



# Delegation Request To Appear Before Township Council

I/we would like to appear as a delegation at the Council meeting on

**JULY 8, 2019**

(Council meeting date requested)

at the ►

☐ 4:00pm Regular Afternoon Meeting

☒ 7:00pm Regular Evening Meeting

Name of delegate or organization wishing to appear

**PATRICIA TALLMAN**

## 1 Topic

The topic of discussion is (be specific, provide details, and attach additional information, if required)

**Prevention Strategy for management of abandoned pet rabbits and their offspring within TOL:**  
**1. Creation of a rabbit shelter/sanctuary to house and care for future surrender of pet rabbits and to capture, sterilize, and house currently abandoned rabbits and their offspring.**  
**2. Amendment of Animal Control Bylaw to specify the care and containment requirements for pet rabbits by owners and breeders as well as the authority to capture and impound feral rabbits.**

## 2 Additional Information

Purpose of presentation

☐ Information only ☐ Request letter of support ☒ Request funds ☒ Other

Desired resolution

Activities to date relative to the matter

**BC Govt - FLNR, legislative and policy review; 2. conversation with LAPS ED, with support from its Board**

## 3 Meeting Location

Fraser River Presentation Theatre, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Township of Langley Civic Facility  
 20338 - 65 Avenue, Langley, BC V2Y 3J1

Office use only

☐ Approved ☐ Declined ☐ Other

Applicant informed



### Delegation to TOL July 8, 2019 7 pm

#### SYMPTOM:

- There is a rapid increase in the reports of abandoned domestic pet rabbits within TOL.
  - Could be from individual pet owners abandoning their pet rabbits, or
  - Uncontained pet rabbits that have gotten loose from breeders' properties, or
  - Breeders turning their unwanted stock loose.

#### PROBLEM:

- If left unchecked, abandoned rabbits will breed and feral populations of domestic pet rabbits will increase.
- Domestic pet rabbits are biologically different from wild rabbits (cottontails) and their lack of instinct put them at increased risk from cars and predators, resulting in carnage that is stressful for humans to witness.
- Abandoned pet rabbits can also do damage to yards, gardens, and buildings due to their tendency to dig and burrow, and they can eventually make their way to farmers' field and eat their crops.
- Feral rabbits constitute a major vector in the transmission of RHD-V2 virus that can affect farm and pet rabbits. According to the SPCA fact sheet: "RHD is a serious and extremely contagious disease with high mortality rates. Most infected rabbits will die. The disease does not affect humans or other species including dogs and cats. The virus can persist in the environment for several weeks and may survive both heat and freezing." <https://spca.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Rabbit-Hemorrhagic-Disease-Information-Sheet-for-Rabbit-Guardians.pdf>

#### SOLUTION:

##### **Part A**

Bylaw amendments – see examples from other municipalities (**Appendix A**)

1. Amend the TOL Animal Control (AC) Bylaw to specifically address housing, care, and control of pet rabbits by their owners.
  - a. To ensure that pet rabbits are adequately cared for and *contained*.
  - b. Currently the AC Bylaw only addresses dogs and large animals (horses, donkeys, goats, llamas, or similar-sized animals); hence it is not illegal to let pet rabbits roam at large.

2. Amend the AC Bylaw to indicate that AC Officers can capture abandoned domestic rabbits.
  - a. Currently, the AC Bylaw only enables AC Officers to seize and impound dogs or large animals at large.
  - b. To control and prevent proliferation of feral colonies.
  - c. Recent (as of July 2018) policy changes by the Ministry of FLNR is that a permit is no longer required to capture, treat, and possess feral and abandoned pet rabbits.

## **Part B**

### Rabbit Sanctuary/Shelter (Rabbitarium) – latest policy from M. FLNR (**Appendix B**)

3. LAPS or a designated rabbit rescue organization to be able to accept owner-surrendered rabbits or abandoned rabbits and their offspring.
  - a. To deter / discourage rabbit abandonment.
  - b. To stop potential breeding by abandoned rabbits.
  - c. Right now, all rabbit rescues in Metro Vancouver are full and there is no place in TOL that has the capability to accept unwanted pet rabbits or to house feral rabbits.
4. LAPS or designated rabbit rescue organization to sterilize intake rabbits, care and house them, and either put them in an enclosed secure sanctuary or up for adoption.

## **Part C**

### Partnerships

- ◆ Rabbitats (a domestic rabbit rescue organization) already has several micro-sanctuaries throughout the Lower Mainland housing colonies of captured, sterilized, abandoned and feral rabbits.
- ◆ They have participated in major rescues at Uvic (1000 rabbits) and the Richmond Auto Mall (400 rabbits).
- ◆ Rabbitats is also involved in my ongoing initiative with the BC Gov't to modify the D&E Regulations and Policies of the *Wildlife Act* wrt feral rabbit management.
- ◆ Rabbitats has initiated a mapping project (AbandonedRabbits.com) to track abandoned rabbits, their feral offspring, and the RHD virus progression.
- ◆ Rabbitats is in the process of building a sanctuary in Richmond and would like to build one in Langley as a showcase sanctuary and learning center (Rabbitarium – **illustration attached**).

- Sanctuaries are mostly for unadoptable rabbits who will be housed in colonies with sheltered spaces in contained enclosures. This type of sanctuary can be built as an attraction for the public to come and learn about domestic rabbits – part of an education program to deter impulse buying of rabbits for kids at Easter. (N.B. rabbits are not suitable pets for children.)
- The Sanctuary can also house adoptable rabbits in separate colonies.

### ACTIONS:

1. Amend AC Bylaw according to **Part A** (#1, 2) under SOLUTIONS.
2. Determine whether LAPS or a designated rabbit rescue organization (such as Rabbitats) be responsible for **Part B** (#3, 4) of SOLUTIONS.
3. **Part C**
  - a. Provide start up partnership funding for the construction of an enclosed rabbit shelter/sanctuary (Rabbitarium), \*estimated to be a one-time capital cost of \$20,000. This could be constructed on already-occupied TOL properties such as Community Centers, LEC, Community Parks, or remnant lands.
  - b. Provide an annual contract for the management of feral rabbits, at a cost of \$24,000 per year (based on an estimated intake volume of 10 abandoned rabbits per month @ \$200 per rabbit). This cost covers sterilization, vaccination, and operating / maintenance costs. This resource commitment is expected to decrease with time as the initial loose rabbits are contained and sterilized limiting feral reproduction, and as the rabbit sanctuary establishes itself as a “Learning/Education Center” for the public (reducing numbers through education and monitoring) and develops programs for sustainable funding through the Center’s activities garnering public donations.

\*Construction costs will vary depending on the land and amenities already in place.

### ❖ NB:

**Rabbits multiply quickly – two rabbits and their offspring can potentially produce up to 400 rabbits in one year. Thus, early detection and rapid response is key to their management.**

July 16, 2018

**Attn: Animal Control Agencies:**

A group of rabbit advocates has some information for agencies involved in animal control with respect to abandoned and feral domestic rabbits. The purpose of this letter is to draw attention to recent provincial policy changes whereby organizations and individuals no longer require a permit to rescue and possess feral rabbits. While we realize that many shelters do not have the capacity to take in additional or any rabbits at this time, we would greatly appreciate your passing on this information to volunteer organizations and individuals willing to catch feral rabbits and keep them following quarantine. Information is divided in three sections:

- A. The current provincial policy on capture of feral rabbits. (Patricia Tallman, PhD – policy consultant liaising with provincial government)
- B. The status of the RHD Virus (Veronica Gventsadze, DVM – veterinarian)
- C. The status of the abandoned rabbit situation in BC (Sorelle Saidman – Rabbitats founder)

**A. Current provincial policy on capture of feral rabbits**

The previous interpretation of the D&E Reg of the *Wildlife Act* with respect to feral rabbits was that a permit was required to trap feral rabbits. This policy is no longer valid as of August 2016. I'm a policy consultant who have been liaising with Jeff Morgan (Ministry of FLNRO, Policy Manager) to re-examine the process required for catching stray rabbits. The current interpretation of the D&E Regulations of the *Wildlife Act* is that a permit is no longer required to catch feral rabbits and possess them.

The following is an email excerpt from FLNR (Jeff Morgan) which provides the specifics:

"...The upshot is that the **Designation and Exemption Regulation** provides exemptions that effectively allow a person (this "person" could be a natural person, a corporation, a society or a local government) to: 1) trap, 2) transport and, 3) possess feral European Rabbits without the need of a permit or license. The following is provided for your reference.

From the **Designation and Exemption Regulation**...

**Exemption from sections 11 (1) and (8), 21, 22, 26 (1) (h), 27 (4), 33, 35 (2) (b), 37, 75 and 78 of the Act**

**9** (1) A person is exempt from sections 11 (1) and (8), 21, 22, 26 (1) (h), 27 (4), 33, 35 (2) (b), 37, 75, and 78 of the *Wildlife Act* where that person hunts, takes, traps, wounds or kills an animal of the species of the family *Leporidae* — hares and rabbits.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply to:

(a) *Lepus americanus* — snowshoe hare;

- (b) *Lepus townsendii* — white-tailed jackrabbit;
- (c) *Sylvilagus nuttallii* — Nuttall's cottontail.

From Sec. 11(1) of the Wildlife Act...

### **Hunting and licences**

**11** (1) A person who hunts wildlife commits an offence unless the person holds all of the following:

- (a) a hunting licence issued to the person under this Act;
- (b) any limited entry hunting authorization that is required by regulation;
- (c) any other licence that is required by regulation;
- (d) any other permit that is required by regulation.

(1.1) Subsection (1) does not apply to a person under 18 years of age on whose behalf the parent or guardian holds a hunting licence.

(2) A person must not issue a hunting licence for a person under 10 years of age.

(3) and (4) [Repealed 2003-90-24.]

(5) A person under 18 years of age commits an offence if the person hunts unless the person is accompanied by and under the close personal supervision of a person who

- (a) is 18 years of age or older,
- (b) holds a hunting licence, other than an initiation hunting licence, or is exempted from holding a hunting licence, and
- (c) meets the prescribed qualifications.

(6) [Repealed 2003-90-24.]

(7) [Repealed 2016-11-31.]

(8) A person commits an offence if the person traps fur bearing animals unless he or she holds a trapping licence.

(9) Subsections (1) (a) and (c) and (8) do not apply to an Indian residing in British Columbia.

From Sec. 37 of the Wildlife Act...

### **Transportation of wildlife**

**37** A person who ships or transports in British Columbia, or engages another person to ship or transport in British Columbia, wildlife or fish or parts of them, except as provided by regulation, commits an offence.

From Sec. 33 of the Wildlife Act...

**Possession of wildlife**

**33** (1) A person commits an offence if the person has live wildlife in his or her personal possession except as authorized under a licence or permit or as provided by regulation.

(2) A person commits an offence if the person has dead wildlife or a part of any wildlife in his or her possession except as authorized under a licence or permit or as provided by regulation.

(3) Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to a person who possesses wildlife under a licence or permit under the *Animal Health Act*.

..."

via Jeff Morgan

Fish and Wildlife Branch – Manager, Fish and Wildlife Policy, Resource Stewardship Division, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations  
Office: (250) 371-6347, Cell: (250) 318-5666, Fax: (250) 828-4000

Any questions relating to the provincial policy can be directed to Jeff Morgan above.

**B. Status of the RHD Virus:**

There have been no confirmed infections in BC since early May, however, it is safe to assume that the virus can pop up again in any area at any time, thus we urge quarantine of newly rescued rabbits, biosecurity, and vaccination.

The vaccine is available very cheaply (\$100 + taxes and shipping costs) when ordered in bulk packages yielding roughly 45 shots), therefore cooperation between jurisdictions and veterinarians is encouraged re: staging volume vaccination clinics.

We also urge animal control officers to be diligent in watching for and reporting rabbit deaths and feral colony disappearances. Bodies in good condition with no cause of death apparent should be sent for testing to the Animal Health Lab in Abbotsford. (Call (604-556-3003 for more information). Bodies are the main conduit of the virus thus they need to be taken out of the environment immediately with biosecurity precautions taken, e.g., double-bagging the bodies and incinerating when possible. The bodies should NOT be buried or placed in a landfill without pre-arranged deep burial procedures in place.

Practicing biosecurity measures around the rabbits at all times would be prudent. Please refer to this document from the BC SPCA: <https://spca.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Rabbit-Hemorrhagic-Disease-Information-Sheet-for-Rabbit-Guardians.pdf>

In addition to the above, the following protocol should be implemented:

- a. Newly rescued feral rabbits should be quarantined for 10 days (rabbits who lived together in the wild can be housed together, otherwise they should be housed separately) and vaccinated as soon as possible thereafter, and
- b. All the mentioned disinfectants are not to be used on human or animal skin or fur.
- c. For more detailed information, any shelters or individual rescuers are welcome to email Dr Veronica Gventsadze at [gassendus@hotmail.com](mailto:gassendus@hotmail.com)

### C. Status of the Abandoned Rabbit Situation in BC

The abandoned domestic rabbit population is burgeoning due to three major factors:

- a) a naturally occurring population explosion experienced every 10 years or so,
- b) low rental housing vacancy rates leading to limited options for rabbit guardians,
- c) shelters and rescues closing their doors to rabbits due to the RHD virus.

It is imperative that agencies not taking in rabbits make other arrangements for their intake. Unsterilized rabbits released into the environment results in danger to those rabbits as well as property damage and an increased occurrence of feral colonies that spread the virus. While there is a small RHD risk to rabbits in the shelter system, there's much greater risk to feral rabbits via predators, cars, and the potential to perpetuate the disease for years to come when people are forced to abandon the pets into the environment. There are also no provisions being made in many areas to deal with sick and injured stray rabbits.

Please distribute this information to as many people in the Animal Control system in BC as possible immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Dr. Patricia Tallman (policy, liaison with government)** [pattallman@shaw.ca](mailto:pattallman@shaw.ca) 778-828-2850

**Dr. Veronica Gventsadze (veterinarian)** [gassendus@hotmail.com](mailto:gassendus@hotmail.com)

**Sorelle Saidman (Rabbitats founder)** [rabbitats@gmail.com](mailto:rabbitats@gmail.com)



## CITY OF VANCOUVER - ANIMAL CONTROL BY-LAW NO. 9150

(Consolidated for convenience only to January 15, 2019)

### DEFINITION

“other animal” means any animal, including any mammal, bird, reptile or amphibian, except a dog or domestic cat;

### SECTION 6 IMPOUNDMENT OF DOGS

### SECTION 7 REGULATION OF ANIMALS

#### Controlling other animals

7.1 A person who keeps an other animal, or a person who has care, custody or control of an other animal, must not permit, suffer, or allow the other animal to be elsewhere than on his or her property unless it is under the immediate charge and control of a competent person.

#### Seizing other animals under this By-law

7.7 The Poundkeeper or a police officer may seize an other animal who is elsewhere than on property referred to in section 7.1, and who is not under the immediate charge and control of a competent person.

#### Seizing other animals under Parks Control By-law

7.8 A police officer or a person authorized by the Park Board who seizes an other animal under a by-law enacted by the park board may deliver the other animal to the Poundkeeper or to the pound.

#### Impounding other animals

7.9 Promptly upon receiving an other animal under section 7.7 or 7.8, the Poundkeeper may impound the other animal at the pound.

#### Detaining impounded other animals

7.10 The Poundkeeper may detain an other animal impounded under section 7.9 for 48 hours.

#### Caring for other animals

7.11 The Poundkeeper, as he or she considers necessary and humane, may maintain and care for impounded other animals including the provision of food, water, and shelter, and may arrange for veterinary care and medication.

## "Delta Animal Control Bylaw No. 6893, 2010"

### DEFINITION

"domestic animal" means a domestic animal as defined in the Community Charter, but for the purposes of this Bylaw does not include wildlife, livestock or poultry;

"livestock" includes cows, horses, mules, swine, sheep, goats, llama, alpaca and ostriches; and any other animal that is raised or housed in an agricultural setting to produce commodities such as food, fibre, or labour; but does not include poultry or any domestic animal;

### PART III - CONTROL OF ANIMALS

23. Every Responsible Person shall ensure that any animal they are responsible for, other than a spayed cat, does not run at large or trespass in or upon any private lands or premises.

24. Without limiting section 23 every owner of any livestock, poultry or rabbits shall ensure that their livestock, poultry or rabbits do not run, stray or trespass on a highway or any public place, or graze on unfenced land, unless the livestock, poultry or rabbits securely tethered or otherwise constrained and accompanied by a Responsible Person.

### PART V - CARE OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS

35. Every person who keeps a domestic animal must provide it with: (a) clean potable drinking water at all times; (b) suitable food of sufficient quantity and quality to allow for normal growth and the maintenance of normal body weight; (c) food and water receptacles kept clean and disinfected and located so as to avoid contamination by excrement;

#### Bylaw No. 6893

(d) the opportunity for exercise sufficient to maintain good health, including the opportunity to be untethered and exercised regularly under appropriate control; and (e) veterinary medical care when the domestic animal exhibits signs of pain or suffering.

36. No person may keep or leave a domestic animal, other than a spayed cat, unattended outside for more than an hour, unless it is provided with outside shelter to ensure protection from heat, cold and wet that is appropriate to the domestic animal's weight and type of coat. Such shelter: (a) must provide sufficient space to allow the domestic animal the ability to turn around freely and to easily stand, sit and lie in a normal position; (b) must be at least 1 ½ times the length of the domestic animal and at least the domestic animal's length in width, and at least one hundred ten percent (110 %) as high as the domestic animal's height measured from the floor to the highest point of the domestic animal when standing in a normal position; (c) must provide sufficient shade to protect the domestic animal from the direct rays of the sun at all times; (d) must contain bedding that will assist with maintaining normal body temperature

for the domestic animal; and (e) must be regularly cleaned and sanitized and have all excrement removed and properly disposed of daily.

37. No person may cause, permit or allow an animal: (a) to be hitched, tied, or fastened to a fixed object where a choke collar forms part of the securing apparatus, or where a rope or cord is tied directly around the animal's neck; (b) to be hitched, tied or fastened to a fixed or heavy object where the securing device fails to allow the animal the ability to turn around freely and to easily stand, sit and lie in a normal position.

38. Notwithstanding any other provision of this bylaw, no person shall: (a) cause, permit or allow an animal to suffer; or (b) train any animal to fight.

#### PART VI – ANIMAL SHELTER OPERATION

42. An Animal Control Officer may seize: (a) any animal, other than a spayed cat, at large on a highway or public place; (b) any animal, other than a spayed cat, straying or trespassing on private property;

Bylaw No. 6893

(c) any domestic animal, other than a spayed cat, on unfenced land and not securely tethered or contained (d) any unlicensed dog more than 6 months old; (e) a spayed cat that does not bear identification meeting the requirements of section 62; and (f) any dog that does not bear identification meeting the requirements of section 12, and shall forthwith impound the animal at the Animal Shelter or such other facility as the Animal Shelter Manager may have available. The Animal Control Officer shall retain the animal for a period of not less than seventy-two (72) hours, and if the animal is not reclaimed in accordance with section 48 herein within the said seventy-two (72) hours, the Animal Shelter Manager may cause such animal to be sold by auction or private sale or otherwise disposed of.

43. An Animal Control Officer acting under the direction of the Animal Shelter Manager, is authorized, at the sole cost and expense of the animal's owner, to: (a) seize and forthwith impound any animal that appears to be in imminent danger of substantial harm or death, or that appears to be suffering from an injury, disease or sickness if, in the opinion of the Animal Shelter Manager, its safety or relief from suffering cannot be reasonably dealt with in another manner; (b) open, enter or break into any locked or unlocked vehicle containing a domestic animal that is or appears to be in imminent danger of substantial harm or death, or that is or appears to be suffering for the purposes of rescuing, seizing and impounding the domestic animal; and (c) deem the animal to have been surrendered to the District and sell the animal by auction or private sale or otherwise dispose of the animal if the animal is not claimed by its owner within seventy-two (72) hours. The owner of such vehicle shall not be entitled to any damages for such action.

## ANIMAL CONTROL BYLAW 2005 NO. 4440 THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY

### PART VI - CONTROL OF ANIMALS

30. No person shall suffer or permit any dog or large animal owned, possessed or harbored by them (1) to run at large or to trespass in or upon any private lands or premises; (2) to do any act that injures a person or persons whether on the property of the owner or not; (3) to do any act that injures an animal or animals whether on the property of the owner or not;

### PART VIII – ANIMAL CONTROL SHELTER OPERATION

50. The Animal Control Officer may seize any dog or animal found running at large or any unlicensed dog, and immediately after making such seizure, cause such dog or large animal to be impounded.

## Rabbits: An Attraction, Not A Pest!

- Events, markets and various businesses pay to rent inhumane 'petting zoos.'
- Rabbitats has developed a humane 'no touch' stress-free method of viewing and interaction.
- 'Meet n' Treat' events can help provide sustainable funding for shelters and sanctuaries.
- Parks containing animals are major family attractions.
- 'Therapy animals' are a fast growing trend.
- The rabbits can be a bonus for businesses looking to attract a customers, including farm markets, garden centres and developments. Institutions, care homes and other venues can have controlled colonies.
- City Parks can position the rabbits as a 'hands off' calming attraction overseen by Rabbitats volunteers.
- Developers can also incorporate low-maintenance 'Rabbitats' onto 'Green roofs', garden courtyards and other innovative projects giving them an added feature – and a lot of extra attention.

