deficiencies that impact on service delivery. While the building is less than 15 years old, it is an outdated facility with serious design deficiencies that prevent efficient and effective animal handling. Given the many

shortcomings of the facility, we believe that it should either be gutted and rebuilt or replaced.

- Incomplete staffing complements and high staff turnover make it difficult to deliver timely and effective services. The NS SPCA has indicated that any new staff for this program has to fit into, what it terms, its 5-year plan for the delivery of the animal care and control program, which, we were told, will be modeled after the NS Ambulance Program. We do not believe that this is a good model for animal control. We believe that the thrust of any animal care and control program needs to include pro-active problem prevention if it is going to be successful.

6.1.2 *Our Recommendation*

Our review and assessment of the existing service arrangement indicate that “the system is broken and needs fixing.” We have carefully weighed all options.

Option #1: The HRM could decide to build its own animal service centre and provide all sheltering and field services. We have provided an outline for shelter requirements together with both capital and operating budgets for such facility (Appendix#2). If this option is chosen, the HRM should review the concepts and requirements for shelter design as identified in Appendix #2 before deciding on a location and building for a new shelter

Option #2: The NS SPCA currently provides By-law enforcement and animal sheltering services. We rejected this option since it appears that the current enforcement of By-laws, or more correctly the lack of it, continues to create ongoing issues in the service delivery. Apart from a suggestion that steps are currently being taken by the NS SPCA to correct the concerns, we saw and heard nothing that would give us the confidence to suggest that the NS SPCA is currently in a position to effectively handle and manage By-law enforcement.

The SPCA has the know-how and experience in sheltering and caring for animals. However, operating a shelter and finding new homes for unwanted animals is not the same as providing By-law enforcement and other municipal animal-related field service that should focus on public health and safety first, and where at times, human concerns will need to take precedence over animal concerns.

We will state here that the NS SPCA has expressed the interest to continue providing both, By-law enforcement as well as sheltering services under a

the discussions we have had with both the HRM and the NS SPCA, and based on what we observed during the course of this project, we are not prepared to suggest that the Society, while having good intentions, has the ability to deliver an effective, all-encompassing municipal animal care and control program at this time, particularly a program that includes pro-active problem prevention.

Option #3 We believe that the following option is the most appropriate for the HRM at this time.

Since the HRM has the experience and knowhow in By-law enforcement while the SPCA has the know-how and experience in sheltering and caring for animals, we are recommending, that the HRM, the residents of the HRM, and the animals of the HRM will be best served at this time, if the delivery of municipal animal care and control services were to be shared (refer to Section 5.2.3) including that:

1. **All By-law enforcement becomes the sole responsibility of the HRM. This should include management of the field services program, the hiring and supervision of all enforcement, dispatch and community outreach staff, supply of vehicles etc.;**
2. **All animal sheltering activities, including the receipt of stray and owned domestic animals identified in HRM By-laws, the release of stray and impounded animals to their owners and the disposition of unredeemed animals, become the sole responsibility of the NS SPCA, provided that:**
 - a. **the current SPCA Metro Shelter at 5 Scarfe Court, Dartmouth is completely overhauled to meet current shelter standards for appropriate animal sheltering, which enables safe, efficient and humane animal handling and housing; or**
 - b. **the NS SPCA locates in a new facility that meets current shelter standards for appropriate animal sheltering, which enables safe, efficient and humane animal handling and housing; or**
 - c. **in the event the NS SPCA is either unable or not interested to take on the sheltering of municipal animals under contract, that the HRM, in addition to providing field and enforcement services, also consider building and operating its own municipal animal shelter.**

We have provided an outline for shelter requirements together with both capital and operating budgets for such facility, (Appendix #2).

We recognize that construction of a new shelter facility is a costly undertaking. Consideration might therefore be given to a joint venture between the HRM and the NS SPCA, whereby the NS SPCA might be provided either with capital fund assistance, or with municipal property for shelter construction in exchange for a long-term contract to undertake the operation of the municipal pound.

We recognize that our recommendation will increase costs to the HRM, which is reflected in the Budget Tables in Appendix #2.

6.2 Additional Recommendations

The following are specific recommendations arising out of our review and assessment. We suggest that these recommendations should be given due consideration as an integral part of our overall recommendations. No matter which animal service delivery option the HRM ultimately adopts, they are valid regardless, and should be reviewed and considered.

We believe, when the following recommendations are implemented that they will overcome most of the deficiencies we have identified in this report. They are not listed in any order of priority, and some are inter-related.

Legislation

- That the HRM consider the Guidelines for Legislation (Appendix #1) when a new or harmonized Animal Care and Control By-law is enacted.
- That the HRM Planning and Development Department enact a By-law for the regulation of Kennels and Cat Colonies (Catteries) and to consider the following guidelines for inclusion, when drafting such By-law:
 - ▶ The requirement for kennels and catteries to comply with zoning regulations.
 - ▶ Definition of a hobby vs. commercial kennel/cattery.
 - ▶ Definition of breeding vs. boarding kennel/cattery.
 - ▶ Regulations for kennel/cattery buildings and other structures.
 - ▶ Identification of the type, height and placement of property enclosures.
 - ▶ Kennel/Cattery location on the property - distance from residential or commercial properties.
 - ▶ Nuisance (Noise/Odour) abatement requirements.
 - ▶ Waste disposal requirements.
 - ▶ Relationship between kennel/cattery facility space and number of animals permitted.
 - ▶ Provisions for animal care.
 - ▶ Licence requirements.
 - ▶ Facility inspection.

Program

- That the HRM identify the reasons for the existence of its Animal Care and Control Service in a Mission Statement in order to provide a focus for program planning and implementation.
- That the HRM develop programs around the Mission Statement with specific annual implementation targets that are realistic and achievable (i.e., by 2007 Animal Service will increase the number of licensed dogs by 5%).
- That the HRM change the emphasis and focus from one of "control" to one of "service," and reflect this in the way complaints are resolved.
- That the HRM explore the "free ride home" concept for identifiable animals.
- That the HRM/NS SPCA develop and distribute a series of Animal Services handouts that outline operating hours for shelter and enforcement services, the types of animal services available etc.
- That the HRM explore ways of mobilizing the community to assist and complement staff in enhancing animal service programs, particularly in public outreach and education.

Policy & Procedures Manual

- That all completed Policies and Procedures be implemented as soon as possible.
- That any new Policies and Procedures be reviewed by the appropriate staff and promptly implemented accordingly.
- That advice from outside individuals or agencies be sought where appropriate (i.e., dealing with vicious/aggressive animals).

Licensing

- That the HRM review its licensing program to identify its focus and consider whether its fee structure supports the focus of its program

- That animal licensing be integrated into the animal control function.
- That the HRM develop a specific initiative aimed at increasing the issuance of licenses.
- That the HRM licensing record system be required to show a breakdown of numbers sold and revenues received for each of the licensing categories (Unaltered, vaccinated, sterilized etc.).
- That all dog licence sales outlets (veterinary offices and the SPCA) be equally compensated for licences sold.
- That the HRM give consideration to increasing the basic licence fee for an unaltered dog, thus offering a more substantial discount for animals that have been sterilized.
- That the HRM give serious consideration to providing a financial incentive in the licensing fee structure for animals that have been permanently identified by microchip.

Staffing

- That the reasons and causes for high staff turnover be addressed promptly.
- That additional permanent staff be added to serve the HRM.
- That regular performance appraisals and personal goal setting for animal care and control staff be implemented by the NS SPCA.

Vehicles and Equipment

- That animal care and control vehicles be appropriately upgraded to meet current industry standards to facilitate safe, efficient and humane animal handling and transport.
- That animal care and control vehicles be appropriately identified to take advantage of the fact that vehicles are the most visible part of an animal care and control program in the community.

- That the NS SPCA consider adding equipment such as proper animal stretchers for transporting injured animals, and replacing the nets currently carried in its animal service vehicles with nets that have been specifically designed for humane and effective animal capture, and that all appropriate staff be properly trained in the use of such equipment.

Appendix # 1

Note: *We have reviewed the existing and proposed HRM Animal Care and Control By-laws and are providing the following Guidelines for consideration when existing animal care and control By-laws are revised or new ones are enacted.*

Guidelines for Legislation

An Animal Care and Control By-law should advocate public safety and promote responsible pet ownership to minimize conflicts and encourage a harmonious relationship between residents and pets.

1. **DOG LICENSING** provisions are required to enhance the prompt return of dogs to their owners, and should include:
 - Appointing deputy registrars.
 - Licensing procedure.
 - License year (annual or anniversary).
 - Licence fees (with appropriate recognition for owners who have their dogs sterilized and/or permanently identified by microchip).
 - Requirements when a dog is sold or given away.
 - Having identification affixed.
 - Definition and registration of dog kennels.

2. **DOG CONTROL** provisions are required to provide guidance to dog owners about proper confinement and restraint in order to protect public health and safety, and to promote responsible ownership, and should include the following offences:

A. Dog Control

- Dog running at large (restraint).
- Authority to impound dogs running at large.
- A requirement to notify the owner, where known, of an impounded dog.
- Length of redemption period
- Providing veterinary care to injured and sick dogs.
- Authority to dispose of a dog at the end of the redemption period.
- Failing to clean up defecation.
- Dog in a Municipal Park where prohibited.

- Damage to public or private property.
- Failing to confine an un-spayed female in heat.
- Exemptions (field trials, dog shows, etc.).

B. Dog Attacks and Dangerous Dogs

- Identification of what constitutes a dog attack on a person or domestic animal.
- Identification of what constitutes a dangerous dog.
- Circumstances for issuing Notices to Microchip, Muzzle and/or Destroy a dog.
- Requirement to identify dangerous dogs in the municipal registry.
- Exemptions (protecting young, trespassers, etc.).
- Circumstances and authority for Animal Control Officer to destroy dangerous dogs at large.
- Control of dangerous dogs in enclosures on owners' property.
- Muzzling instructions.

3. CAT LICENSING provisions are required to enhance the prompt return of cats to their owners, and should include:

- Appointing deputy registrars.
- Licensing procedure.
- License year (annual or anniversary).
- Licence fees (with appropriate recognition for owners who have their cats sterilized and/or permanently identified by microchip).
- Requirements when a cat is sold or given away.
- Having identification affixed.
- Defining and licensing of cat colonies(catteries).

4. CAT CONTROL provisions are required to provide guidance to cat owners about proper confinement and restraint in order to protect public health and safety, and to promote responsible ownership, and should include the following offences:

- Cats running at large defined.
- Actions to deal with cats attacking a person or animal.
- Actions to deal with cats damaging public or private property.
- Permitting the establishment or continuation of a cat colony (cattery).
- Identifying the circumstances when cats running at large may be captured or seized by a property owner.
- Requirement for captured cats to be delivered to the shelter keeper.
- Requirement to notify the owner, where known, of an impounded cat.

- Length of redemption period.
 - Providing veterinary care to injured and sick cats.
 - Authority to dispose of a cat at the end of the redemption period.
5. **ANIMAL CONTROL** provisions are required to provide guidance to owners of animals other than dogs and cats about proper confinement and restraint in order to protect public health and safety, and to promote responsible ownership, and should include the following offences:
- Being at large.
 - Attacking a person or animal.
 - Damaging any public or private property.
 - Failing to clean up defecation.
 - Identifying when and how animals at large may be captured, seized and impounded.
 - Requirement for captured animals to be delivered to the shelter keeper.
 - Requirement to notify the owner, where known, of an impounded animal.
 - Length of redemption period.
 - Providing veterinary care to injured and sick animals.
 - authority to dispose of an animal at the end of the redemption period.
6. **PROHIBITED ANIMAL CONTROL** provisions are required to provide identification of animals which are prohibited from being kept by residents to protect public health and safety, and to deal with prohibited animals found in contravention of the By-law and should include:
- A list of prohibited animals as an appendix to the By-law.
 - Consequences for owning a prohibited animal.
 - Disposing of a prohibited animal.
 - Selling or offering for sale of a prohibited animal.
 - Exemptions.
 - Authority to seize any prohibited animal found at large.
 - Identification of holding time for a seized prohibited animal.
 - Requirement to notify the owner, where known of a captured animal.
 - Providing veterinary care to injured and sick animals.
 - Authority to dispose of an animal at the end of the redemption period.
 - Selling or transferring a prohibited animal to a location where ownership is permitted.

7. **LIMITING THE NUMBER OF CATS AND DOGS** provisions are required to provide to promote responsible ownership, and enhance community harmony and should include the following:
 - Identifying the maximum number of dogs and/or cats by individuals who are not licenced as a dog kennel or cat colony (cattery).
8. **REPORT OF CATS AND DOGS ON PREMISES** provisions are required for the HRM to conduct a pet census. Accurate numbers of owned dogs and cats will assist in developing appropriate animal care and control programs.
9. **ANIMAL NOISE** provisions are required to deal with animals which persistently cause a public nuisance through persistent barking, calling, whining or other persistent noise-making.
10. **WATERFOWL** provisions are required to order to protect public health and safety, and should include the following offences:
 - Prohibiting the feeding of waterfowl on property owned by the Municipality.
 - Exemption for municipal staff or contractors to feed waterfowl owned or under the care of the Municipality.
11. **SHELTER KEEPER** provisions are required to provide guidance regarding:
 - Holding times for animals.
 - Notifying the owner, where known, of impounded animals.
 - Requirement to provide veterinary care for injured or sick animals.
 - authority to destroy animals immediately that are posing a danger to persons or other animals.
 - Authority to adopt or euthanize animals not claimed by owners.
 - Requirement to hold all seized animals where there is an action before a court until such time as a court orders otherwise.
12. **COST RECOVERY** provisions are required to encourage responsible ownership and to recover sheltering costs that are incurred as a result of owners failing to exercise proper control over their pet.
13. **PENALTIES.** Penalty provisions are required that appropriately reflect the impact on the community of an offence under the animal care and control By-law.

Appendix # 2

BUILDING AN ANIMAL SHELTER /POUND

A. Conceptual Consideration

"Your animal shelter is the nucleus of your overall community animal control program. The shelter should be maintained and operated to be attractive and convenient for the community. Most important, it should be a place of safety and comfort for the animals. If you are building a new facility, these considerations should be basis for your plan."

Humane Society of the United States

In a changing public climate, communities are recognizing the need to provide facilities for the humane and compassionate care of homeless, lost and unwanted animals. Although, not every community can afford the ultimate facility, none can afford not to plan carefully for a facility with maximum utility and long-term phased expansion designed in.

Unfortunately, some communities are saddled with facilities that are either nonfunctional or too costly for the community to maintain and operate. Some of the blame for those inadequate shelters must fall to their designers who failed to learn from the experiences of previously built facilities. However, equally guilty are those communities who fail to recognize the level of commitment that is required in order to have a successfully operating animal care and control facility.

The location and design of an animal control shelter should take into consideration:

- The service and program needs and wants of the community.
- The types of animal care and control programs that the organization currently provides.
- The type of programs and services the organization is going to provide in the future.
- The needs of the animals to be housed in the facility.
- The requirements and convenience for shelter staff to move and care for animals safely and conveniently.
- The needs of staff and visitors to the shelter.

Since the shelter will be most visible part of the organization, the best thinking available must be devoted to every stage of the planning and building whenever a new facility is planned or reconstruction of an existing one is undertaken.

B. Site Selection and Size

Since most animal shelters tend to serve a community for many years, shelter size, location and public accessibility are crucial considerations.

Items to be considered include:

- Public access;
- Future expansion;
- Visual screening;
- Floor plans that respond to the decision-making hierarchy;
- Floor plans that consider location and access to service areas;
- Public areas vs. Staff (service) areas;
- Future neighbourhood development;
- Noise and odour control;
- Use of natural factors in building the layout.

B.1 FUNCTIONAL PLANNING

In Canada two shelter designs predominate.

The first type commonly has indoor/outdoor kennels. The distinguishing feature is that the dogs are kept in temperature controlled inside kennels, but through close-able doorways, have access to individual or group runs outdoors.

The second type is a facility that has all animal-holding areas (except holding for large domestic animals) totally enclosed and insulated from external climatic conditions.

However, no matter what the design, shelter facilities should provide for several separate functions and should offer efficient animal and people traffic patterns.

Whenever a new facility is planned, or whenever an existing one is scheduled to be renovated, an *Adjacency Table* should be developed during the early planning stage. Such a table summarizes the relationship of various functional areas considered during the shelter design process. Each of the spaces or functional areas should be listed and compared on the basis of sharing (or being isolated from) one another physically, visually, acoustically, and by air circulation. Ideally, the final shelter design should confirm these specifications

A list of functional areas might include:

- Kennels for dogs;
- Food preparation;
- Adoption interview;

- Cages for cats
- Equipment wash-up
- Reception and public waiting
- Wildlife holding
- Reception area
- Food storage
- Adoption holding and service
- Clinic
- Examination area
- Euthanasia room
- Crematorium
- Garage and service bay
- Equipment and supply storage
- Personnel washrooms
- Lockers/showers
- Staff lunch room
- Meeting room
- Electrical and mechanical
- Parking lot
- Cold storage
- Public education/conference room
- Night drop area for animals
- Cages for small animals
- Memorial wall/cemetery

Any floor plan design must also take into consideration and respond to a decision hierarchy. For instance, in what order will the following be prioritized and why:

- Dog or cat or other?
- Owned or stray?
- Keep or euthanize?
- Diseased or healthy?
- Adult or young?
- Male or female?
- Aggressive or docile?, etc.

The design concept can incorporate current and future needs by developing a plan that permits construction of only those areas of the facility that are required immediately, yet incorporates plans for the phased expansion in the future as the needs arise.

B.2 SPECIFIC FUNCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

B.2.1 Reception Area

Traffic patterns of both people and animals are of prime importance in order to keep the public from hindering shelter staff activities and to keep animal populations healthy.

Under ideal conditions a minimum of three separate entrances, two of them for public use, would provide access to an animal shelter. One entrance would be available to receive stray and owned animals from the public and to release found and impounded animals back to their owners. Another, separate entrance would be used by agency field staff to off-load animals from vehicles and move them into the facility, while the third separate entrance would provide access to the shelter's adoption and office areas only.

Although this may not appear practical in a small shelter, separate entrances should receive serious considerations as soon as the volume of animal or public traffic through the facility warrants. Animal reception areas should permit safe, smooth handling of incoming animals with little traumatic effect on either the animal or the individual surrendering the animal.

In order to make this happen, a number of questions require answers:

- Should temporary cages be provided for incoming animals?
- What happens if an incoming animal appears ill or injured?
- What happens to animals surrendered for euthanasia?
- Where will animals go from the reception area?
- How far will the supervisor's desk or office be from the reception area?
- What should be the distance separating the animal adoption and office entrance from the animal reception area in order to minimize incoming animals from being taken to the wrong area?

Appearance of the reception area is another important consideration. Often overlooked is the fact that the reception area is where the public forms its first and frequently lasting impression of the shelter facility. So, in addition to being practical, this area should also be friendly and cheerful.

B.2.2 Animal Quarters

The well-being of all animals in the shelter depends on the availability of suitable and appropriate quarters that balance the needs of the housed animals with the need that the facility is functional and economical to operate.

In some jurisdictions minimum standards are mandated. Those regulations may cover requirements for floors, drains, walls, doors, windows, roofs, vermin control, lighting,

heating and ventilation.

When animal quarters are designed, the following additional guidelines should be considered:

B.2.2(a) Animal Quarters Size

The size of the facility should take into consideration the current and future needs to house animals. Housing needs for dogs, cats and other animals should be considered separately.

B.2.2(b) Floors & Drains

In addition to any mandated requirements, floors should be non-slippery and slope toward floor drains. Drains and sewage lines should be at least 10.5 cm in diameter, although 15.0 cm is preferable in dog runs. Drains should be equipped with an appropriate cover and pitch-basket-trap.

The use of independent drains are preferable to open or common gutters. All corridors and halls should ideally be on the same grade. Where different grades are necessary, a smooth non-slippery ramp rather than steps should be used to connect the different levels.

To accommodate efficient work routines, corridors should have a minimum width of 1.80m. All floor/wall connections should permit easy cleaning.

B.2.2(c) Walls

In addition to any mandated requirements in applicable Regulations, walls in animal quarters should be free of any projecting fixtures up to a height of 2.00 m. Exposed corners should be fitted with protective strips to prevent damage.

B.2.2(d) Ceilings

Ceilings should be sealed. Use of vermin-proof acoustic materials that can be readily disinfected are the ceiling materials of choice.

B.2.2(e) Lighting

In addition to any mandated requirements, light in animal rooms should generally duplicate the characteristics of sunlight. In some animal quarters, windows or skylights have been used to provide part or most of the required light, while in others artificial lighting is used.

Intensities of between 75 and 125 foot-candles (807 - 1345-lux) at 76 cm from the floor have been found to be effective to allow for proper animal observation. In animal quarters that rely exclusively on artificial light sources, automatically controlled cycles of light and darkness should be established. Light fixtures should be installed flush to surfaces with water-resistant seals to facilitate cleaning. Facility design should maximize use of natural lighting and seasonally optimal solar heat gain.

B.2.2(f) Heating, Ventilation and Humidity

Ideally, animal quarters should be maintained between 18 degrees and 22 degrees Celsius.

Some animal facilities provide heated floors for animal comfort in the kennels and runs and maintain the overall temperature in the unit at the low end of the comfort range. It is preferable not to circulate air between individual areas of a shelter (stray units, adoption section, clinic, staff areas, etc.). When an area-circulating heating or ventilation system is used, it should be equipped with effective filters to remove dirt, hair and to avoid the spread of disease.

Cat quarters require 10 -18 air changes/hour for ventilation, while dog quarters require 8 -12 air changes/hour.

Most animals prefer a humidity of about 50% but ranges from 30% to 70% are acceptable, so long as temperatures remain relatively constant and appropriate for the species. Extremes, or continual fluctuations in relative humidity outside the comfort range, may lead to illness, particularly to respiratory diseases.

B.2.2(g) Noise

Although unavoidable in facilities that house dogs, shelter design and layout should take into consideration the impact of animal noise on staff, on the visiting public and on the neighbourhood. Being able to separate noisy animals from others and away from noise stimulants is desirable.

B.2.2(h) Species Separation

Separate facilities should be provided for housing dogs, cats and other animals. It is preferable to place one dog, but no more than two per kennel or run, or cat per cage (except relatives). Puppies and kittens should ideally be separated from adult animals (except from their mothers) and kept in appropriately sized and equipped enclosures.

B2.2(i) Kennels for Dogs

Kennel Size: Kennel size may vary depending on the size and type of dogs to be housed. For singly housed dogs below 12 kg in weight, a minimum floor area of 115 square meters should be considered, and for dogs more than 12 kg, a minimum floor area of 2.5 square meters should be provided. A modular design with moveable barriers can provide flexibility.

Kennel Height: Kennels should preferably be three meters high to allow comfortable use of cleaning equipment.

Kennel Walls: Kennel walls should be constructed of sealed concrete blocks or other impervious materials at least 1.5m high and should prevent water and waste materials from flowing between kennels. For the balance of kennel walls, welded wire fabric or chain-link fencing (minimum 9 ga.) may be used.

Kennel Floors: Kennel floors should be non-slippery, impervious to water, easy to clean and disinfect with a slope approximately 1.5 cm per running meter toward drains, to prevent pooling of urine and water.

Self-Waterers: Independent and automatic watering systems (and feeding systems) are desirable but need regular monitoring and maintenance.

B.2.2(j) Cages for Cats

Cage Size: Most cats are housed in cages (stainless steel preferred) rather than kennels, although some shelters operate communal cat runs. Cat cages should provide a minimum floor area of 0.30 square meters per cat and a minimum height of about 75cm. Perches inside cages greatly add to cat comfort.

B.3 SUPPORT FACILITIES

B.3.1 Feed Storage

Feed should be stored off the floor in a cool, dry vermin proof separate storage area, away from cleaning materials and other chemicals.

B.3.2 Equipment Storage

Space to store equipment (traps, tools, uniforms, automotive and cleaning supplies, etc.) frequently is overlooked in shelter design. When it is identified as a need, such space is frequently of insufficient size, resulting in surplus equipment having to be stored in corridors, in office space or in the feed storage.

B.3.3 Feed Preparation and Wash-up Areas

Feed preparation and wash-up areas for feeders, waterers and utensils should be located in, or in close proximity to the animal quarters. Each of those areas should be equipped with appropriate sinks and other wash-up equipment and have adequate counter space. Counters should be impervious to moisture and be scratch resistant.

B.3.5 Offices

Office space should be located away from animal housing and in an area in the shelter where through-traffic by the public and by non-office staff is minimized.

B.3.6 Personnel Facilities

In addition to washrooms, staff facilities should include showers, lockers and a lunchroom. In a larger agency a separate meeting room for staff meetings and training sessions should be considered.

B.3.7 Animal Treatment Room

A separate room, appropriately equipped, to examine incoming animals and animals that appear ill or injured is a requirement in any shelter. In smaller shelters this room can also be used for euthanasia of shelter animals. In larger shelters a separate Euthanasia Room should be considered. This room should be strategically located close to animal housing, away from public traffic.

B.4 PUBLIC USE AND COMFORT

Since a shelter usually encourages significant public contact, the facility should be designed to make access to the shelter safe and easy and permit traffic by the public inside the facility safely and with little disturbance to animals or shelter routines.

In addition, items that should be considered include:

- Visible and intelligible signage and directions inside (colour-coded) and outside the facility.
- Public access to animals that permits clear visibility of all appropriate animals, yet reduces physical contact.
- Appropriate acoustic controls to minimize noise.
- A cheerful and bright colour-scheme throughout the shelter.
- Appropriate odour controls to minimize undesirable odours.
- Ramps instead of steps and stairs wherever possible.
- Public washrooms, accessible from the public reception area.
- Adequate parking space for agency vehicles, staff vehicles and the public.

B.5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition the following items require some thought where applicable:

- Adequate and appropriate drainage.
- Access to municipal sewage service.
- Building Security and fencing.
- Cadaver disposal/cremation.
- Wildlife housing/handling where appropriate.
- Large animal holding where appropriate.
- Environment enrichment techniques for shelter animals.

B.6 SUMMARY

The size and design of a shelter are often determined by the amount of money available for the project. As a result, shortcuts are frequently taken which are subsequently found to result either in more frequent - and therefore costly - repairs, or in additional staff time. No one plan is necessarily "the Best," however all problems should be thought through during the planning stage, before construction begins. During the planning stage a number of shelter facilities which, serve communities of similar size and make-up, should be visited and critically examined.

C. Building Recommendations for a HRM Municipal Shelter

Table #1: Space Allocations for a projected HRM Municipal Animal Shelter

We have calculated the space requirement using the 2004 municipal animal handling statistics provided by the NS SPCA and have considered that some form of cat regulation will be included in any updated Animal Care & Control By-law. The HRM Municipal Shelter Model is based on a per diem ability to shelter 37 dogs and 67 cats. However, In order to provide ease of cleaning for kennel staff, particularly when the facility is operating at maximum capacity, an additional 3 dog kennels and a total of fourteen racks with six cages each (total of 84 cages) are recommended.

Requirement	Area Identification	Area Size	Area sq. ft.	Total sq. ft.
HOLDING AREAS				
2	Cat Rooms (*1)	15x20	300	600
3	Dog Rooms (*2)	16x25	400	1200
2	Cat Isolation Wards (*3)	14x9	126	252
2	Dog Isolation Wards (*4)	16x12	192	384
1	Misc. Animal Holding Room (*5)	10x8	80	80
SUB-TOTAL				2,516 sq. ft.

Enforcement Space				
1	Supervisor's Office	16x11	176	176
8	Officer Cubicles	6x6	36	288
3	Dispatcher Cubicles	8x8	64	192
2	Administrative Support Cubicles	8x8	64	128
			SUB-TOTAL	784 sq. ft.
ANCILLARY AREAS				
1	Supervisor's Office	16x11	176	176
3	Shelter Staff Cubicles	6X6	36	108
2	Staff Change Room/Lockers/Showers/Washrooms	16x23	368	736
2	Reception/ Receiving Area	16x24	384	768
2	Interview Rooms	10X8	80	160
1	Lunch/Kitchen Area for Staff	10X20	200	200
1	Laundry Room	10X10	100	100
1	Storage Room	16x12	192	192
1	Equipment Sanitation Area	10X10	100	100
1	Food Preparation Area	11x9	99	99
1	Food Storage Room	11x9	99	99
1	Record Storage	11x9	99	99
1	Treatment/Euthanasia Room	10x8	80	80
1	Wash-up Area (*6)	10x12	120	120
1	Freezer Room	10x8	80	80
1	Meeting/Training Room	10x10	100	100
2	Public Washrooms (Handicap accessible)	8x12	96	192
1	Vehicle Unloading Bay (*7)	15x20	300	300
1	Mechanical Room	9x10	90	90
			SUB-TOTAL	3,799 sq. ft.
Hall ways 20% of total area (7,099 x 20%)				1,420 sq. ft.
TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE				8,519 sq. ft.

- Explanatory Notes:**
- (*1) Two rooms allows for separation of stray cats from adoption cats. As well, such separation reduces the possibility of a significant disease outbreak spreading to all cats.
 - (*2) The same principle as (*1) applies to dogs. As well, noise concerns are more easily addressed by placing fewer dogs in each room. Larger rooms also have more echo characteristics.

- (*3) One room would be used to house sick cats, the other would be used to house apparently healthy cats that are either required to be held for rabies observation because they have bitten, or for other legal reasons.
- (*4) The same principle as (*3)
- (*5) This room is identified for housing of other domestic animals, like domestic rabbits, gerbils, rats, mice, canaries etc., which appear at shelters with great regularity.
- (*6) The wash-up area is used to clean cat racks, litter boxes, and food and water dishes. As little cage-cleaning as possible should be done in rooms housing animals as it can contribute significantly to the spread of disease, and the noise further stresses the animals.
- (*7) This is the animal receiving area for enforcement staff. We recommend that it be an enclosed vehicle bay so that animals which may escape when being unloaded are still confined within the building. The public would bring their animals to the reception area listed above.

Table #2 Capital Budget for construction of a HRM Municipal Animal Centre

This table contains our projected Capital Budget for construction of an HRM Municipal Animal Centre. Square footage costs have been projected by an Architect experienced in shelter design and have been adjusted to reflect local costing in the Halifax Region.

TOPIC	COMMENT	COST
Animal Holding Areas	2,516 sq. ft @ \$225	566,100
Enforcement Space	784 sq. ft. @ \$150	117,600
Ancillary Space	3,799 sq. ft @ \$150	569,850
Hall Ways	1,420 sq. ft. @ \$150	213,000
HVAC System	18 Air Changes/hr. + Heat recovery	Included
Architect Fee	(*9)	Included
Contingency	(*10)	Included
SUB-TOTAL		\$1,466,550
START UP COSTS OUTSIDE OF CONSTRUCTION COSTS		
Dog Kennels	40 @ \$3,000 (*11)	Included Above
Cat Caging (Racks)	14 @ \$3,300 (*12)	46,200
Security	(*13)	7,500
IT Requirements	(*14)	7,000
Pressure Washer	1 @ \$2,600	2,600
Service Carts	2 @ \$200 (*15)	400
Freezer (Upright)	1 @ \$4,000	4,000
Clippers	1 @ \$100	100

Treatment Table	1 @ \$950	950
Appliances (Fridge/Compact Fridge)	1 @ \$600 / 1 @ \$225	825
Bowls & Litter Trays	150 @ \$10 (*16)	1,500
Office Furniture/Lockers etc.	Lockers - 16 @ \$100 = 1,600 Office Furniture - 2 @ \$2,500 = \$5,000 Cubicles - 14 @ \$2,700 = \$37,800 Interview Room Tables - 2 @ \$370 = \$740 Lunch room Table - 1 @ \$370 = \$740 Tack Chairs - 16 @ \$200 = \$3,200 Guest Chairs - 30 @ \$150 = \$4,500 Lunch Room Chairs - 10 @ \$70 = \$700 Contingency (For incidental additions that may have been missed) - \$5,000	59,280
Signage		5,000
Sound Baffling		3,000
Washers and Dryers	1 Washer and 1 Dryer @ \$750.00	1,500
Fencing	(*17)	1,500
	SUB-TOTAL	\$141,355
	GRAND TOTAL	\$1,607,905

- Explanatory Notes:
- (*8) Percentage of heat recovered would be dependant upon unit selected in consultation with mechanical engineers.
 - (*9) We used a rate of 6.5 to 7% ,which would seem appropriate for a building of this projected cost, but may need to be adjusted to reflect Halifax conditions.
 - (*10) We used a contingency of 10%, but may need to be adjusted to reflect Halifax conditions.
 - (*11) See Introductory Comment for Table #1
 - (*12) See Introductory Comment for Table #1
 - (*13) This includes card access readers to limit access to the building to staff outside of public hours which has proven to work more effectively than keys. It limits time of access, records access and can quickly deny access when an employee leaves your employ. Additionally, readers are located to prevent public access to lunch and locker rooms for staff security, treatment/euthanasia room for security of drugs, to prevent access to dog and cat isolation rooms to limit disease transmission to the rest of the building and reduce liability where the public may be bitten by animals under rabies observation. Additionally, motion detectors may be required in areas where animals are separated from the detectors by solid or glass walls, as well door and window contacts will be required. Video cameras in the dog and cat areas and a quad monitor in receiving to provide security in the rooms without staff constantly having to escort viewers. Further the costs would provide for the installation of a public address system which is very useful to communicate with staff.
 - (*14) We only estimated the location of a junction box in the facility, network cable to the various computer work station locations (now is the time to locate where there may be need for additional drops in the future) and a fiber connection to your network.)

- (*15) These are usually *Rubber Maid* carts with an upper and lower shelf and used to move litter trays, food etc. about the facility.
- (*16) We have found that it is much cheaper and the product better, if food and water are provided in stainless steel serving bowls, and chaffing dishes are used for litter trays. These are available through restaurant supply and the market is more competitive. Note that cat feeding and water bowls are included in the cost for cat racks.
- (*17) Fencing is only recommended in areas where security is required - primarily near staff parking and vehicle access to the unloading bay. We are opposed to fencing around the entire exterior of an animal shelter, as it presents a very negative "animal jail" image of the facility and operation.

Table #3 Operating Budget

Program Option: Both animal sheltering and all field services are delivered by HRM staff from a municipal animal centre owned and operated by the HRM.

This Table contains our projected Operating Budget for a complete HRM animal care and control service program that includes both, the operation of a municipal animal shelter and the delivery of By-law enforcement services. Our projections are based on documentation provided by either the HRM or the NS SPCA. Where no information was available, we have projected costs and service requirements.

Enforcement Staff

Determining the optimum number of Enforcement Staff remains a difficult task for animal service agencies. The service spectrum can vary significantly, since it is dependent upon the management style and philosophies of senior management and local government, and the expectations of the community.

One of the profession's accepted models is to look at the number of staff dedicated to field activities relative to the number of human population served. The *National Animal Control Association* recommends that the average number of enforcement staff should be one officer for every 16,000 to 18,000 persons in order to provide an all-encompassing, effective and timely field service. Few agencies, government or private, are able to provide that level of service. As an example, in the City of Toronto, where the service level is one officer for approximately 70,000 persons, the City frequently is unable to respond to "nuisance" complaints such as *failing to clean offences or dogs off-leash in parks* in a timely manner.

We recommend that the Halifax Regional Municipality consider using a ratio of one officer per 50,000 human population. Considering an HRM population of 360,000, we recommend that 8 FTEs be assigned to enforcement services. This staffing level accounts for allowances such as after-hours on-call services and includes time allowances for vacation, sick time and court time.

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ITEM	DETAIL	TOTAL
ENFORCEMENT EXPENSES		
Salaries		
Salary - Animal Care & Control Officers - Supervisor	8 @ \$14.00/hr. X 1,820 hrs = \$203,840 1 @ \$16.00/hr. X 1,820/hr. = \$29,120	232,960
Salary - Dispatch & Reception (9AM - 9PM) (911 after hours)	3 @ \$11.00/hr. X 1,820 hrs	60,060
Administrative Support (SOT Administration, Adjudication, Education, Data Management, etc.)	2 @ \$19.00/hr. X 1,820 hrs.	69,160
Overtime	1,000hrs. @ \$14.00/hr.	14,000
Benefits	Salaries x 22% (\$376,180 x 22%)	82,760
SUB-TOTAL		\$ 458,940
Supplies		
Vehicle equipment Feed, bowls, toys, blankets, towels, leaches, collars, muzzles, cleaning supplies, disinfectants, cat graspers, catch poles, protective gear, vehicle cages and traps, stretchers, first aid kits, safety gear, fire extinguishers, bolt cutters, shovels, tools, flashlights, etc.	Equipment for 6 vehicles @ \$3,000	18,000
Uniforms & protective clothing	Uniforms & footwear 9 @ \$800	7,200
SUB-TOTAL		\$25,200
Services		
Vehicles -lease, operations and maintenance	Assume \$11,500 per vehicle/annum x 6 vehicles	69,000
Radio Communications	Cell phones 9 @ \$700 = \$6,300 Mobiles - \$18,000	24,300
Telephone, Fax, Computers	Telephones - 7 @ \$700 = \$4,900 Toll Free Line - \$300 Fax Line - 1 @ \$700 = \$700 Fax Machine 1 @ \$350 = \$350 Computers - 14 @ \$300 = \$4,200 Printers - 2 @ \$3,000 = \$6,000 Photocopier - 1 @ \$6,600 = \$6,600 Scanner - 1 @ \$160 = \$160 Digital Cameras and accessories - 10 @ \$200 = \$2,000	25,210
Office Supplies, Printing and Postage		10,000
SUB-TOTAL		\$128,510
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$612,649

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REVENUES		
HRM Funding		345,227
Licences	13,495 @ \$15.00	202,423
Summary Offence Tickets	150 @ \$100	15,000
Impound Fees	500 @ \$100	50,000
TOTAL REVENUES		\$612,650
SHELTER EXPENSES		
Salaries		
Salary - Shelter Staff - Supervisor	8 @ \$11.00/hr. X 1,820 hrs = \$160,160 1 @ \$14.00/hr. X 1,820 hrs = \$25,480	185,640
Overtime	Assume 1,000hrs. @ \$11.00	11,000
Benefits	Salaries x 22% (\$196,640 x 22%)	43,260
SUB-TOTAL		\$239,900
Supplies		
Office Supplies, Printing and Postage		3,000
Disinfectants and Chemicals		4,000
Animal Care Supplies		25,000
Feed, litter, bowls, regular and flea shampoo, toys, grooming tools, beds, blankets, towels, leashes, collars, muzzles, cleaning supplies, garbage cans, heat lamps, cages for exotic animals, traps, cat grasper, catch poles, protective gear, stretchers, first aid kits, safety gear, fire extinguishers, shovels, tools, flashlights, etc.		
Uniforms & protective clothing (Kennels)	(Uniforms & footwear @ \$500 X 9)	4,500
Veterinary Care and Related Expenses	Examine and medications - \$20,000 Euthanasia (Dogs) 140 dogs @ \$10.56 = \$1,478.40 (use \$1,478) Euthanasia (Cats) 400 cats @ \$8.64 = \$3,456 Euthanasia (Other) 100 @ \$8.64 = \$864 Spay (Dogs) 120 @ \$112 = \$13,440 (Cats) 400 @ \$70 = \$28,000 Neuter (Dogs) 120 @ \$90 = \$10,800 (Cats) 400 @ \$50 = \$20,000	98,038
SUB-TOTAL		\$134,538

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SERVICES		
Animal Disposal	640 animals @ \$20	12800
Building Housing Costs power, water, heat, sewer, snow removal, maintenance	Based on 8,519sq. ft @ \$5.00 sq.ft/per annum	42595
Telephone, Fax, Computers	Supervisor Cell Phone - 1 @ \$700 = \$700 Telephones - 5 @ \$700 = \$6,300 Fax Line - 7 @ \$700 = \$700 Fax Machine - 1 @ \$350 = \$350 Computers - 9 @ \$300 = \$2,700 Printers - 2 @ \$3,000 = \$6,000 Photocopier - 1 @ \$6,600 = \$6,600 Scanner - 1 @ \$160 = \$160	23510
Pest Control		1500
Refuse Collection		2500
SUB-TOTAL		\$82,105
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$456,543
REVENUES		
HRM Funding		152,557
Licenses	7,449 @ \$15.00	111,736
Adoption Fees	1,640 @ \$104	170,000
Boarding Fees	800 @ \$25	20,000
Veterinary Fees		2,250
TOTAL REVENUES		\$456,543

TOTAL ENFORCEMENT EXPENSES	612,650
TOTAL SHELTER EXPENSES	456543
TOTAL ALL EXPENSES	\$1,069,193

Note: Current expenditures related to the licensing program in Financial Services and Parks Patrol in Real Properties and Asset Management Services are not included in the aforementioned budget.

RESOURCES/READING

READING #1

What makes an effective Animal Control Officer ?

By James H. Bandow
Senior Consultant
James H. Bandow & Associates

About 30 years ago an effective animal control officer was an individual who could keep up with a running dog, jump fences in a single bound, and wrestle straying dogs to the ground. Those were the qualities we were looking for in an ACO when animal control was "dog catching," and when rounding up packs of stray dogs was the order of the day.

In those days, all captured dogs were taken to pounds and shelters, and unfortunately, most of them never left those facilities alive. Those roundups and the high destruction rate should have reduced the number of strays, but it did not. Instead of redeeming their captured pets from the shelters, many owners simply got new ones. But a new dog did not change an irresponsible owner's behaviour. So it was only a question of time before the new dog was also on the streets and the cycle started all over again.

Next came the period of time when the ideal Animal Control Officer was six feet tall, had a stern look, and could not be easily intimidated. That was the time when we switched from "chasing dogs to chasing owners." Rather than apprehending stray dogs, we were now chasing them home whenever possible and issuing tickets and summonses to their owners. The thrust was on penalizing irresponsible owners. After all, hitting owners in the pocket book would soon change their attitude. Unfortunately this strategy did not work either. Although fewer dogs were taken to shelters compared to the time when they were merely rounded up, redemption rates did not improve significantly. Once owners realized that they not only had to pay pound fees but were also facing penalties for letting their animal run at large, many of them still did not redeem their dogs from shelters, but got new ones instead.

It also became evident that the public did not appreciate being "bossed around by someone in a uniform," especially by someone who was still seen as the "dog catcher."

It became apparent that another strategy was needed. Some Animal Control Officers appeared to have more success than some others in getting dog owners to change irresponsible behaviours. Those officers did not accomplish this with tickets or summonses or by intimidating dog owners, but by persuading those who did not act responsibly that it

was in their own and in their dogs' interests to comply with the rules and expectations. Needless to say, not every ACO who was originally hired to chase and capture dogs, or who was hired to ticket or summons offenders to court, felt comfortable becoming an *educator*. To persuade pet owners to voluntarily comply with animal care and control regulations requires that an animal control officer have the skills to get pet owners' cooperation. Some individuals working as ACOs felt uncomfortable with this new approach. Others did not have the "people skills" needed, and were not interested to acquire them, and therefore left the field.

The attitude of the public toward an animal control agency or toward its animal control officers is influenced by their prejudices, fears, their own motives, interests or views. Much therefore depends on the personal qualities and skills of an ACO, particularly on his/her ability to deal with individuals from different backgrounds, or with individuals who have different customs that may include a different view about the role and/or uses of animals.

Of course, many applicants for animal control officer positions are not necessarily endowed with magnetic or dynamic personalities. However, that is not to say that ACO's who do not have those qualities cannot function effectively, or don't have latent qualities that can be encouraged or developed.

Although opinions tend to vary among animal control and shelter managers which qualities or skills are necessary or desirable for individuals who want to become effective ACOs, I consider the following five characteristics or skills at the top of my list:

1. GOOD EVEN TEMPERAMENT

I consider a good even temperament at or near the top of desirable qualities. An ACO is frequently placed in situations where it is easy to lose one's temper or self control. When that happens, things may be said or done that would not happen under *normal* circumstances and this inevitably results in complaints to the agency and in sorrow and regret. Inability to control one's temper clouds part of the brain and habitually exercised controls go out the window. The problem of course is that bad temper is infectious and begets bad temper, which in turn frequently tends to raise the level of conflict. Just watch that smile disappear from a person's face when a curt, angry answer is given. Although everyone can find themselves in situations where they are tempted to let their feelings get the better of them, for an ACO to be effective s/he needs to have the ability to remain even tempered.

It is understandable, when an ACO is asked the same tedious, obvious question a hundred times or more during a shift, or when an ACO has just been nipped by a supposedly *nice and friendly animal*, or when someone tells an ACO that s/he is just a *dog catcher*, or when an ACO realizes that a particular animal owner does not care about the fact that the

ACO is trying to be helpful and instead unleashes a string of obscenities, that it is difficult to remain cool, calm and collected. It takes a lot of self-control to choke back hot words, yet an effective ACO must be able to do it and still appear to be in control of a situation.

Of course, just like *bad* temper is infectious, so is *good* temper. The challenge for any ACO who is confronted by an inconsiderate, foulmouthed, aggressive individual, is to have that individual accept the ACO as a professional and to have the individual apologize for his/her improper behaviour or inconsiderate words when all is said and done. That requires a good temperament.

2. BEING TACTFUL

There are different opinions about tact and what tact is. While some say that it is the ability to say the *right things* at the *right time*, others insist that it is the ability of *not saying the wrong thing at the wrong time*, and still others have their own version of what tact is. All are probably correct.

Unlike temperament, which makes up one's personality, and which one can only learn to control, tact is a quality that can be acquired.

Tact could be described as *the ability to get things done without ruffling feathers*. It has been suggested that it isn't so much what a person does, but the way s/he does it. Individuals who have mastered that skill are the people of whom it is frequently said that *they can get away with murder*.

The rules, if it is possible to formulate any, appear to be largely negative and begin with the word *don't*. 'Don't give smart answers', 'don't be sarcastic', 'don't make personal remarks', 'don't be overbearing', are just some of them.

An individual who always puts his/her foot in the mouth or who always thoughtlessly tramples on everyone's *pet corn* is considered tactless, and is not the kind of individual agencies would want representing them.

3. MATURITY

Maturity is a person's ability to see the *big picture*. At times this means putting up with *short term pain for long term gain*. Maturity is the ability to stick with an issue or a situation until it is finished or has been resolved. It means being able to defer to other people, to circumstances and to time. It means being there when it counts and coming through in the crunches.

People who lack maturity break promises, substitute excuses for performance and often

can not be counted on. They frequently show up late or not at all, are often confused and disorganized, they are not considered dependable or reliable and lack self discipline. Their lives are frequently mazes of unfinished business.

Maturity is doing what is expected and keeping one's word. Maturity is the ability to make a decision and then stick with it, riding out whatever storm may follow. This requires the courage to stand up for one's convictions. Mature persons refuse to settle for mediocrity. They would rather aim high and miss the mark than aim low and make it. This is the kind of quality that makes an ACO an outstanding ambassador for any animal control agency.

4. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

Any individual working as an ACO must develop the quality of conscientiousness. An ACO must be thorough and see an issue or a job through right to the end no matter how much effort, time and trouble it takes, even though, when all is over and done, there is no profit, no glory, and often no recognition in it for the ACO.

5. THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Although an Animal Control Officer must still be able to capture and handle animals, that ability is no longer the primary skill of an effective Animal Control Officer. One of the main functions of today's ACO is to inform, to educate, and to solve problems. This recognizes that much of an ACO's time is spent with people rather than with animals and that considerable time is spent trying to persuade people to change unacceptable behaviours. This requires good communication and interpersonal skills. Of course, communication is much more than simply giving instructions or expressing an opinion. Communication is a broad concept that includes a variety of roles which we assume when we interact with others as we receive (listen) or send (speak and write) information.

Effective communication skills are learned, just like driving a car is learned. How well an individual communicates depends on how well s/he has been taught. It is said that *practice makes perfect*. However, all the practice in the world is of little value unless the *right* things are practiced.

Most dog owners, just like most other people, will not be intimidated or threatened with fines, nor will they jump just because an ACO says so. An officer who has developed the ability to persuade an irresponsible animal owner to become responsible is essential to the management of a successful animal control agency.

CONCLUSION

I have discussed only five of a number of qualities and skills which I believe to be essential

for an Animal Control Officer to be effective. There are others of course, some essential, all desirable, which an individual must develop if s/he wants to be successful as an ACO. Some of these are: integrity, moral courage, dignity, smartness, patience, and calmness.

The public has come to expect high standards from individuals in public service and they will be surprised by and will no longer tolerate individuals who are bad tempered, sarcastic or cynical.

READING #2

The issue: Biting Dogs

Jim Bandow
James H. Bandow & Associates
Consultants to the Animal Care and Control Field

Every day, people get bitten by dogs, and at least half of dog bite victims are young children, usually less than 10 years of age.

There is no question that aggression in dogs is the most serious dog behavior problem that confronts many communities today. Yet, this problem is largely preventable if dog owners have a better understanding of the factors that influence the development of aggressive behavior.

In an effort to curtail dog bite incidents, some municipalities have enacted By-laws that ban certain breeds. Frequently such legislation is a knee-jerk reaction in direct response to a specific incident and is intended to show the public that the municipality is "doing something about the problem." Breeds, commonly included in such bans are: Rottweilers, Staffordshire Terriers and Pit-bulls.

While some types of dogs may not be the most suitable in a high-density urban environment, it has been demonstrated that breed bans generally don't work for a variety of reasons, including:

- They indiscriminately target all dogs of a particular breed - the innocent as well as the guilty - regardless of their disposition;
- They tend to create "witch hunts." Many people don't have sufficient knowledge and experience about dog breeds. (We have conducted "man-in-the-street" interviews in the past and found that most non-dog owners could not identify a Pit-bull. They commonly identified English Bull Terriers and Boxers as Pit-bulls);
- They are difficult - in some cases impossible - to enforce, particularly since cross-breeds of banned breeds are difficult to identify correctly;
- They do not end the keeping or use of dogs that have a propensity for aggressiveness by those who want to own such dogs. There are a number of other breeds beyond the above list, which are commonly excluded from breed bans, but which can be trained to be very aggressive;
- They do not address the much more significant threat from ill-tempered, poorly bred, or poorly-socialized dogs of a variety of breeds, or cross-breeds, that are often referred to as "family dogs."
- Unless enacted in a large geographic area, like the entire province, bans in randomly selected municipalities do not make sense.

Some municipalities have opted to require owners of some breeds to show proof that they carry sufficient insurance specifically related to damages caused by dogs.

While responsible owners will generally comply with such demands, others will subsequently ignore the licensing requirements altogether and may need to be chased down by municipal staff. Others may no longer register their Pitbulls as "Pitbulls" but instead as "Boxes Cross-breeds" or variety of similar looking breeds or crosses.

My observations are based on more than 30 years of practical experience in the animal care and control field, including 10 years of management of the Animal Control Services for the City of Toronto prior to amalgamation.

In my capacity of General Manager of Animal Control for the former City of Toronto, I reported to the Toronto Medical Officer of Health, since Animal Control Services in Toronto was a division of the Toronto Department of Public Health. During that time, Public Health Inspectors investigated dog bites where humans were the victims and Animal Control Officers investigated bites where the victims were other animals. This gave me direct access to the Department's bite investigation reports.

In addition, I served as the sole member of the *Animal Control Appeal Tribunal* for nearly 10 years. In that capacity I conducted monthly Public Hearings under the *Ontario Statutory Powers Procedures Act*, adjudicating appeals to have Dog Muzzle Orders, that had been issued under a Toronto Municipal By-law, revoked. During that time I adjudicated more than 2,000 such appeals. This has given me a first-hand opportunity to learn which dogs bite, and why.

Factors influencing aggression

Genetic and hereditary factors play a major role in aggression. Protective breeds such as Dobermans, Akitas, and Rottweilers are expected to be more aggressive than Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers. Feisty terriers were bred to kill small game and they still retain this characteristic. Inbreeding can create unstable temperaments and hormones can contribute to aggressive tendencies in intact male dogs. As well, living conditions, lack of socialization, excessive punishment, being attacked or frightened by an aggressive dog, being spoiled or given too much unwarranted praise by owners, being isolated from human contact, being exposed to frequent teasing by children, or aggravation from joggers can also influence aggression.

Obviously dogs are not people. They have a 'pack order' that determines their social rank, a pack order that is established and maintained by body language. When dogs live with people, they look at humans as members of the pack and try to establish their place in the social order by challenging the more submissive family members, particularly the children. If dogs display a dominant gesture such as growling while guarding the food dish and they are not corrected for this behavior they are establishing dominance to build on with any or all family members.

Owners often misunderstand the progression of behaviors and blame the dogs for biting "for no reason." These dogs are then frequently sold or "given away to a good home," without anything being said about the dog's behavior, so it is not surprising that they frequently re-offend. Unfortunately, biting animals frequently go from home to home, often leading a life of fear and severe inhumane punishment, while continuing as a potential public threat.

Aggression prevention

The first rule for preventing human/dog problems is to match the right breed to the right owner. In other words, the Rottweiler or Akita is neither a suitable breed for a meek or mild owner, nor for the 'macho' owner who is looking for a tough, aggressive dog. And the Irish Setter, does not fit sedentary lifestyles, and the Shetland Sheepdog and the Chihuahua do not like boisterous, rowdy children, etc. Likewise, the litter bully of most breeds will take over the home of a submissive owner, and conversely the shy dog needs extra attention to adjust to an active household.

Aggression prevention includes early socialization. Dogs should be taught to take food without grabbing or lunging. They should not be allowed to chase children or joggers, jump on people, mount legs, or growl for any reason. They should never receive or be part of rough, aggressive play such as hand-fighting, wrestling, or tug-of-war games. They should never be physically punished for aggressive behavior; instead, they should be denied the rewards of aggression, restrained from repeating the infraction, and taught alternative behavior.

Dogs should not be left unsupervised with children, especially children who do not live in the same household. Children should be taught to use the basic obedience commands so they can exert some control over the pet. Unfortunately, once a dog has reached dominant status, punishment cannot be used to correct a dominant aggressive dog! Aggressive dogs can be retrained under the right circumstances. A trainer may make some inroads in changing behaviour and the dog may respond to that person out of fear, but it is unlikely that it will ever be trustworthy around other people or children and may bite if provoked. The most that may be accomplished is to reduce the frequency and severity of the aggressive acts.

Breed bans won't stop dog bites, and By-laws no matter how well, intended, even if they could be rigorously enforced, will not prevent dog attacks or bites.

Since dog ownership is not a right, any dog owner who permits or encourages his or her dog to attack or bite a person or domestic animal without provocation should be subject to appropriate penalties that should include surrender of the dog, stiff fines, and loss of privileges such as being permitted to walk their dog in public, or requiring that the dog is always muzzled when off the owner's property.

However, the most effective municipal strategies for preventing dog bites are:

- An aggressive program of public outreach that provides information on breed selection and dog behaviour;
- A strategy that encourages owners to participate in programs such as obedience training to help integrate their dogs into the community; and
- A program in schools that teaches youngsters how to behave around dogs generally and specifically when confronted by aggressive dogs.

Such pre-emptive programs will be more effective if done in cooperation with animal welfare groups, breed clubs, the veterinary community and other interested dog owner groups.

READING #3

It's time to establish some basic rules about cat ownership

by Jim Bandow

James H. Bandow & Associates

Consultants to the Animal Care and Control Field

(From Vol. 15 No. 1 (2003) of THE AASAO JOURNAL)

Many animal service agencies in Ontario have Mission Statements that clearly identifies equal concern for the health and safety of both humans and animals.

Although animal care and control services traditionally incorporate a significant enforcement component, such enforcement works most effectively when combined with education and community involvement. Animal Service Agencies need therefore to be committed to the promotion of responsible pet ownership concepts through community outreach, working with like-minded groups, and agencies, and through one-on-one encounters with residents. Recognizing that fines have, at best, limited impact on changing irresponsible behaviours, legal action should always be considered as a last resort.

And while animal care and control legislation does provide the opportunity to bring offenders before the courts, such legislation should be viewed primarily as "formalized community expectations" which establish the parameters for those owning pets.

Since animal issues tend to transcend geographic boundaries, it is important that a working relationship and collective problem solving exists between agencies that share common political borders. To that end, agencies should strive toward animal care and control legislation which is similar in make-up but which reflects community expectations.

Given the number and types of cat-related complaints and comments from the public, it is clear that issues needing closer examination are the rules and regulations about cat ownership. Statistical sheltering facts in most agencies will unquestionably reveal that a closer look at cat issues must be a priority.

Clearly, the differences between dogs and cats are dramatic. No one can possibly argue the fact that redemption rates for cats are appallingly low and that euthanasia rates are unacceptably high. Not only do those numbers represent a tragic impact on shelter cats, there are also economic consequences. While most redeemed dogs leave the animal centres within 48 hrs. - which keeps sheltering costs down, all unredeemed cats, - and that is most of them - need to be sheltered for the full redemption period.

Many attempts have been made during the past 25 years, through information and information outreach programs, to promote more responsible behaviour by cat owners, yet there has been little change in cat owners' attitudes or in cat redemption rates.

Why are there such differences between dog and cat statistics, and why is there an apparent public perception that cats do not require the same ownership responsibilities which are generally accepted by dog owners?

It wasn't always that way for dog owners either. We need to remind ourselves that 30 years ago dog statistics were only marginally better than today's cat statistics.

Working in Hamilton at the time, I recall sending staff on "roundups" of straying packs of dogs. Most of those dogs were neither redeemed nor adopted. However, we soon recognized that impounding and euthanising those dogs did not reduce the problem, in fact, it perpetuated it by creating a market for more.

Even when we started to chase owners, and routinely issued offenders with violation tickets, improvements were only marginal. It wasn't until we developed legislation-based education and outreach programs that focussed on identification and return-to-owner strategies, and on rewarding people through licence differentials for doing "the right thing," that we started to see improvements in redemption rates.

This strategy has been of benefit to both dogs and dog owners alike. Consider, for example, that many municipalities in Ontario now return more than 60% of impounded and straying dogs to their owners, and in some municipalities, more than one-third of all straying dogs, which could be identified either by microchip, or by a licence affixed, were returned home under a "free ride home" program.

If we are to improve the current dismal return-to-owner rates of stray cats, we need to start where we know there can be tangible results.

Given our experience with dogs, the logical place to start is with a registry of known cats, and that means having owners of cats register their animals with their municipality. Nothing else has so far been effective in improving redemption and realistically reducing euthanasia rates. While all shelters, including those commonly referred to derogatorily as "pounds," would like to be "no-kill" shelters, this is obviously unrealistic. If every agency today proclaimed to be a "no-kill" shelter, we would condemn many cats to lives far worth than humane euthanasia, to say nothing of the impact on communities.

No, I don't believe that life, no matter what, is preferable. "No-kill" shelters only work if there is another place where cats can be taken.

In light of past failures by cat owners to voluntarily take greater responsibilities for their animals, we must consider some new directions. They may not be perfect, and they may not have immediate impact, but from my perspective the Status quo is unacceptable and I have not seen the critics come up with anything but criticism.

I believe that, while we must accommodate for the obvious differences between cats and dogs, they should be treated equally when it comes to ownership expectations, and that includes identification and central registration.

Although some cat owners suggest that registration requirement is just another way for a municipality to grab tax dollars, the focus of such program needs to be on owner identification and on encouraging permanent identification of cats. We need to start with owned cats while we look for ways of dealing with feral ones.

Although I recognize that it is not politically palatable, I believe that providing cat registration without fees would have maximum impact.

On the other hand, municipalities which charge for cat registrations, should consider channelling revenues from cat registrations into cat sterilization and owner education programs. In other words, money collected from cat owners for cat registration should be reinvested in programs that will benefit cats.

Animal service agency records show that complaints about nuisance problems caused by cats are increasing. To deal with those, By-laws might be considered that include provisions to deal with cats that trespass on private property. I would emphasize however, that such provision should only be intended for use on private property. There is no suggestion that there should be a provision to chase or impound straying cats on public property.

Many cat owners believe that cats should have the right to roam, and so they should! The question is whether they should have the right to roam unrestricted.

In urban municipalities such roaming should be restricted to the cat owners' property. Neighbours should not have to put up with uninvited cats using children's sand boxes and neighbourhood gardens as their toilet, or to have them spray on other people's property.

Like dog owners, cat owners need to accept that they have similar responsibilities to their animals and to the community. Recommended inclusion of registration and trespass provisions in municipal By-laws will simply formalize public expectations.

Although cat control is no doubt a controversial issue, the time has come for all municipalities to take a serious look at this issue. Perhaps 20 years from now we will than be able to look back to 2002 as the year when we took the initial steps that resulted in improved redemption and reduced euthanasia rates of straying cats.

I realize that it's a long road. Not only are some segments of the public opposed to anything that does not preserve the Status-quo when it comes to cat ownership, but politicians, cat owner groups as well as some animal welfare groups and humane societies are opposed to cat regulations.

READING #4

Will breed-specific legislation reduce dog bites ?

by James H. Bandow
General Manager, Animal Control Services
Department of Public Health
City of Toronto

(Originally published in Volume 8, No. 1 of THE AASAO JOURNAL)

A study by University of Washington researchers, which was recently published in *PEDIATRICS*, the publication of the American Academy of Pediatrics, found that children are more often bitten by their own dogs or those belonging to neighbours than by stray animals.

Of the attacks studied, 21 of the dogs belonged to a neighbour, 13 were from the children's own household, and only three were strays. Three of those attacks were fatal, and one-third of the victims required treatment in an intensive care unit. Children under the age of five faced the greatest risk of being bitten by a dog, and medium and large breeds, including German Shepherds, Shepherd mixes and Rottweilers were the breeds most frequently identified as the biting dogs.

I found similar facts in my own detailed study of dog bites in the City of Toronto. While the University of Washington Study only looked at a small number of children who had been bitten, I did not restrict my study only to children but reviewed all of the 628 animal bites (human victims) reported to the Toronto Department of Public Health in 1993. Although the Toronto study confirmed that young children tend to be victims of more serious bites, they do not make up the majority of victims.

There may have been other bites that were not reported by the victims, but those were probably not serious enough for the victims to seek medical attention.

Of the 628 reported bites 419 (67%) were caused by dogs, 159 (25%) were inflicted by cats, and 50 (8%) represented bites by other animals. My study looks at the dog bites only.

AGE OF BITE VICTIMS:

Since there tends to be a general concern about children being victims of animal bites, I divided bite victims into one adult group over 18 years of age and three groups representing victims under 18 years of age. I found that bite victims fell into the following age categories:

Victims to 6 yrs. old:	8.6% (36)
Victims 7 to 12 yrs. old:	15.0% (63)

Victims 13 to 17 yrs. old: 7.6% (32)
Victims 18 yrs. and older: 68.8% (288)

Those percentages may be surprising, since it is often suggested that children are the most frequent bite victims.

WOUND LOCATION - ALL BITE VICTIMS

When I looked at the location of the bite wounds, I found that most victims were bitten on the hands or arms, although children up to 12 years of age were three times as frequently bitten in the face than bite victims in other age groups.

Bitten on hands and/or arms: 49.8%
Bitten on feet and/or legs: 32.9%
Bitten in face: 10.9%
Bitten on torso: 6.4%

WOUND LOCATION - VICTIMS UP TO 12 YRS OF AGE ONLY

Bitten on hands and/or arms: 33.9%
Bitten on feet and/or legs: 29.6%
Bitten in face: 29.9%
Bitten on torso: 6.6%

The most vulnerable areas for all groups appear to be the arms and hands. This should not come as a surprise since this is the area most frequently reachable by dogs. It should also not come as a surprise that children are more frequently bitten in the face when one considers the size and stature of most youngsters up to 12 years of age and the size of the dogs which are most frequently identified as having bitten.

AGE OF VICTIMS

The records indicated that males of all ages were more likely to get bitten than females. In 1993, 58.2% of human dog bite victims were male and 41.8% were female.

MEDICAL TREATMENT - ALL VICTIMS

One of the concerns, particularly with younger bite victims is the severity of the bite. Although the records I checked did not include complete medical histories, they did indicate the following general type of treatment received by dog bite victims:

No treatment: 4.6%
Wound cleaned only: 29.4%
Wound cleaned and antibiotics given: 12.6%
Wound cleaned, tetanus inoculation: 22.7%
Stitches required: 9.5%

Wound cleaned and rabies vaccine: 1.2%

MEDICAL TREATMENT - VICTIMS TO 12 YRS OF AGE ONLY

No treatment:	16.9%
Wound cleaned only:	46.7%
Wound cleaned, antibiotics given:	9.1%
Wound cleaned, tetanus inoculation:	7.8%
Stitches required:	19.5%
Wound cleaned, rabies vaccine:	0.0%

The University of Washington Study, referred to earlier, suggested that children are more likely to be bitten by their own dog or a dog belonging to a neighbour rather than a stray or unknown dog. My study came up with the same results. Of the 99 children under 12 years of age bitten by a dog in Toronto, 85% knew the dog that bit them.

REASONS GIVEN WHY DOG BIT

Next I looked at the reasons given by victims under 12 years of age, or by their parents or custodians, why the victims had been bitten. These were the reasons given:

Play with owned/ known dog:	36.4%
Disturbing dog while eating:	26.0%
Trying to pet dog:	11.7%
Victim trespassing on dog property:	6.5%
Bitten by uncontrolled dog on public property:	6.5%
All other reasons given:	12.9%

This information is of particular significance for individuals or agencies which are providing information and education programs in schools and for community groups. It would appear that at least 80% of dog bites in young children are preventable. In response to this information, Toronto Animal Control Services has changed the focus of its school program from a program with a general theme of responsible pet ownership to a specific program on bite prevention.

WHERE BITES OCCURRED

58% of all dog bites occurred either on a dog owner's property or on some other private property where the biting dog was either visiting with its owner, or where it was being kept on behalf of the owner. The other 42% occurred on public property.

BITES CAUSED BY UNCONTROLLED DOGS

Of the 179 dog bites which occurred on public property 123 (69%) occurred while the biting dog was under leash control and only 56 bites (31%) were inflicted by uncontrolled dogs or dogs at-large. Some of those bites occurred while victims were trying to break up fights between their own dog and another dog or between two dogs, unknown to them.

Following then is a summary of what my study has revealed about dog bite victims:

Young victims under 18 years of age:

1. Children under 18 years of age represented less than one third of all reported dog bite victims.
2. Because of their size and the way they behave around dogs, children were more frequently bitten in the face, and those injuries frequently required stitches.
3. Most (85% in 1993) of dog bite victims under 12 years of age were bitten either by their own dog or by a dog they knew.
4. Most children who were bitten on the property where the biting dog lived, were either the dog owners' children, or children of the dog owners' relatives or friends, or friends of the dog owners' children.
5. Nearly 75% of all children were bitten as a result of play activity with the biting dog, or as a result of teasing or trying to pet a dog.
6. In 1993, only 6.5% of the children under 12 years were bitten by an uncontrolled dog on public property.

Adult victims

1. Nearly one-half of adult victims were bitten on the arms and/or hands.
2. Adults who were bitten on dog owners' properties were mostly service personnel, mail carriers or delivery persons.

REASONS WHY DOGS BITE

There are three main reasons why dogs bite people:

1. The dog is intentionally or inadvertently provoked;
2. The dog is owned by someone who is ignorant about the characteristics and behaviour of the dog breed and has done nothing to familiarize him/herself with the breed or;
3. The dog is not properly confined, controlled or socialized.

WHICH DOGS BITE MOST OFTEN ?

As soon as a serious dog bite is reported some people immediately know what happened, "it must have been a Pit Bull," and away we go again on another *Ban the Pit Bull* campaign. I remember when we had similar *Ban the Doberman* campaigns about 20 years ago

From time to time certain breeds attract the public's attention and are termed a public menace that warrant special attention. Since the mid 1940's a number of breeds have fallen into such disrepute. In addition to the Pit Bull and the Doberman they have included the Chow-Chow, Rottweiler, German Shepherd and even the St. Bernard.

As part of my review of the 1993 City of Toronto bite reports I also made a list of the breeds of the dogs which had been identified as the biting animals. I compared this with the City of Toronto licence register to determine how frequently those breeds showed up in the licence register.

I wanted to determine which of the breeds bit more frequently than they appeared in the licence register. I will admit that this part of the study is flawed, since it relies on bite victims being able to correctly identify the straying dogs that bit them, and relies on dog owners to correctly identify their dogs at time of registration. The latter is especially important when we deal with dogs that are not registered pure-breeds or with mixed breeds. Owners often see the breed they want to see when they identify their dogs for licensing purposes.

Seven breeds were identified in bite reports disproportionately to the percentage they represented in the licence register. These breeds were: the German Shepherd, Pit Bull Terrier, Rottweiler, Collie, Doberman Pinscher, Great Dane and Poodle. Collectively those seven breeds represented 12.9% of licensed dogs but 27% of the dogs identified as having bitten.

Summary

So how do we deal with biting dogs? To start with, we must remind ourselves that biting is a natural activity of all dogs, and that there is potential for injury. All dog owners must understand this and must be made aware that they are fully responsible for the actions of their dogs. I am not convinced that this is universally understood by dog owners, nor am I satisfied that every dog owner takes the necessary steps to train and socialize their dog. Owners need to be encouraged to actively work at inhibiting biting behaviour when dogs are young. As well, all dogs should be socialized to accept children, regardless of whether or not there are children living with the dog.

Adults without dogs need to learn that dogs don't understand "peoples' rights," and that dogs should not be expected to act differently with different people. Adults also need to understand that young children should never be left alone with a dog (or a cat) without supervision, and that all children should be taught how to behave around dogs, particularly around dogs they don't know.

So long as we have dogs living with us there will be people who get bitten. The most effective way to prevent bites is to encourage dog owners to become knowledgeable about their animals and to train and socialize them so that they can become *good dog neighbours*.

Many municipalities already have By-laws that deal with animal bites, and in Ontario the *Dog Owners Liability Act* has proven to be effective in confining, restraining or disposing of biting or attacking dogs judged to be a definite threat to public health and safety, and when evidence warrants, there is always Section # 221 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Most legislation deals with bites after the fact. If we want to prevent all bites, there is only one sure way and that is to ban all dogs. That is of course as unrealistic as trying to prevent bites by enacting *breed-specific* legislation.

READING #5

OFF-LEASH PARKS THE TORONTO EXPERIENCE

**By Jim Bandow,
Toronto Animal Services**

(Originally published in the AASAO Journal, Vol. 10, No. Summer/Fall 1998)

In Toronto, off-leash parks come in all sizes. In response to requests from the dog-owning public, their numbers have grown from 6 to 21 during the past 5 years.

In the former City of Toronto (which is now part of the new amalgamated City of Toronto) 21 parks have designated off-leash areas. Some of those parks have areas where dogs are permitted off-leash 24 hours per day, while most of them have areas identified with restricted hours for off-leash activities. Most of the off-leash areas are not fenced, while some have partial fencing. The size of parks with off-leash areas ranges from the largest park in the City (High Park) to very small ones that are not much more than one third of a City block (Cawthra Park). In parks that have restricted off-leash hours times for off-leash activities are commonly when most other activities such as ball games have ended and most of the youngsters are no longer in the park.

When I joined the City of Toronto's Animal Control Services, six of the largest parks had identified off-leash areas. Most of those were located in areas of the parks that could be described as "natural areas" of the parks where there were few walks or trails.

PUBLIC DEMANDS FOR OPTIONS

When enforcing leashing requirements in the rest of the City's parks and parkettes animal services staff continually ran into the same conflicts between dog owners and other park users. Dog owners wanted the ability to exercise or play with their dog without the restraint of a leash, while other park users wanted to be certain that they were not being accosted by loose dogs, especially dogs over which owners had little or no control. When we told people about the off-leash areas in the existing locations, we generally got the same response. Those parks were too difficult to get to, especially for those without cars who had to rely on public transport.

FINDING A COMPROMISE

In an effort to find a compromise, we met with the City's Parks Department to look for a compromise solution. We decided to test the off-leash concept in some of the smaller parks, providing there was sufficient support from all park users for such pilot projects. We established a 7-step process for establishing off-leash areas.

1. Area residents interested in an off-leash area for their neighbourhood park should talk with other park users and contact the Parks and Recreation Department and their Ward Councillor.
2. Providing there is sufficient interest, to request that the Ward Councillor hold/chair a community meeting, publicize such meeting, and have representatives from the Parks Department, Animal Services and Community Policing in attendance to provide information.
3. Structure the meeting in a way so that everyone who wants to speak will have an opportunity to do so.
4. At the meeting identify individuals who are interested in participating on an Ad-Hoc Steering Committee and to make sure that such committee has representation from all park user groups.
5. Have the Ad-Hoc Steering Committee develop an off-leash proposal, and if needed either circulate the proposal to park users or hold another community meeting to receive feedback on the proposal.
6. Submit the proposal to the ward Councillor as a request.
7. Upon approval post the necessary signs and publicize the off-leash area to dog walkers in the park.

We have encouraged steering committees to remain functioning or to form local dog owners/walkers groups that can provide liaison with our agency. Once an off-leash area was approved, animal service officers did some "soft enforcement," raising awareness and encouraging compliance. Using this process, 15 additional parks were provided with off-leash areas between 1992 and 1997.

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE OFF-LEASH AREAS?

I believe that many residents benefit from animal companionship because animals provide companionship and social and recreational activity, and in some cases security. Since the City of Toronto has a very high percentage of multi-family dwellings with little or no outside space, and since it is important for dogs to be socialized with people and other animals to minimize conflicts it is important that there be areas that provide areas for socializing.

Permitting dogs to roam unleashed in City parks is a controversial issue, and this can become a very contentious issue when a park is small and park use is intense. However parks, where dog owners routinely socialize, have been shown to deter criminal activity in those parks. We have generally found that most dog walkers are on their best behaviour when a new off-leash area is first established. Since all new off-leash areas will be approved as pilot projects only, everyone who is interested in an off-leash area is anxious to make the project work.

However, our experience has also shown that in some parks things start to slacken off within a few months. The first thing that usually happens is that the off-leash area starts to expand. Some dog walkers become a little less concerned about their dogs straying from the off-leash area or that

their dogs leave their “deposits” outside the designated areas. Other problems that have been identified include:

- some dogs are released from their leash as soon as they are in the park before they reach the designated off-leash area;
- some dog owners behave as if off-leash areas are for the use of dog walkers only;
- professional dog walkers with up to 10 dogs in tow take over an off-leash area;
- concentrated use by dogs results in park damage.

HOW CAN THE CONCEPT OF OFF-LEASH AREAS BE IMPROVED?

To start with, let me reaffirm that I am still solidly committed to off-leash areas. I still believe that they provide dog owners with an excellent opportunity to socialize their dogs and that they make leashing enforcement in other areas of such parks more effective. In response to what we have learned, the City has developed a new 9-step process for developing off-leash areas in public parks. These are:

1. *Initial proposal request*

Area residents who are interested in an off-leash area for their neighbourhood should contact the Parks and Recreation Division and their Ward Councillor.

2. *Research of the proposal*

Parks and Recreation will review each site against the established guidelines, which follow, in consultation with the Public Health Division - Animal Services. If the proposal does not meet the guidelines, the proponents will be advised of the deficiencies.

3. *Community Input*

The Parks and Recreation Division will participate with the Public Health Division - Animal Services and the Ward Councillor in a public meeting with members of the community such as advisory councils, sports groups, area schools etc. to establish a protocol to determine the area and identify the dog watch community group.

4. *Report*

The Parks and Recreation Division will submit a report to the local Community Council with recommendations. Public deputations at Community Councils may be required depending on neighbourhood circumstances.

5. *City Council approval*

6. *Evaluation*

The following procedure set out the review process.

7. *Implementation*

The Parks and Recreation Division will arrange for and install signage that will clearly indicate on and off-leash areas, hours of off-leash times and stoop and scoop regulations and fines.

8. Annual Review

The Parks and Recreation Division and the Public Health Division - Animal Services in consultation with the Ward Councillor and the community dog watch group will undertake a review annually to determine if further action is required to improve the off-leash area or whether it should be removed. A report with the recommendations will be submitted to the local Community Council.

9. Enforcement

The Public Health Division - Animal Services and the Metropolitan Toronto Police will handle enforcement of the regulations in the off-leash areas as required when contacted by the community dog watch group.

Following are the guidelines for establishing off-leash areas in City parks:

1. All parks and vacant City of Toronto lands should be considered for dog off-leash areas. In most cases, parks with the following will not be considered:
 - ▶ Parks that have passive and active uses, such as playgrounds, wading pools, permitted sports field activities, paths used for cycling, roller-blading and pedestrian links (boardwalks);
 - ▶ Active play areas of parks such as toboggan areas and athletic running tracks;
 - ▶ Environmentally sensitive areas such as ravine areas and naturalized planting areas;
 - ▶ Parks adjacent to schoolyards;
 - ▶ Natural and artificial rinks;
 - ▶ Internal pedestrian park pathways that are used on a regular basis (neighbourhood connections);
 - ▶ Sports fields;
 - ▶ Ornamental gardens;
 - ▶ Parkettes less than 0.5 ha in size.
2. Consideration should be given to establishing fenced-in off-leash areas for selected parks on a regional basis in parks that are larger than 10 ha, subject to the guidelines outlined under recommendation 1.
3. Before considering an application for a dog off-leash area, dog owners who use the park must form a group with a minimum of 15 members who agree to:
 - ▶ Provide "Dog Watch" eyes and ears in the park to identify and help educate irresponsible pet owners who use the park;
 - ▶ Organize a minimum of four park clean-ups per year;
 - ▶ Repair areas damaged from dogs digging;
 - ▶ Consult with the Public Health Division - Animal Services for By-law enforcement when required.

4. Off-leash times in the designated areas (except in fenced areas) will be established in consultation with the Ward Councillor to minimize potential conflicts with other park users.

If we agree that dogs add to the quality of life of many of our residents, than we must find ways to accommodate them. In smaller or rural communities it is often easier to find some room to romp and play with a dog. In large cities this is often exceedingly difficult. Unfortunately, most municipal planners and most developers of multiple residential units have yet to take into consideration that many residents want to have animal companions. And even when they do, they only pay lip service to the concept. Have a look at the condominiums and apartments that are being built in your municipality. Are there provisions for a dog activity area? Is there even room for anything other than room for parking?

Until that changes there will be pressure on our parks and as animal service agencies we must be involved in developing reasonable rules and regulations for dogs in parks. After all, we wind up having to solve the problems.