SUBMSSION – JANE OLIJNEK FOUNDER OF END BSL MANITOBA

Item 2 of the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks dated April 11, 2022 regarding Further Proposed Responsible Pet Ownership By-law Amendmentss

April 28, 2022

Dear Winnipeg City Councilors

I'm Jane Olijnek founder of End BSL Manitoba — we are a non-profit group of local citizens working towards improved animal welfare and dog equality in the province of Manitoba. We support breed neutral laws and encourage responsible pet ownership, education and advocacy. We have been working together with Winnipeg Humane Society and Winnipeg Animal Services to create a kinder safer Winnipeg inclusive to all.

Safer communities are created with an evidence-based, breed neutral RPO that targets the underlining risk factors leading to dog incidents, with consistent enforcement, penalties and education to prevent dog incidents from escalating. This proactive approach should encompass ALL irresponsible owners and dangerous dog behaviour.

We strongly support the addition of the new "At Risk" category in the proposed breed neutral RPO, which further supports pets from entering the current dangerous and exceptionally dangerous category. "At Risk" focuses on laws that strengthen and improve the safety of both pets and the community. Breed neutral laws better evaluate a dog's behaviour, without bias and supports a community-based approach to dog guardianship, which would include licensing, spaying, neutering along with public awareness campaigns to build a responsible pet ownership culture, rather than targeting breeds or a dog's appearance, which does not improve safety nor inclusive to all.

The proposed RPO focuses on (1) known risk factors to improve safety outcomes and prohibit ownership if required for both the dog and public's safety. The new "At Risk" category emphasizes the owner's role in properly caring for, managing and taking responsibility for their dog's behaviour. In doing so, it targets known "risk factors" for dog aggression acknowledged by organizations like the American Veterinary Medical Association, the SPCA and Centers for Disease Control. These factors include breeding, health, training, socialization, past behaviour, spay/neuter, roaming at large, 24/7 chaining, and quality of ownership.

Any dog bite is a concern, no matter, what type of dog. The new "at risk" and strengthened "Dangerous dog" category in the proposed RPO will help prevent dog incidents and allows requirements to be placed on a pet owner to proactively improve community safety. We also support the additions made to the "Dangerous dog "category; prohibiting ownership, if necessary, required harness use and training, along with no appeals on dangerous and exceptionally dangerous dogs — safety must be first priority.

Breed-specific legislation is opposed by every reputable (2)animal science and animal welfare organization. Targeting breeds or a dog's appearance does not improve desired safety outcomes, it leaves dangerous dog's in the communities. Science has proved aggression is not a breed trait but a learned behaviour. A combination of that individual dog's life experiences and health

combined with their owner's guidance dictates that dogs behaviour, not breed. BSL targets the wrong end of the leash. "There is NO scientific evidence that one kind of dog is more likely than another to injure a human being."

Breed-specific legislation is outdated and completely misses the mark on improving community safety because it does NOT target, the underlining "risk factors" leading up to dog incidents. The science leads to prevention by revealing the factors that need to be focused on like: improved ownership, better understanding of dog behaviour, education of parents and children regarding safety around dogs and consistent enforcement of dangerous/reckless owners. These "risk factors" are targeted in the proposed RPO for improved safety outcomes.

Breed-specific legislation bylaws are a disservice in any city it is enacted, it punishes responsible owners and directs animal control resources away from more important animal welfare issues. BSL does not allow owners to be responsible, that right is taken away. They are afraid to take their dog for training, socialize them properly and seek veterinary care for fear their dog may be targeted. BSL is very subjective and based on visual identification, most people don't know if their family dog would be banned by BSL or not? They live in fear daily, of losing their dog, based on appearance alone. Breed-specific legislation (BSL) is not a rational or effective approach to improving public safety. Looks do not equal behaviour and are not indicative of whether or not a dog is dangerous. Safety comes from laws and policies governing responsible dog ownership and on the known past behavior of individual dogs. In Canada, Winnipeg and Toronto are the only major cities with BSL, and Winnipeg is surrounded by 115 breed neutralmunicipalities throughout Manitoba. Breed neutral areas surrounding Winnipeg and Manitoba are "NOT" experiencing theirshelters over-filling, nor an influx in popularity, bites or incidents from the banned breeds. [Some BNL Cities in Canada are; Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Kelowna, City of Vancouver, North Vancouver, St. Johns, Halifax, Nanaimo, West Minister, Coquitlam.]

In all dog incidents you need to look at the circumstances — doing so reveals the (1)potentially preventable factors. The science leads to prevention and improves dog/human safety when the known risk factors are targeted and enforced. Breed is never a factor in preventing attacks.
Important reminder; Improper language/labels such as "pitbull" perpetuate negative stigma, fear and discrimination by painting dogs (and thereby their owners as well) with the same negatively presumptuous brush. "Pitbull" is nothing but a slang term used by society to wrongly encompass a large and diverse group of dogs similar in appearance not breed, such as stocky body, muscular, short hair, and a large wide head, which are common in many pure breeds such as the American Bully, American Staffordshire Terrier, American Pit Bull Terrier, and American Bull Terrier - all breeds banned under our current BSL.

These features can also be present in many dogs of a mixed breed (boxer/lab cross for example), thereby classifying them as a"mutt" and no "breed" at all. The correct usage of the term should only be used in reference to the American Pit Bull Terrier.

Unfortunately, BSL discriminates against dogs on the basis of appearance alone, therefore not actually targeting the issue at hand which is "dangerous dogs behaviour."

We hope Winnipeg City Councilors will progress towards the thousands of communities around Canada, the U.S. and the world that are implementing a more effective, evidence-based, breed neutral approach to animal control and welfare.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Jane Olijnek
Founder of End BSL Manitoba

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(1)Canadian Study;
A Canadian study by Dog advocate and researcher Steve Barker compiled a list of published fatal dog casualties from January 1983 to May 2017.
In this time period, there has been a total of 42 fatal attacks involving dogs in Canada: Of the 42 recorded fatal attacks, 7 (16.6%) were in Manitoba, all in remote communities by (Huskies or sled dogs). Based on total population, Manitoba has suffered a higher number of fatalities than any other Canadian province except for Ontario. None of the Manitoba cases involved the three banned dog breeds (or their types) targeted by BSL. Severity of attacks are not due to breed but circumstances.
(1)The American Study;
The AVMA's study on fatal dog attacks reveals 7 co-occurrences of potentially preventable factors, and breed is not one of them. The science leads to prevention by revealing the factors that need to be focused on like: improved ownership, better understanding of dog behaviour,
education of parents and children regarding safety around dogs and consistent enforcement of dangerous/reckless owners
Major co-occurrence factors for the 256 DBRFs in this study included;
87.1 % — absence of an able-bodied person to intervene.
85.2% — don't know the dog — no relationship
84.4% — owner failure to neuter dogs.
77.4% — compromised ability to interact with dogs.
76.2% — resident dogs, isolated, no positive interactions.
37.5% — owners' prior mismanagement of dogs.
21.1% — owners' history of abuse or neglect of dogs.
0% — "BREED is not one of the factors".
(2)
Breed-specific legislation (BSL) is opposed by every reputable animal science and animal welfare organization. There is a long list of
organizations that do not endorse BSL: Winnipeg Humane Society (WHS), Winnipeg Animal Services (WAS), Canadian Kennel Club (CKC),
Canadian Veterinary Association (CVA), Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), American Bar Association (ABA) American
Kennel Club (AKC), Animal Farm Foundation (AFF), American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), American Veterinary
Medical Association (AVMA), American Veterinary Medical Society of Animal Behavior's (AVSAB), Association of Professional Dog Trainers
(APDT), Best Friends Animal Society, British Veterinary Association (BVA), Humane Society of the United States, National Animal Control
Association (NACA), National Canine Research Council (NCRC), United Kennel Club (UKC). Pet Professional Guild (PPG), Royal Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals UK (RSPCA), State Farm Insurance, Department of Justice, Obama Administration