



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Date: September 13, 2005
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CC File No.: 3507
Meeting Date: October 4, 2005

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Chief License Inspector in consultation with Director of Finance
SUBJECT: Year 2006 Animal Control Dog License Fee Amendments

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the license fee for unaltered dogs be increased from \$64 to \$65 for Year 2006.
- B. THAT the license fee for altered dogs remain at \$35 for Year 2006.
- C. THAT the \$10 early payment discount be eliminated.
- D. THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary By-law amendments to the Animal Control By-Law to implement the revised Schedule of Fees and Charges to be effective January 1, 2006.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Managers of Corporate and Community Services RECOMMEND approval of the above.

COUNCIL POLICY

It is Council policy that fees and charges be established on the basis of the cost of providing the associated services.

It is Council policy that new or expanded service costs be fully offset by expenditure reductions or new revenues.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update the Animal Control dog license fees for 2006. This includes increasing the license fee to own, harbour or possess an unaltered dog by \$1.00. It is proposed that the existing \$35 license fee for altered dogs remain unchanged. The report also proposes the \$10 early payment discount offered for payment made on or prior to March 1 be eliminated. The resulting single fee will be consistent with the proposed 12 month staggered dog license renewal system commencing January 2006.

BACKGROUND

In May, 2004, Council endorsed the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan as a guide for staff action to improve Animal Control Services in the City of Vancouver. The actions are targeted to improve safety and public comfort, address animal welfare concerns, and improve the shelter facility, equipment and care of impounded animals. The administrative and procedural changes outlined in the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan are to be implemented over the next five years.

Dog license fees in the City of Vancouver, the most significant source of revenue for Animal Control, have remained relatively low to encourage licensing of dogs and also to stay in line with other GVRD municipalities.

Further to Council's endorsement of the Animal Control Services Strategic Plan, the successful implementation of the actions therein require the achievement of a higher level of licensing revenue for each successive year of the Plan. The financial goal of the Plan is to recover the increased annual costs for Animal Control Services from an increase in annual dog licensing fee revenues by 2009. This includes annual dog license fee increases as proposed in this report.

Presently Council through a separate report is also considering the staggering of dog license expiry dates throughout the year. Currently, every owner of a dog over three months of age must purchase a dog license at the beginning of the year. The City provides a grace period to March 1 and if the dog license is purchased after this date, the \$10 discount is lost. The proposed staggered dog license renewal system would stagger dog license expiry dates throughout the year by certain geographic areas. Such a system will spread the existing workload out more evenly throughout the year which will allow existing staff to follow up on delinquent accounts.

DISCUSSION

The Animal Control By-law stipulates that all dogs in the City of Vancouver over the age of three (3) months must have a valid dog license. The license fee for unaltered dogs was increased by \$10 in 2005 to encourage owners to spay/neuter their dogs. Currently, the annual license fee is \$64 for unaltered dogs and \$35 for altered dogs. A \$10 discount is offered as an incentive for early payment.

This report recommends that the current \$10 early payment discount offered for payment made on or prior to March 1 be eliminated. The resulting single fee will be consistent with the proposed 12 month staggered dog license renewal system commencing January 2006.

The report also recommends that the current \$64 license fee for unaltered dogs be increased to \$65 and the \$35 license fee for altered dogs remains the same. Keeping the fee for altered dogs the same will help to offset the elimination of the early payment option. The relatively small increase for unaltered dogs is intended to raise some additional revenue for Animal Control while minimizing the impact on dog license sales. Staff also need time to implement the 5-year Animal Control Services Strategic Plan prior to consideration of larger fee increases. A greater license fee increase for unaltered dogs may be necessary in future years to encourage more owners to spay/neuter their pets.

The following table outlines the existing and proposed dog license fees for Year 2006:

Current and Proposed (2006) Dog License Fees (Fee Schedule "A")

License Category	Current Fee (\$)	Proposed Fee (\$)
Unaltered Dog	64.00	65.00
Spayed/Neutered Dog	35.00	35.00
Note: \$10 early payment discount to be eliminated		

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial goal of the Animal Control Strategic Plan is to recover the increased annual cost from an increase in annual dog licensing fee revenues by 2009. The proposed license fee increase for unaltered dogs and elimination of the early payment discount for Year 2006 will result in approximately \$128,000 in increased revenue. This increase has already been accounted for in the 5-year Animal Control Services Strategic Plan's revenue forecast. Additional revenue for 2006 is expected to be generated through an increase in the number of licenses purchased. This will be achieved through certain initiatives focusing on greater licensing compliance, more effective license canvassing and making licenses easier for dog owners to obtain.

CONCLUSION

Recognizing the importance in having one's pet spayed/neutered and the need for Animal Control Services to achieve a higher level of licensing revenue in each successive year of the Strategic Plan, this report proposes a \$1.00 license fee increase for unaltered dogs. It is proposed that the current \$35 license fee for altered dogs remain unchanged. It is also proposed that the current \$10 early payment discount be eliminated as a single fee will be consistent with the proposed 12 month staggered dog license renewal system to commence in January, 2006.