

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

Chair Thompson and Members,  
Economic Development and Community Development Committee  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street, West.  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N1

**Request to improve Toronto Animal Protection Bylaw #349  
Agenda Item #EC 31.5**

Dear Chair Thompson and Members of Committee:

As a former Toronto City Councillor who was involved in every major animal welfare initiative in our City during my 15 years on Council, I am urging you to strengthen Toronto's Animal Welfare Bylaw #349 by adopting the recommendations within this letter.

In addition to supporting the seven recommendations put forward by the Toronto Wildlife Centre (included below), I urge you to:

- 1.) Ban medically unnecessary surgical procedures on pets in Toronto.** Toronto Animal Services (TAS) staff oppose unnecessary cosmetic procedures on pets – as do the Toronto Humane Society and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association - but then unfortunately step back and suggest this ban should be left to the province. The City banned cosmetic pesticides in Toronto, not the province. The City banned puppy mills in Toronto, not the province. The City banned shark fins in Toronto, not the province. The City adopted bird friendly development guidelines in Toronto, not the province. The province may never ban these inhumane and unnecessary surgical procedures. The province could take years or decades to consult Ontario's 444 municipalities while this inhumane procedure continues in our city. Unnecessary surgical procedures are inhumane and should be banned now.
- 2.) Financially support animal rescue groups in their quest to rescue and rehome outdoor cats.** TAS staff have come a long, positive way from when I was first elected in 2003. Today, TAS staff only euthanize animals for compassionate reasons, they provide free spay/neutering services to rescue groups, they operate our mobile spay/neutering clinic, they reduce/wave fees for low-income residents, they operate our CHIP trucks, and they work in co-operation with rescue groups. Small rescue groups need financial support to increase the wonderful work they do. The more work rescue groups do, the more cats – and birds – they save. Charities are often the least expensive, most effective means to solve a problem.

- 3.) **Host a Golden Horseshoe, 2023, Saving Cats and Saving Birds Summit at City Hall.** Toronto should invite Greater Golden Horseshoe municipalities, humane societies and cat and bird rescue groups to come together at City Hall and create an action plan on how to protect both cats and birds in the largest and most populated urban area in Canada.
- 4.) **Approval an anti-roaming bylaw for cats, with an exemption for feral cats.**
- 5.) **Keep the requirement to retain nuisance animals, with an exemption for feral cats.**
- 6.) **Require mandatory microchipping of cats** with the City providing a free microchipping service to all cat rescues and charities and low-income residents.
- 7.) **License Wildlife Removal Companies.**
- 8.) **Create a positive list of pets people can keep.**
- 9.) **Strengthen the “no feeding of wild animals” section of the bylaw** so that food cannot be left outdoors when members of the public are not present or under the direction of wildlife rescue staff.
- 10.) **Launch a comprehensive public awareness campaign** that includes promoting the City’s and other charities microchipping services and spay/neutre services.

I have great admiration and respect for Toronto Animal Services staff and members of our City Council and know that with Toronto Council leading the way, we can all work together to be national leaders in finding solutions to improving the welfare of both cats and birds.

Sincerely,

Glenn De Baeremaeker