

RE: ANIMAL CONTROL  
(Item 21, Report No. 35, 1986 May 26)

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendation of the Director Finance be adopted.

\* \* \* \* \*

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER  
FROM: DIRECTOR FINANCE  
RE: ANIMAL CONTROL

86 06 02

FILE: D57

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT this report be received for information purposes.

1. Background

At the regular Council meeting of 1986 May 26, Council received a report (Item 21, Report No. 35) concerning animal control as it relates to off-leash areas for dogs. As a result, Council posed a number of questions. This report now deals with those questions.

2. "Bitings"

Council has indicated that they would like to know the source of the following statements:

"Opponents of this program rely on expert opinion which states that:

- only about 1 dog in 100 is properly trained
- dogs are pack animals and when banded together in a pack of three or more, even a normally placid dog may become viscious
- very few owners really dominate and control their dogs
- just one bitch in season in an off-leash area could create mayhem."

On 1986 May 12, the Lakeview Ratepayers Association presented a written submission to the Director Finance. The statements in question were extracted from that document. This submission, entitled "Dogs off leash in Burnaby" is attached to this report as Schedule "A" (see item 6).

Jeannine Barnhill, who is credited with making these statements, has been training dogs for 19 years; is a member of the Western Federation of Individuals and Dog Organizations (F.I.D.O.); the past president of the Junior Kennel Club, and the past president of the Siberian Husky Club of British Columbia. Mrs. Barnhill has indicated that she is willing to appear before Council if requested to do so.

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2.1 Statistics

	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	
Number of dog bitings while animal off leash and at large	32	31	26	102
Number of dog bitings on leash in a public place	0	3	3	
Number of dog bitings while animal on private property	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>15</u>	
Total number of recorded dog bitings	42	39	44	
	==	==	==	

As per Council's request, these statistics have been further broken down and form Schedule "B" of this report (attached).

3. West Vancouver

Council raised the question of staff's consultations with "West Vancouver's Chief Licence Inspector, Cpl. Laurentson."

It should be noted that West Vancouver's Director of Permits and Licences is a Mr. Ernie Nealy and that West Vancouver's Licence Department does not deal with animal control regulations other than as they relate to kennel licencing and dog licence sales.

Special Constable Laurentson is a West Vancouver by-law enforcement officer who reports directly to the Chief of West Vancouver's municipal police force. As head of West Vancouver's by-law section, Constable Laurentson's duties include enforcement of animal control regulations and, as such, he was consulted prior to the submission of our 1986 May 26 animal control report. His comments regarding enforcement in West Vancouver's off-leash areas are outlined in the third paragraph in Section 3.4 of that report, which reads as follows:

"West Vancouver by-law enforcement officers who have dealt with the question of what is direct supervision and control in court indicate that judges have found that if an animal can hear its owner and responds, that it is under direct supervision and control. As a result, West Vancouver by-law enforcement officers do not routinely attend at the off-leash park areas of their municipality. If a specific complaint is registered, they will attend but since there are no quantitative means to assess "control" there is no justification for regular patrols or even spot checks at their off-leash sites. They view animals in off-leash areas to be beyond the practical application of the by-law."

3.1 "Effectiveness of West Vancouver's System"

Aside from the above noted observations, Special Constable Laurentson had only positive things to say about West Vancouver's off-leash areas. He indicated that the off-leash program was working well and he perceived no negative impact from it. The Constable noted that dog owners from North Vancouver and Vancouver often use West Vancouver's off-leash areas. Dog owners who might potentially offend on-leash regulations can be directed to the designated free run sites and, as a result, Constable Laurentson sees the free run sites as being a valuable animal control alternative.

Mr. Frank Kurucz, West Vancouver's Director of Parks and Recreation is currently on holidays and as such was unavailable to comment with respect to the effectiveness of West Vancouver's off-leash parks. His assistant, Mr. Bob Kusch, feels that although defining and maintaining control in these areas is at times difficult, that they do satisfy the needs of the proponents of off-leash areas.

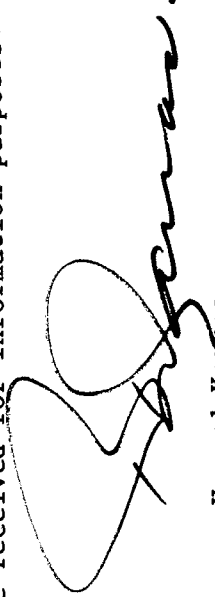
4. S.P.C.A.

Mr. Michael Weeks is the Secretary-Manager of the Vancouver Regional Branch of the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. As indicated in the May 26th report, Mr. Weeks supports the dogs off-leash concept. We were aware of Mr. Weeks' letter of 1985 September 03 to Margaret Carr-Hilton of Parks and Recreation. (Attached-Schedule "C"). In our report we endeavoured to reflect the opinion of Mr. Weeks as contained in that letter. Mr. Weeks has previously presented submissions directly to Council and made his views known at that time.

The report of 1986 May 26 recommended "That a copy of this report be sent to those persons who in the past have corresponded with Council on this matter." As a result, Mr. Weeks was automatically mailed a copy of the report.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT this report be received for information purposes.



Howard Karfas  
DIRECTOR FINANCE

cc. Director Recreation & Cultural Services

EM

MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 37

COUNCIL MEETING 86/06/09

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Lakeview Ratepayers' Association  
Dogs off leash in Burnaby

May 12, 1986

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Major concerns:

1. Safety of children and adults.
2. Enjoyment of parks by all citizens of Burnaby.
3. Opposition to the spending of municipal funds to provide dog runs.

1. A by-law cannot be drafted that assures dog control. Only fencing or a leash can assure control.
2. The Chief Licence Inspector's report of May 5, 1985 states that, "It is a dog owner's responsibility to control his animal in such a way as to prevent damage or injury to property or people. Experience indicates that the most administratively effective way to achieve this control is to require dog owners to keep their animals on a leash."
3. This same sentiment is expressed in the Municipal Manager's report of July 29, 1983.
4. A letter dated June 25, 1985 to Mr. Gaunt from the District of West Vancouver stated that conflicts arise between dog owners and walkers and joggers in the off-leash area.
5. On January 23, 1985 a solicitor for Burnaby's Legal Dept. stated that, "We cannot say with any assurance that a Court would not assign some liability to the Corporation if a dog running off leash in a park area under authority of a by-law were to injure a person." Recently a court ordered the city of Brampton, Ontario to pay \$6.3 million to a boy injured on city owned land because the city hadn't taken precautions to prevent use of the land by trail bikes.

6. Jeannine Barnhill of F.I.D.O. and a dog trainer for 19 years  
stated that:

- a. Only about one dog in one hundred is properly trained.
  - b. Dogs are pack animals and when banded together in a pack of three or more even a normally placid dog may become vicious.
  - c. Very few owners really dominate and can control their dogs.
  - d. Just one bitch in season in an off-leash area would create mayhem.
7. Until all people are responsible citizens we require laws to protect us, whether from dog attack or from speeding drivers.
8. Dr. Carl Rothschild, a Vancouver psychiatrist who deals mainly with childrens' problems stated that, "An uncontrolled dog represents a physical threat to the child because the child has no control over the dog and recognizes that the dog has little control over himself. Children often require psychiatric counselling after being traumatized by a dog - there need not even be an attack - just the fear the child suffered."
9. Meeting an unleashed, large, unknown dog generates fear in most people. (Sharron's note - When I walk my dog people often cross the road rather than pass her, even though she is on a leash.)
10. During the time that the off-leash area was in effect there were four recorded incidents in the off-leash area, two of which were <sup>to</sup> Burnaby staff members. One of these led to an angina attack. We had people arriving here from many nearby cities and municipalities to let their dogs run free. Since the off-leash bylaws were rescinded, we have been pleased to enjoy our park again, and we are adamantly opposed to again relinquishing it to off-leash dogs

11. There have just been 160 new lots developed in the area

adjacent to Robert Burnaby Park, and more are planned for future development. This means that even more people will be using the bottom part of the park.

12. \$60,000 is spent annually just to maintain this park. We feel that the taxpayers have a right to the quiet enjoyment of their parks without fear or intimidation by unleashed dogs.

13. Are Burnaby residents willing to incur expenses to provide a dog run area, or should it be the owner's responsibility?

The residents we spoke to while petitioning (over 1,000 Burnaby taxpayers) felt strongly that they would support parks for people, but not for dogs, although many were dog owners.

14. In a time of fiscal restraint when there is not even enough money to adequately support the school system without increasing taxes, spending money for dog parks would be intolerable.

15. If a dog area is provided in one area, thus setting a precedent, the grounds will be established for people to keep pushing until they receive approval for these areas all over Burnaby. Even in Robert Burnaby Park, when one area was allowed the few people who had established it were not satisfied, and came back to ask for a larger area. The precedent had been established, so the larger area was approved.

16. The Vancouver Parks Board recently conducted a two year study which led to the exclusion of dogs from playground areas, even though they were on leashes.

17. We hope that our municipality is mainly concerned with the well-being of people. The SPCA is a society for the well-being of animals. They are a non-profit group and could raise funds to obtain and maintain areas for dogs to run free if they were convinced that this was necessary.

Total Number of Bittings	Owner Present (ie. out for walk)	Not on Leash	On Leash	Dog on Public Property Owner not Present (Dog at large)	Dog on Private Property Other Than Home (Dog at large)	Dog at Home	Dog Chained on Public Property	1985 - 44	1984 - 39	1983 - 42	Total - 125
		1	2	19	6	15 (2 on chain)	1 (In Park)		5 (1 in Park)	0	6
									2 (1 in Park)	0	4
									22	23	64
									4	9	19
									5	10 (1 on chain)	30
									1	0	2
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SCHEDULE "C"



VANCOUVER  
REGIONAL  
BRANCH

1205 EAST 7th AVE.,  
VANCOUVER, B.C.  
CANADA V5T 1R1

TELEPHONE: 604-879-7721  
SPCA EMERGENCY: 879-7343  
ANIMAL CLINIC: 879-3571

## British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

President:  
DOUGLAS MILLER  
Secretary-Manager:  
MICHAEL H. WEEKS, M.A. (Vet. Reg.)  
Director of Veterinary  
Medical Services:  
DR. C.W. COLLIN, B.Sc. M.C. (V.S.)  
FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN  
Honorary Chairman:  
Clotilde Simpkins

September 3, 1985

The Corporation of the District  
of Burnaby  
4949 Canada Way  
Burnaby, B.C.  
V5G 1M2

Attention: Margaret Carr-Hilton  
Research Officer

Dear Ms. Carr-Hilton:

Thank you for your letter of August 21st - I enclose some notes which  
I hope you will find helpful and relevant.

Yours sincerely,

Michael H. Weeks  
Secretary-Manager

MHW/awl

SCHEDULE "C"



Dog Population

- 1) A 1978 survey of the City of Toronto showed that 166,000 pets lived in 486,000 dwelling units, 49% being dogs. Of the 486,000 dwelling units, 170,000 were apartments. Total population was 640,000 or 1.4 persons per unit.
- 2) The population of Burnaby today is about 145,000 and most of the units are family units. The likely spread is 2.5 persons per unit or 58,000 dwelling units.
- 3) The Toronto figures show 1 pet per 3 dwelling units or 1 per 2 units if the 170,000 apartment units are excluded. Using a midway figure for Burnaby of 1 pet per 2.5 dwelling units, would give a total of 23,000 pets.
- 4) If approximately half of these are dogs, the dog population of Burnaby is about 11-12,000 dogs.

Irresponsible Ownership

- 5) In 1984, the SPCA impounded 1,141 dogs. Allowing for some dogs being impounded more than once, we may be left with 1,000 single dogs. Assume we saw and impounded only 50% of the dogs running at large, and the 50% we did not impound belonged to different owners, then there might be about 2,000 irresponsible dog owners out of 11-12,000 owners, or about 20%.

Dog Licences

- 6) In 1984, 8,670 dog licences were sold. If the figure of 11-12,000 dogs is correct, this shows a % purchase of tags at about 75%, again leaving a figure of 25% as owners irresponsible enough not to buy a tag.

Complaints

- 7) In 1984, the SPCA recorded 1,000 complaints in Burnaby, a figure consistent with the complaints received in 1985 so far.

This argues that only 1,000 owners (or less) out of 11-12,000 owners, or 8-9%, were irresponsible enough to allow their dogs to behave in such a way as to cause complaints, or say 16-18%, if only 50% of the irresponsibly owned dog behaviour was observed and thus the subject of a complaint.

Summary

- 8) From the foregoing, it is arguable that the irresponsible dog owner forms 16-25% of all dog owners.
- 9) Off Leash Areas

There are two main reasons why dogs should be allowed off leash.

a) Health

A review of both our veterinary and general libraries shows the need for exercise to maintain the optimum physical and mental health of a large/medium sized dog. And even small dogs benefit.

This of course is parallel to experience with horses - and humans. A responsible dog owner is thus faced with a choice. Do I keep my dog on the leash, to the continued detriment of his health, or do I break the law? Most owners choose the second, choosing those areas in the Municipality where their off leash dog, under their control, will not cause a nuisance to other people. I think by and large this works.

#### b) Animal Control

However, in terms of Animal Control, when the SPCA observes such a situation, we have nowhere we can direct the owner to take their dog. We, the SPCA, are in the difficult position of directing someone to put their dog on the leash, knowing that it is detrimental to the health of the dog. We are in fact promoting mental listlessness, and obesity, with its attendant increased risks of heart disease, arthritis etc!! or knowing that as soon as our truck moves on, the dog comes off the leash, which makes a farce of our position.

We firmly believe that an appropriate number and disposition of off leash areas would create a greater opportunity for irresponsible owners to respond to the social requirements of the Dog Control By-Laws - and that they would do so. At the very least, our educational programs would have a real base from which to work. And the lawful dog owner can evoke a real influence - peer pressure works too.

#### 10) Dog Bites

Opponents of off-leash areas often cite the probability of increased dog bites as an argument. There is no foundation for this argument, in fact, as far as I can discover.

Relevant studies are not easy to find, but a study of Saskatoon in 1977 showed

- 150,000 people, 13,000 dogs
- an average of 7.7 bites per 10,000 population
- 83% of the bites occurred on the dog's own street
- 46% occurred on the victim's street
- most were between April and August

#### 11) Causation

Most authorities are agreed that "territorial instinct and defense of territory" are the main causes, unlikely therefore to occur in the "open" territory of a neutral off leash area.

#### 12) Social Observations

Increasingly, society recognizes the recreational needs of sections of society - and many recreational areas are set up exclusively for those groups. This exclusivity has a long history - museums are used for works of art, and no-one plays golf there. Golf courses are not used for football, bowling greens are not used for putting, jogging tracks are not used for pram-pushing, some G.V.R.D. trials are used exclusively for horse riding, some parking areas are for boat trailers only - exclusivity needs no defence.

13) Sections Interest of Dog Owners

If my calculations in sections 1-4 are correct, then 11-12,000 dogs live in 58,000 dwellings each containing 2.5 people. So, dogs relate to 11-12,000 x 2.5 = 27-30,000 people, or about 20% of the population in Burnaby.

Is it expecting too much for Burnaby to respond to the sectional interest of such a large percentage of the population, probably much greater than other sections it caters for exclusively - tennis, badminton, squash, folk art, swimming etc.

14) Cost

The cost to the municipality of an off leash area, set aside exclusively for dog owners, is absolutely minimal, and certainly not to be compared with the cost of maintaining swimming pools, tennis courts etc.

The capital cost of setting out trails, erecting signs, and minimal fencing, could only be decided when exact areas are identified. But the use of volunteer labour to do much of the work could be organized by the SPCA from amongst the dog owners.

15) Areas Required

It is interesting to note that West Vancouver, with a population of about 40,000 has 10 off leash areas and some of these are not wild areas - Ambleside Park for example has its off leash areas adjacent to the Fitness Circuit and Pitch and Putt.

16) Signage

It is our opinion that each entry to an off leash area should be posted as follows:

"You are entering an area where dog owners are permitted to have their dogs off leash. Non dog owners are advised to enjoy our recreational areas elsewhere."

17) Fencing

In general, off leash dogs being walked do not stray far from their owners, and owners generally keep a watchful eye on their dogs. The dogs enjoyment of this freedom is part of the owners enjoyment. In general terms, we do not think that fencing is required.

