

OSPCA hands over enforcement of animal cruelty laws to Province

Written By KIRA WRONSKA DORWARD

As of June 28, 2018, there are some changes to the policies of Ontario's SPCA. "Since 2017," says Senior Director of Marketing and Communications, Alison Cross, "we have been looking for ways that we can better serve [the province]."

In January, the Superior Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for a charity to do law enforcement work. Additionally, a study conducted by Kendra Coulter of Brock University concluded that there were "serious safety concerns for OSPCA officers that they don't have the same resources to do the same work as police. With that report, our own research, and that ruling from the judge, and the fact that our contract [with the provincial government] was up at the end of the month, we decided to hand [the law enforcement] back to the government to do."

After extending their services a further three months, the OSPCA has now officially taken a step back from enforcing animal cruelty laws, which are now in the hands of the provincial government, who are hiring other officers and a director to oversee efforts in the future, under the auspices of the Solicitor General Sylvia Jones.

Cross points out that law enforcement is "really only 20% of the work for animal welfare. It's really only a fraction of the work we do across the province to prevent cruelty to animals. With regards to our enforcement services, we had said we would provide support services [to the government]." In addition to that we'll continue to do work across the province with our mobile spay and neuter services, animal rescue services (in cases of community disasters), as well as having a guardian program for women in shelters. If you have a concern either for your own pet or another animal and you're not sure what resources are available, just call us. We're here to help."

The general line for the OSPCA is 1-888-668-7722. More information is available on the OSPCA website, ontariospca.ca. You can also reach out to your local SPCA (Caledon's is located on Healey Road in Bolton). If you have concern for an animal, but are unsure of what service to call, please call 310-SPCA and one of the dispatchers will direct you to the appropriate resource.