



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole meeting of September 2, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** August 30, 2021
From: Council Andrew and Councillor Thornton-Joe
Subject: Animal Welfare and the Animal Responsibility Bylaw

Background

Incident of animal neglect

Portland Housing Society (PHS) staff at 844 Johnson recently informed Animal Control Officers they administered *three* doses of Naloxone (an opioid blocking chemical) to a small dog owned by a resident of the building. The intervention was required to resuscitate the animal.

PHS Staff subsequently notified Animal Control Officers this latest incident was the seventh time PHS staff administered Naloxone to the dog. Animal control officers report PHS staff stated they called because the latest incident “exceeded someone’s personal threshold”.

Following the PHS report, Animal Control Officers attended the 900 block of Pandora Avenue for a report of an off-leash dog. On arrival, they found a dog matching the description on a leash. An investigation revealed the dog had previously been off-leash and was the dog reported by PHS staff to received seven interventions with Naloxone. Animal Control officers seized the dog under Victoria’s Animal Control Bylaw as the dog was unlicensed.

On arrival at the pound, Animal Control Officers observed the dog to be unstable and had weakness in its hind legs.

A veterinarian examination of the dog found methamphetamine, amphetamine and cocaine in its urine.

Ninety-six hours after seizure, the dog became the property of the City of Victoria and adopted out to another owner.

Other incidents of animal neglect

There has been an increase in incidents where animal control officers received reports of animals believed to have ingested opioids and received Naloxone. Animal Control Officers report a dramatic increase in animal neglect over the past 18 to 24 months.

Review of legislation pertaining to animals

A review of several jurisdictions found Esquimalt, Saanich, Oak Bay, Surrey, Kamloops, North Vancouver found bylaws that specifically prevent abuse and or neglect of animals.

A review of several jurisdictions found Esquimalt, Nanaimo, Surrey and North Vancouver allow Animal Control officers to seize animals of owners that violate care conditions of bylaw.

Surrey also refuses release of animal to owner to protect the animal.

Jurisdictions that mention Opioids ingested by animals

There are no jurisdictions reviewed by Councillor Andrew that specifically mention ingestion of opioids, however interpretation of bylaws allows for Animal Control to seize animals under "pain and suffering" conditions.

Recommendation:

- 1) The City Solicitor prepare the following amendments to the Animal Control Bylaw:

Animal Welfare

- a) To add language that stipulates no animal shall be allowed to ingest opioids, narcotics or recreational drugs other than those prescribed by a veterinarian.
- b) To require any person that administers Naloxone or other treatment to block the results of opioids to report such incident to Animal Control and the BCSPCA.

Seizing and Impounding Animals

- c) To provide Animal Control officers with the ability to seize animals suspected of ingestion of narcotics, recreational drugs or opioids and deliver them to a veterinarian for evaluation and treatment.

Or, in the alternative:

Any animal where in the opinion of the Animal Control Officer or Bylaw Officer any provision under the Animal Control Bylaw has been contravened.

- 2) That council request a report from Animal Control through the Manager of Bylaw Services to inform council of that status of Animal Control and animal welfare together with recommendations to council.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Andrew



Councillor Thornton-Joe