

Good evening Mayor Hankivsky, and members of Council

My name is Martin Field and I am glad to come from Oshawa to present before you.

I am here to inform you as to how my advocacy over the past eight years has met with success in helping to establish Trap, Neuter, Return & Manage (TNRM) programs for feral cat populations in nearby municipalities.

With the support of the following municipalities, successful programs have been established in Clarington, Oshawa and Whitby with the support of the Durham Region Humane Society. In addition, working with the Humane Society of Kawartha Lakes, TNRM was established in the City of Kawartha Lakes two years ago. The program has also been approved by the Township of Georgina where it has registered as a tremendous success, so much so that the local Georgina Feral Cat Committee has expanded their range to include Brantford/West Gwillimbury and other communities within a 25 kilometer radius. I have also been invited as a stakeholder in TNRM reviews by the Town of Caledon and the City of Mississauga.

For those who are not familiar with the program, TNRM is the only time-tested method to reduce and to eliminate feral cat populations through natural attrition through humane practices.

This program has been successfully practised in Europe, South Africa and the USA for over thirty years.

I have assisted and guided feral cat caretakers in municipalities to have the program officially recognized by councils and to have the program entrenched in by-laws in order that caretakers can freely and legally operate.

The program can be supported by passing a no roaming (At-large) by-law provision and exceptions in current by-laws where needed to facilitate the program such as a no feeding exception.

In fact, I would suggest that one of the most effective actions for Port Hope is to provide for a no roaming by-law provision in residentially zoned areas. This will reduce the number of intact cats breeding, eliminate their exposure to urban dangers such as busy roads and poisons set as bait to control vermin. As realized in other municipalities, it will also eliminate negative human/cat interactions such as digging and urinating and marking territory as well as yowling and fighting.

Such a no roaming provision will also assist in reducing what is reportedly an increasing influx of foxes and coyotes who see the cats as prey and a food source. TNRM would also be met with approval by many in the birding community who regularly cite the millions of bird deaths caused by free-roaming cats.

Life on the street is far from fun. Feral cats can acquire contagious diseases like Feline Leukemia, respiratory infections (both bacterial and viral), and rabies. Protective actions such as vaccinations, once trapped, help prevent the spread of FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) and parasite prevention protects them from heartworms, flea and tick-borne infections, and intestinal parasites. As such, feral cats have no medical care and can suffer from a wide variety of ailments unless they are monitored and managed by a caretaker.

TNRM speaks to the responsible management of feral cats.

As in other communities where the program has been approved and In order to operate in the program ;

Feral cat caretakers and their colony location are registered.

Feral cat caretakers are required to take the two-hour online certified course that is offered by Community Cats Toronto (CCT). This course is widely recognized throughout the GTA area and well beyond where best practises such as teaching a strict feeding regimen and maintaining good relations with neighbouring property owners is taught. This online course also comes with the 160-page caretaker manual that is produced by the charity, neighbourhood cats that is often referred to as the 'bible' of TNRM. This is the same manual that you have been handed and in addition, I have provided TNRM by-law extracts from adjacent and nearby municipalities for your reference

Caretakers will arrange through their participating vets to have the cats spayed and neutered, to have the multi-vaccine shot, including for rabies, microchipped, together with any additional veterinary care.

There is also something else that I would like to bring to your attention.

Caretakers are tasked to pay for all veterinary services at their own expense. They are invariably busy enough caring for these cats, purchasing food and other supplies, trapping and vets visits, to have any spare time to raise funding. I feel that these caring members in our community should not have to incur such out-of-pocket costs. Caring for these cats is not something that they cannot ignore or walk away from. It is not in their nature to do so and I think we should consider ourselves fortunate to have these selfless members in our respective communities. With modest funding from the town to compensate for veterinary expenses, such support would go a long way to alleviate their financial hardship and would simultaneously recognize their contribution to the Town.

The benefit is that the volunteer caretakers will, in effect, perform all the leg work thus leaving the Town's staff to continue business as usual.

In summing up, I feel it is important to note that by addressing this issue in a collaborative manner, it will, in a short time, deliver several positive results as noted including the reduction of complaints and through a responsibly-run program, will foster community goodwill, where previously there may have only been frustration.

I hope members of council will consider establishing a TNRM program to manage this ongoing ever present issue for the benefit of these cats and the community at large.

Thank you.