



**TOWN OF MINTO**

**DATE:** May 27, 2016  
**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Bill White, C.A.O. Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Petition Feral Cats in Palmerston

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**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

9.13 Implement short form wording and streamline by-law enforcement practices where possible to efficiently allocate resources to minor offences, and continue enforcing by-laws based on complaints

**BACKGROUND:**

The attached petition was received May 25 asking for a by-law to regulate cats in Palmerston. The petition sites the following concerns:

- 10-20 cats running loose in James, Main, Bell and William Streets
- Feces, trespass, noise, unfettered population growth
- Request a limit on number of cats per property and on care and control of these cats

The Town limits the number of dogs in any one household to three. There is no such by-law for cats. The Town's Animal Control officer does not pick up cats and the shelter is not equipped to handle cats. The Owen Sound Animal Shelter is properly equipped as a full "no-kill" shelter. In the past they have accepted dogs from Minto, but have not been approached to accept cats. The Owen Sound Shelter covers a considerable area and has a comprehensive cat program.

Section 103 of the Municipal Act allows for cats and dogs to be regulated as follows:

**Impounding animals**

**103. (1)** If a municipality passes a by-law regulating or prohibiting with respect to the being at large or trespassing of animals, it may provide for,

- (a) the seizure and impounding of animals being at large or trespassing contrary to the by-law; and
- (b) the sale of impounded animals,
  - (i) if they are not claimed within a reasonable time,
  - (ii) if the expenses of the municipality respecting the impounding of the animals are not paid, or
  - (iii) at such time and in such manner as is provided in the by-law.

The attached information Feral Cat Rescue is from a non-profit organization based in Orangeville, Shelburne and Owen Sound. These volunteers assist with trapping, neuter/spay, and return/adopt out feral cats. The volunteer organization operates on the basis of donations. Their Facebook Page is active <https://www.facebook.com/Feral-Cat-Rescue-806298772730182/> and the group has been contacted regarding the issue in Palmerston.

**COMMENTS:**

There can be considerable discussion on the merits of licensing and regulating cats. If the Town is going to pick up stray cats it should have a licensing by-law to help identify any cats that are picked up and to generate revenue to assist with the cost.

One challenge is designing a bylaw that effectively applies in urban and rural areas. Given the Town's large geographical area and the variety of feral cat habitats within the boundaries it would be difficult to conceive of a fair and affordable licensing program. A licensing program in urban areas might work, but left unregulated feral cats in rural barns on the outskirts could soon be drawn into communities for food or shelter.

Staff has been involved with initiatives to regulate cats in other municipalities and found the actions to be very controversial attracting a wide variety of interests. Dog owners have come to accept a license program for dogs including limits on numbers, prohibiting large pets, and even dangerous dog designations and associated penalties. Cat licensing is unlikely to help the situation in Palmerston especially since these are likely feral cats. Staff believes they may be drawn to this area by people who feed them.

Owners of in-door cats are likely to resist licensing because their cats never go outside. Even if an owner of an "indoor-outdoor" cat agrees to a license, they believe letting their cat roam the neighbourhood is humane treatment. Some cat owners will resist limits on the number of "indoor" cats so long as proper care is being offered. In the past in extreme situations the SPCA has evacuated homes in Minto with too many cats and dogs due to animal welfare concerns.

Town staff believes the cost of a regulatory by-law system and shelter could be high relative to the potential benefit, and in fact may not address the issue of feral cats in Palmerston. As an alternative the Town may wish to support cats being transferred through the feral cat rescue program.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:**

One cat held for 5 days before being transferred to a "no-kill" shelter would cost will cost the Town well over \$100 (including impound, daily charges, and license if applicable).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Council receives the CAO Clerk's report dated May 27, 2016 regarding Petition Feral Cats Palmerston, and that the Town consider support for the Feral Cat Rescue program, and that staff follow up regarding the concerns expressed in downtown Palmerston.

Bill White, CAO/Clerk



## Low Cost Spay & Neuter Services

**\$65.00**

Spay or Neuter

**\$40.00**

Transport Donation

Feral Cat Rescue is offering Low Cost Spay & Neuter Services to residents of Owen Sound and surrounding areas and will transport your cat to and from the Barrie SPCA Spay/Neuter clinic for a donation that goes 100% to the Rescue to help feral cats.



**Feral Cat Rescue**

**519 -278-0707**

To learn more about our Transport Service to the  
SPCA Spay/Neuter Clinic go to [www.feralcatrescue.ca](http://www.feralcatrescue.ca)  
and click on Spay/Neuter Services or Call

**519 -278-0707**

Spaying and Neutering your cat will:  
stop spraying, fighting, yowling, roaming and cat overpopulation.  
Cats become healthier, less stressed and are better pets.



Feral Cat Rescue is a non-profit organization run by  
volunteers and operates completely on donations. We  
provide Trap, Neuter and Return services for feral cats  
and rehome feral cats and kittens.



May, 2016

Town of Minto Council:

This letter was inspired by the amount of cats that are running loose in Palmerston, especially the downtown core, in the area of James, Main, Bell and William Streets.

We have counted between 10 and 20 cats, that are left outside all summer and winter long (cruelty to animals) roaming around freely on everyone's property, their feces piling up in our gardens and lawns, and in the parking lot behind the old Palmer hotel. The cats screech and fight at all hours of the night, which is disrupting our sleep. They are obviously not neutered, they spray everywhere, the smell is everywhere. They can be seen mating frequently, which means the problem is only going to get worse. Left unattended, they will bring and spread disease.

We the undersigned, request the council realize the need to have a Cat By-Law similar to that of dogs, which would restrict the amounts of cats per property, and somehow enforce individuals to take responsibility for the problem that they have created, and in the end, have the power to euthanize any unclaimed cats as a dog would be.

Barbara Moon      Paul Doherty  
Chris Craig      John  
Jim Clark      Larry McKenzie  
Roger Swartz      Margie McKenzie  
Lloyd McFarlane  
Barbara Burns  
O'Hara

