

# Animal control bylaw changes spark lots of criticism

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The safety hazard collars and tags can pose. The Milton resident said she had a dog who was strangled to death while playing with its brother because its collar got tangled up.

"It was very traumatic," she said, adding that the dogs she has now don't wear tags.

"I expected to see more emphasis on safety (in the bylaw)," Ms Lewin said.

Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada Vice President Keith Burgess said the numbers put forward in the draft bylaw are too restrictive.

"There's no public health or safety issue to justify limiting the number of these pets to two per household," he said. "Restricting the numbers isn't the solution. The answer lies in education and information."

Toronto municipal lawyer Teresa Kowalishin said the proposed bylaw disregards a person's

legal rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by taking a once-legal activity and making it an offence.

"I consider the draft bylaw to be a bad municipal precedent," she said. "This draft will turn you, municipal councillors, and your staff into pet police."

Stephen Baker, local horse farm owner and member of the Golden Retriever Breeders' Association of Ontario, said focusing on having two of each animal is leaning towards banning animal breeding. Under the draft bylaw, breeding isn't prohibited.

Mr. Baker also pointed out the definition of domestic farm animal as "an animal kept by a person for its pelt, wool or fur or for food or research purposes" doesn't leave room for horses and that horses are listed as a prohibited animal.

Ms Bennett said after the meeting that this could have been a typo. "We don't want to prohibit horses in the rural area," she said.

There were also several bird owners and bird club members in attendance who told staff the number of birds people can own shouldn't be limited.

Few had words of support for the draft bylaw, with one being resident Tim Boker, who said the Town is "doing the right thing" by putting these guidelines in place.

Under the draft, residents are allowed to own two of each critter classified as a small animal, such as rabbits, gerbils, mice and turtles.

Local homes can also have two non-venomous snakes, two lizards and two domestic birds.

The bylaw also lists prohibited animals, like bats, tarantulas and wolves, and sets out rules for pigeon keepers.

The draft has some similarities to the existing bylaw in that it permits two dogs per household in an urban area and three dogs in a rural area. The dogs must be licensed by the Town and wear a tag at all times.

Cat ownership rules also remain the same, with three cats being allowed in town and five cats in the country. While cats don't have to be licensed, they're required to wear a collar with the owner's name and address.

Ms Bennett said residents' comments will be compiled into a report that will hopefully come before council at its August 30 meeting, along with a finalized version of the bylaw. She added the report should be available on the Town's Web site, [www.milton.ca](http://www.milton.ca), or at the clerk's department at the Town Hall on August 26.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at [mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

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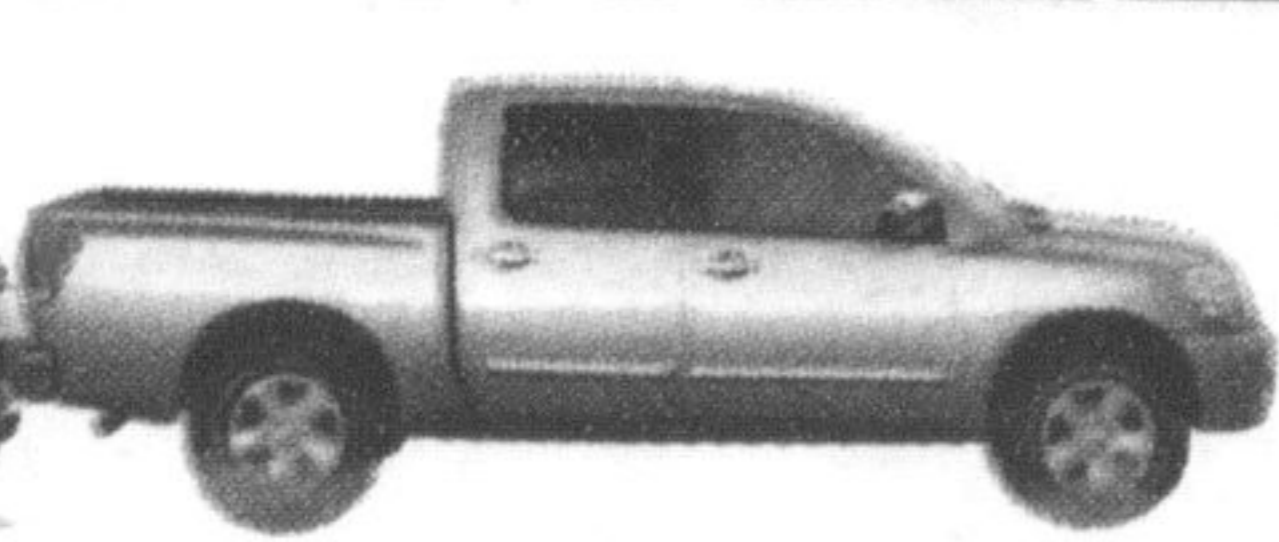
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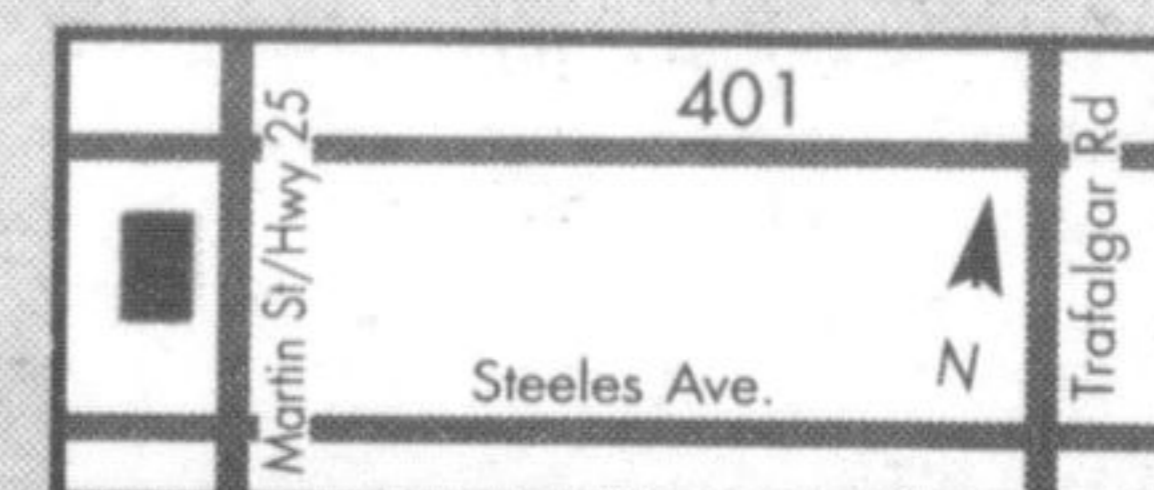
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