

## Clarity needed on what constitutes a 'dangerous dog'?

**By Brock Weir**

Aurora is looking to set down clear definitions on just what constitutes a 'dangerous dog'.

Council approved a notice of motion from Mayor Geoff Dawe last week calling on Aurora to look at amending existing bylaws to clarify the definitions of 'dangerous dog' and 'dangerous act and attack' similar to amendments made at the City of Toronto.

'I have had a number of people contact my office with respect to concerns over dangerous dogs,' said Mayor Dawe. 'Council might remember we had a couple of challenges last term when we had to deal with dangerous dogs. This is really just a request to ask staff to look into the process to see whether we should do something and how it might work. This is pretty straightforward but it is just responding to some of those concerns.'

Toronto approved a number of changes to their existing policies this past December, defining an 'attack' as 'an act of aggression towards a person or domestic animal causing injury' and clarifying the definition of 'dangerous act' to include 'any bite, attack, act of menacing behaviour or any combination of bite, attack or act of menacing behaviour.'

Dogs deemed dangerous in the City of Toronto are to be muzzled at all times when off their owners' property, they are forbidden from designated leash-free parks, are microchipped and subject to warning signs on owners' properties.

While Council approved Mayor Dawe's notice of motion to start the ball rolling on similar changes here, some suggestions were fielded in order to make the motion more complete. Councillor Tom Mrakas, for instance, suggested staff also look into the City of Toronto's policy on choke collars and 'other preventative measures to protect animals.'

'I would definitely like to look at the aspects of protecting other animals as well,' said Councillor Mrakas. 'Not all of them are dangerous; some of them have dangerous owners, possibly, so we might need to protect animals from the owner.'

Mayor Dawe agreed, noting, 'It is usually more the owner than the dog.'

Councillor Wendy Gaertner added she would also like further information on the use of retractable leashes.

'They can be very dangerous for the owner of the dog and certainly people walking of the vicinity of the dog,' she said.