(Add your address including your email address)

(Add the date)

Dear (name of Councillor):

I am writing regarding my concerns about the proposed new Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw. Much of the wording in this proposal is unreasonable and can only lead to overregulation.

Points of particular concern include the following:

Under Part 3, 16.(5) states that an animal must not be left unattended in a vehicle when the temperature outdoors is below minus 15 or above plus 15. This simplistic over arching regulation gives no thought to owners who have developed appropriate strategies for managing their animals in a vehicle. A far more thoughtful example is this wording from Illinois, Do not “Confine any animal in a motor vehicle in such a manner that places it in a life or health threatening situation by exposure to a prolonged period of extreme heat or cold, without proper ventilation or other protection from such heat or cold”

Also in Part 3, 22.(1) the Bylaw says that the Owner of an animal must ensure that the Animal does not …bark at, or chase stock, animals, bicycles, automobiles or other vehicles. The words “bark at” need to be removed.

The descriptor “nuisance” dog in this bylaw is over used and can far too easily result in severely punitive consequences for the owner and dog. In Part 5m 44 (b) the Bylaw states that a dog may be designated Nuisance Animal if it has been found running at large more than once. It is completely unreasonable to think that a dog would be that heavily punished if it happened to escape its yard more than once in its lifetime.

Similarly, in Part 3, 20 (1), the Bylaw declared that the Owner of an Animal must ensure that such Animal does not bark, howl, or otherwise make or cause a noise which disturbs any person. This subsection leaves the dog and it owner completely at the mercy of disgruntled neighbours and Bylaw enforcement.

An issue that was never made part of the Public Engagement is reference throughout this Bylaw to “intact” dogs. Recent research increasingly informs us that (particularly early) spaying and neutering can have long-term negative impacts on the lifelong well-being of dogs. Despite this, licensing and fines are considerably more expensive for intact dogs, and should a dog be designated as vicious, it must be neutered or spayed within 10 days at the Owner’s expense. This bias in this Bylaw needs to be reviewed through a lens of current research.

Many areas of this document require greater clarity if effective compliance and enforcement is to be achieved. I hope that City Council will see fit to require further work on this Bylaw prior to it being passed into law.

Sincerely,

(your name)