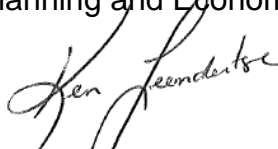




INFORMATION UPDATE

TO:	Members of Council
DATE:	April 14, 2020
SUBJECT:	Barking Dogs Enforcement Program (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Ken Leendertse Director, Licensing and By-law Services Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

Licensing and By-law Services is providing an overview of the continuous improvement process put in place to address noise complaints resulting from barking dogs.

On January 24, 2018, Council amended the Responsible Animal Ownership By-law 12-031 to include offences of noise made by animals which allowed such offences as barking dogs to be enforced under one by-law by Animal Services Officers.

Previously, barking dog offences were investigated by Municipal Law Enforcement Officers under Noise By-law 11-285 and then transferred to Animal Services Officers to address any dog licensing issues. The by-law amendment has provided Animal Services Officers with the ability to address all animal-related offences under one by-law. This streamlined approach to enforcement has resulted in efficient administration, priority response and a cost-effective service.

In 2019, a total of 1,006 barking dog complaints were investigated by Animal Services Officers. Three officers were rotated through the position of Barking Dog Officer. The Barking Dog Officers were able to investigate dog licensing matters concurrent with the barking dog investigation.

The cause of nuisance barking can be for a variety of reasons including but not limited to: a lack of training, separation anxiety, insufficient exercise or deliberate or unintentional provocation by people or other dogs. Approximately 90% of barking dog complaints were resolved after the Officer's initial visit. Animal Services Officers attempt to educate dog owners before enforcing the by-law. Utilizing solution-based enforcement methods, including officers investigating the cause of the barking,

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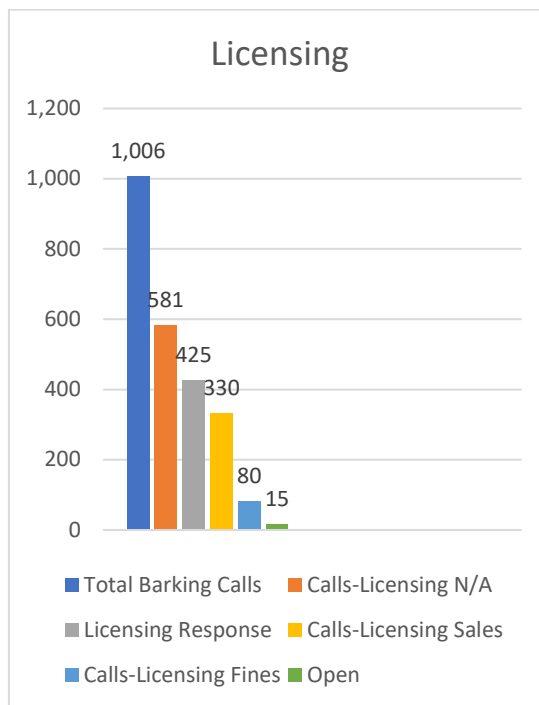
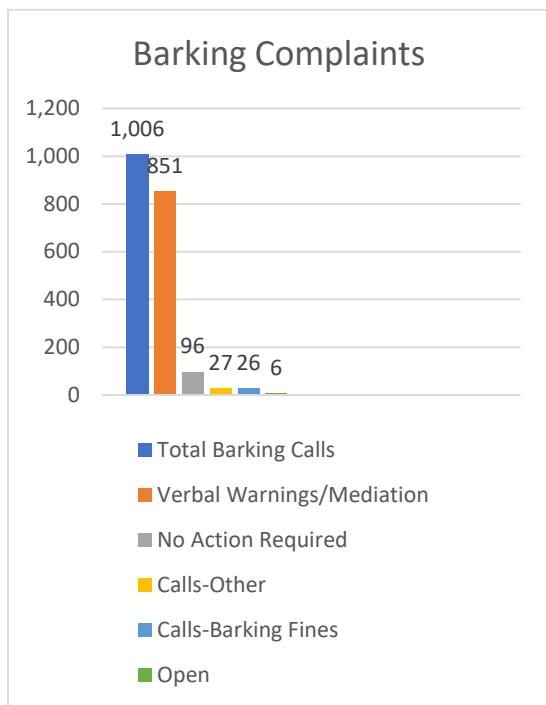
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addressing the matter with the owner of the dog and providing methods to manage, reduce and resolve the barking, has proven to be successful.

Results

- Over 40% of the barking dog complaints resulted in action for licensing (i.e. sale, renewal or fine)
- Approximately 8% of complaints required multiple visits when either the barking persisted or there was prior insufficient evidence to establish if a barking issue exists
- Three percent (3%) of complaints resulted in fines for a barking dog offence



Evaluation and review of the Barking Dogs Enforcement Program in 2019 has identified the following areas for improvement going forward into 2020:

- Utilizing a single Animal Services Officer dedicated to barking dog complaints to reinforce consistent messaging, provide education and enforcement;
- Enhancement of the existing barking dog evidence packages;
- Review best practices and benchmarking to determine thresholds that will define parameters for response such as residences with shared walls and apartment buildings;
- Limits and actions to cease any unsubstantiated (vexatious) complaints;

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- Formal framework for levels of enforcement to achieve by-law compliance where failure to correct the infraction continues despite officer involvement; and
- Development of a standard operating procedure to address limits and provide a consistent formal response platform.

Streamlining of the Barking Dogs Enforcement Program has resulted in a positive community friendly approach to enforcement. Concerns are being resolved by educating the dog owner first and utilizing enforcement when needed to gain compliance.

If you have any questions respecting this communication, please contact Brad Potts Supervisor, Animal Services by phone at Ext. 1105 or by email.

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