

Toward a Toronto Animal Services for all Torontonians

presented to MLS Committee by
Anna-Maria Mountfort
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What it is like to be a dog bite victim in Toronto

- A serious dog bite will require medical care. Doctor or emergency ward visit.
- May involve police
- Public Health – quarantine order and help victim navigate
- Public Health hands the file over to Toronto Animal Services.
- Toronto Animal Services is responsible for enforcing the by-law and the Dog Owner Liability Act (DOLA). TAS is supposed to visit the victim, take notes and pictures, all this according to their internal policy document.
- Try to heal and take care of yourself...sit on pins and needles hoping there is no rabies.
- Under the DOLA, a victim is allowed to pursue damages (civil litigation). Most dog bite claims are covered under home insurance policies. However, after a dog has bitten once, most insurance policies will not insure for a second bite. You are required to tell your insurer when your dog bites and you are very likely going to have to buy a second policy for your dog.

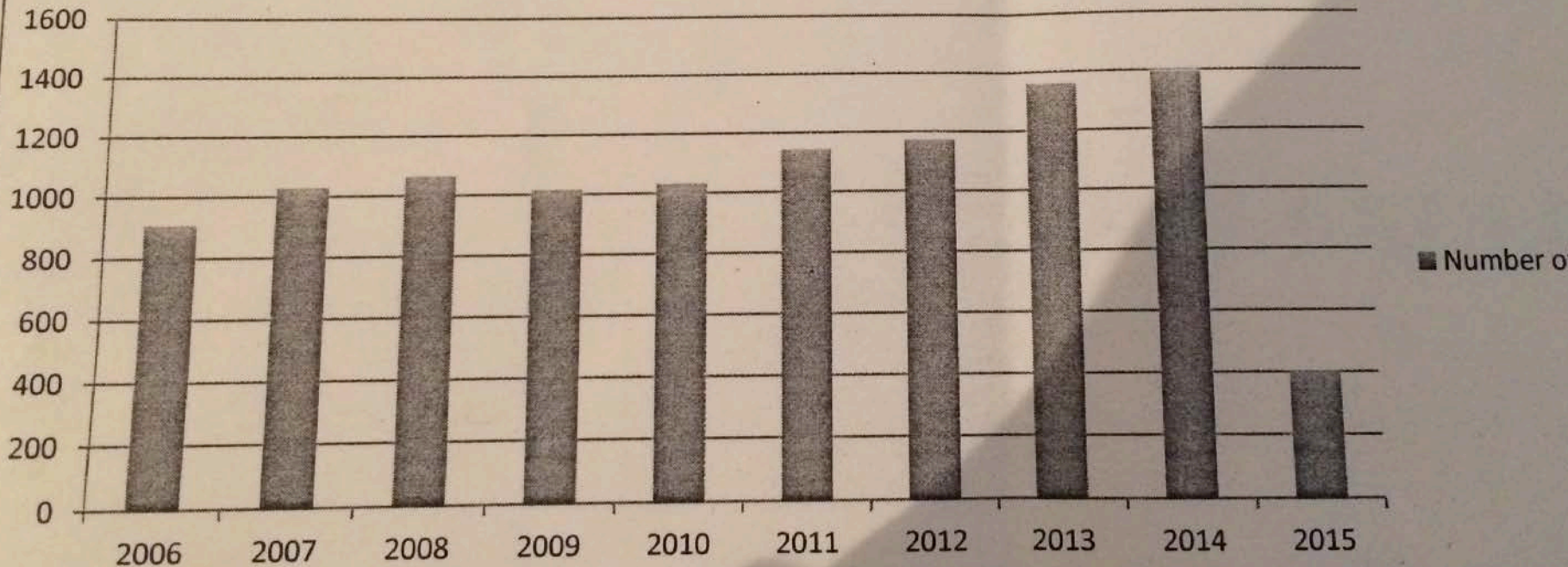
IT IS A DIFFICULT TIME WHICH IS WHY YOU NEED A COMPETENT THIRD PARTY MUNICIPAL AGENCY TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THROUGH.

Why do I care?

- ACO telling me that this is what they do.
- PH numbers vs TAS numbers
- I have met dozens of dog bites victims
- Every day existence – dogs off leash, dog poo and obnoxious dog owners.
- My working group – every single one a dog owner.
- TAS pamphlet

2	2007	1028
3	2008	1065
4	2009	1015
5	2010	1032
6	2011	1143
7	2012	1173
8	2013	1358
9	2014	1391
10	2015	399
Total City Wide		10513

**Number of Dog Bites Received
Until Jun 30th, 2015**



This Query represents all reported bite activities on Sequence 1
(Reported bites between January 01, 2006 and July 13, 2015)

	Total	Dog to Domestic Animal	Dog to Human
2006	814	192	622
2007	834	180	654
2008	814	161	653
2009	648	193	455
2010	703	185	518
2011	802	231	571
2012	736	243	493
2013	1,050	285	765
2014	784	215	569
2015	515	147	368
Total	7,700	2,032	5,668

Difference in dog bite reports between TPH and TAS 2006-2014

year	TPH	TAS	Difference
2006	909	622	287
2007	1028	654	374
2008	1065	653	412
2009	1015	455	560
2010	1032	518	514
2011	1143	571	572
2012	1173	493	680
2013	1358	765	593
2014	1391	569	822

Since 2006, TAS has responded to 4,814 dog bites on people less than TPH

The Status Quo

Judging from the activities that it has chosen to pursue with its limited resources, Toronto Animal Services is like having four more Humane Societies and half of an actual public safety/enforcement agency

Toronto Animal Services of today...

- 1) has seen budget cuts and so have less resources
- 2) have to make careful choices with these resources
- 3) through its chosen activities, has demonstrated a preference for doing animal rescue work over enforcement
- 4) has consistently for the past ten years never responded to as many dog bites as Toronto Public Health
- 5) has a 'blame the victim' mentality when it comes to dog bites. This discourages victims from pursuing the justice they deserve or getting the help that they need.

TAS noted activities

TAS cat rescue work – new cat shelters

TAS rescuing dogs from other jurisdictions, such as New Orleans and Montreal.

Mobile spay and neuter clinic – the bus

Collecting donations from citizens.

Collecting donations from corporations.

Are they lobbying MLS committee for Section 37 money?

Not taking care of dog bite victims. Dog on human or dog on dogs.

Not ticketing or fining dogs off leash enough.

Legal process and risks to the City

1) The Attorney General for Ontario thinks that the City is enforcing the DOLA.

“Although the Ministry is responsible for the DOLA, municipalities are primarily responsible for animal control. This includes enforcement of the DOLA and local by-laws. While the legislation provides municipal officials with significant legal powers in relation to dangerous dogs, local officials make specific decisions regarding enforcement.

Ontario sets high standards for responsible dog ownership in order to keep families safe and secure.” (a letter from the Ministry of the AG to me, dates December 22, 2014)

2) Insurance companies do not insure the second bite. They rely on the City to keep clear records of what dogs have bitten previously. Given that TAS has not kept good records, the insurance industry has likely been paying out for dog bites that are the second or third bite.

3) Examine City of Toronto’s responsibilities under the Occupier Liability Act.

Work to do...

- 1) Complete revision of the animal-related by-laws that must include a definition for dangerous and vicious dogs .
- 2) Update policies and procedures to reflect the mandate. You get your mandate from the law.
- 3) Request that City Manager writes to Attorney General to get clear directives and explanation of the City's roles with respect to enforcing the Dog Owner Liability Act.
- 4) Work to replace the divisive language that we currently use with one based on shared values – non-violence, community, peaceful shared spaces, how to take care of injured parties, what to do when accidents happen because, they will.
- 5) Human Resources Review: Ensure that Toronto Animal Services has the right human resources to be an enforcement agency. This means making sure that the staff do not have political opinions that interfere with their ability to do their jobs.

- 1) Toronto Animal Services and the City's Animal related by-laws exist for the safety and peaceful coexistence of every single citizen of this City – not only special interest groups.
- 2) Toronto Animal Services must serve ALL THE CITIZENS of Toronto not just the ones who are ideologically on-side.
- 3) Policies and process that promotes responsible pet ownership because that is the best interest of the public, for our shared spaces and also for the animals.
- 4) Could the City trade its four TAS shelters for the THS space on River street?