



Affiliated with THE ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
410 JARVIS STREET, FORT ERIE, ONTARIO L2A 2T1

The Fort Erie SPCA would like to respond to some recent allegations made against our manager and staff. Unfortunately there have been some residents that feel the manager and the employees are not treating former employees properly or the animals with the best of care. Some of you may have read the comments posted by a group of people on Facebook. The board of directors of the SPCA take these allegations seriously and have done everything possible to investigate their credibility.

First we would like to explain that the SPCA is a standalone corporation. We are not a department of the Town of Fort Erie. The relationship between the Town and the SPCA is through the Town's Animal Control By-Law #119-97. The SPCA has been contracted by the Town of Fort Erie to enforce the animal control bylaw and administer the licensing of dogs and kennels.

The SPCA is tightly regulated by the province of Ontario through various legislative acts which include the Pounds Act, Animals for Research Act, Provincial Animal Welfare and Services Act (PAWS) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

Back in March of 2020 the SPCA board received a complaint from one of our volunteers. The complaint involved two dogs. The volunteer alleged that there was animal cruelty involving the SPCA manager and her staff. The board was scheduling a meeting to discuss the matter but due to Covid19 that meeting could not be held. Before the board had an opportunity to investigate the allegations internally the complainant posted her story on Facebook. During the delay of the meeting the complainant's Facebook group suggested that the board was covering up or hiding something. Nothing could be further from the truth. Everyone in Fort Erie knows the provincial government banned all group gatherings during the first stages of the pandemic. The board had to wait until the restrictions were eased before a meeting could take place. The board continued its investigation and found that the story on Facebook was not the complete story. We came to the conclusion that the complainant only told enough of the story to get people upset and the root of the complaint was a disagreement between the SPCA manager and the volunteer. The manager however suggested that the allegations be brought to the attention of the regulatory agency, that being PAWS. Provincial Animals Welfare and Services Act are administered through the Solicitor General's office. It is the highest office in the province that the SPCA can be investigated by.

As time went on more and more allegations were posted on Facebook and brought forward to the Town of Fort Erie Council and its CAO. The SPCA manager along with a board member met with the Town's CAO to discuss the allegations. The board believes that the CAO was satisfied with the discussion because after the meeting the Councillors received an email from the CAO stating that if any Councillors had further concerns they were to contact the SPCA board.

In June of 2020 the SPCA was investigated by PAWS. The investigative officer did not report any infractions of animal cruelty and there were no charges filed against the SPCA. The investigator did however recommend that the SPCA make some changes of how we deal with

"We speak for those who cannot speak for themselves."



wildlife. The manager of the SPCA acted immediately and within a week the policies and procedures regarding wildlife were changed to meet the officer's recommendations.

The SPCA board members received a letter dated July 28, 2020 from a law firm representing a group of concerned citizens in the Fort Erie area. The board can only assume that the complainant was part of the concerned citizens. We cannot confirm that because the people behind the letter did not reveal their names and wished to remain anonymous.

OMAFRA is another provincial body that the SPCA shelter is regulated by. OMAFRA officials will come to the SPCA unannounced at any time and inspect the facility. Our board takes great pride in the findings of those inspections. Over the past several years the SPCA has received straight A's from the inspector. Those excellent reports are a result of the great management and professional employees. The staff at the SPCA goes above and beyond their call to make sure the animals at the shelter receive the best comfort and care. The results of those efforts are shown in the inspector's reports. Residents of Fort Erie are more than welcome to visit the SPCA shelter and our manager will proudly go through the inspection reports and explain the story they tell. The board of the SPCA is not trying to cover up anything and we have nothing to hide. In fact it is the complete opposite. The board invites any resident of Fort Erie to come forward with recommendations to make our organization better. If any person has any concerns about our facility we encourage you to visit our website. You will find provisions to contact the board of directors and either lodge a complaint or provide your recommendation. Any complaints will be received and if they need to be investigated by a provincial authority the board will provide the complainant with the contact information required. The board of directors at the SPCA cannot investigate itself but we maintain the right to defend ourselves.

The board of the SPCA stand behind the decisions of our manager. We receive regular reports from our manager and we do not micro manage our staff. We find it difficult to deal with anonymous complaints and we do not rely on Facebook to provide us with the facts or the truth. The SPCA answers to the provincially legislative authorities that regulate us.

We would like to thank all the people that have shown their support over the years and through these allegations. We continue to work toward being the best animal shelter in the province. We are proud of the accomplishments we have made over the past few years and look forward to more of the same in the future.

Arthur B. King DVM
President, Fort Erie SPCA