

Memo To: Sandra Tripp-Jones

From: Commissioners Rideout and Cannon
Ordinance Committee

Date: November 12, 2016

Re: Animal Control and Related issues

Recently we have been reminded of concerns regarding rabid animals from newspaper reports and calls from constituents. Nesting problems have also been reported to Commissioner Cannon and former Commissioner Cooke, which raise health concerns for the community and in particular children in the community. As a result the two of us met to discuss not only that particular issue but also ways that might help reduce the number of wild animals in the city and what legislation and funding might be needed to address what appears to be a limited animal control issue.

It appears from the City and County Codes that animal control is limited to dogs. We know that the county has an animal control staff and that the city does not. From a personal experience at the home of Commissioner Rideout, we know that the Cambridge Police have responded to a call regarding raccoons being seen during the day.

We think that the police should not be engaging in animal control, as it is not the most effective use of their time, training, and talent. How much we need an animal control officer in the city is unknown. We anticipate that some legislation would be needed to allow for a part time animal control officer who could be under a contract without benefits, and funding would need to be set aside to pay for that work.

All of the above raised a number of concerns for us and, we believe, for the community that include the following:

1. What data are available to help determine how large a problem this is in our community?
2. If data are collected but not screened, how difficult and costly would it be to screen and help provide accurate numbers?
3. If information is not available, how easy or difficult would it be for the city to develop a survey monkey or other instrument that could help determine from the community the size and extent of the problem?
4. What might be the cost for a contractor or company to be the part time animal control officer for the city?
5. What might the savings be and what greater protection for the citizens would there be if police officers were able to avoid doing the animal control work?
6. Could we get quotes from the licensed pest control companies here or the Humane Society that handle these types of problems in anticipation of what might be needed if the city were to move in that direction?

In reviewing other city and county websites, they provide information that urges residents to use trash cans for garbage in order to reduce the number of wild animals that would feed themselves from garbage bags left by homeowners for regular collection. In looking at the current Cambridge City Code, Section 8-8 directs how homeowners shall place garbage and nonputrescible materials for the purposes of collection and, Section 8-20 indicates the penalty for violation of the city code or waste regulations after notice of the violation has been served.

We believe that the city rarely enforces the code section that requires garbage to be placed in cans and understand that the enforcement of that section with required notices being served would be a significant burden and expense to the city. We also understand that there is a significant likelihood that wild animals including feral cats and raccoons are feeding themselves from these garbage bags that are not properly placed in cans. We also realize that the current practice has gone on for years so that changing the current behavior may well be difficult.

The above considerations then raised some questions regarding trash collection.

1. What data does the city have regarding trash violations?

2. How could the people collecting the trash know whether the opaque bags have cans and paper in them and do not have putrescible materials in them?
3. How could compliance with the current city code provisions regarding placement of putrescible garbage in trash cans be effectively and economically enforced, if at all?
4. How might the city approach this problem in some different and less burdensome way?
5. What about the city's refusal to collect construction materials?
6. What dumpsters are available in the city for residents to use?
7. What solutions to this problem do members of city staff have that do this work?

With regard to trash collection, we have been approached by some residents who have expressed an interest in recycling. We are aware that the city has looked at that in the past and determined that it is not cost effective. At the same time, we have been told by some people that they would be willing to pay the extra money to be able to recycle.

We understand that one private contractor charges city residents over \$50 a month for recycle service. Might that be lowered through competition with the city being able to provide more than single recyclers? If the county provides the service, at a lower cost, might Cambridge contract with that provider? By engaging in recycling, even to a limited extent, the city potentially would be able to reduce its tipping fees as a result of reducing the amount of trash going in the county land fill. We might also be able to get a better handle on the use of trash cans by residents.

To that end, would it be possible for the city to undertake to determine the following:

1. What would be the cost per voluntary resident to recycle?
2. Might the city do a survey monkey to determine how many people would be willing to have recycling based on what is learned about the costs and then sign them up for the service?

3. Might the costs be increased by \$1-2 a month to pay for any administrative costs that this project might cost the city?
4. What about the possibility of one or more voluntary recycle bins at the city property location on Leonard Lane across from the former DPW building or elsewhere?

Having staff study this issue along the above lines might find some new solutions.