

**From:** [Sara Henshaw](#)  
**To:** [Alana Kertesz](#)  
**Subject:** FW: In support of Doggo Den - for July 15, 2024 City Council Meeting  
**Date:** July 10, 2024 1:58:58 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
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**From:** Susan Toth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 9, 2024 2:00 PM  
**To:** Sharron McMillan <[smcmillan@thamescentre.on.ca](mailto:smcmillan@thamescentre.on.ca)>; Michelle Smibert <[mmsibert@thamescentre.on.ca](mailto:mmsibert@thamescentre.on.ca)>; Thomas Heeman <[theeman@thamescentre.on.ca](mailto:theeman@thamescentre.on.ca)>  
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**Subject:** In support of Doggo Den - for July 15, 2024 City Council Meeting

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Dear Mayor McMillan and City Council of Thames Centre,

I am writing in support of Doggo Den's application to continue their incredible dog daycare facility.

Did you know that 58% of Canadians are pet owners? 35% of Canadian households own a dog. In 2019, Canadians spent over **\$9 billion** on their pets? In fact, between 2018 and 2021, there was a 17.1% increase in what Canadians spend on their pets (including on dog walkers and daycare). This is a growth market. Pet grooming is also a booming industry. (Reference: <https://madeinca.ca/pet-spending-canada-statistics/>)

I hope you are already aware that there is no facility like Doggo Den in the Middlesex area.

This means that it is a huge draw for dog owners in London, Middlesex, Thames Centre, and all the surrounding centres.

Until recently, I have driven over an hour to a facility called K9 Fun Zone in Caledonia which has a private dog park and swimming pool/dock diving. What is important to note is that every time I drove to K9 Fun Zone, I always ended up heading to Caledonia afterwards for lunch, snacks and to run errands. While there, I noticed a bunch of interesting shops that peaked my attention. Would I have spent money in Caledonia otherwise? Unlikely. In fact – definitely – no. Did I end up supporting local Caledonia businesses because of K9? I sure did!

Similarly, because Doggo Den is so unique, I find myself driving to Thames Centre (from London) on a regular basis. This means that I find myself making a stop at Trail's End and Heeman's more than usual! In previous years, I might try to make a trip down to Thames Centre a few times a year – now, I am spending money in Thames Centre at least once every couple of weeks. I can almost guarantee that other clients of Doggo Den are doing the same. They will be buying gas, coffee, plants, strawberries, supplies – all because they are headed to Thames Centre for Doggo Den.

I am a member of many social media pages for dog owners in Ontario. Over and over, I see people asking for places where their dogs can swim, get trained, or go to a private dog park. People are willing to drive long distances to visit high quality places. Each time they do, the chances are they will buy gas, food, or spend money at local Thames Centre businesses. I assume this is all a positive!

I know Thames Centre, like any Municipality, is keen on supporting small businesses and those working to bring money into the local economy. As such, I was disappointed to hear about the overly stringent approach that non-elected municipal officials have taken with respect to Doggo Den. Rather than celebrate and support what Doggo Den is doing, Doggo Den is now at risk of being shut down.

This approach is not in keeping with the spirit of the law. As a lawyer, I can tell you that while laws are meant to be followed, they are not meant to be misapplied to prevent hardworking business owners from running their businesses in good faith, especially when they are doing no harm. Sometimes, an overly stringent interpretation is actually in direct conflict with what a by-law was meant to accomplish. One person (whether wilfully or inadvertently) misinterpreting a by-law can have a profound impact on a business owner, and by extension, hundreds of clients ready, willing and able to spend money in Thames Centre.

Regardless as to what brought us here, ultimately, as the elected officials, the choice of what happens next rests with you.

Over the last year, I have come to know Max and Laurie McCoy of Doggo Den. I have come to know them as hardworking, dedicated people. They are not interested in being disruptive or harming the community. On the contrary, they simply want to grow their innovative and forward-thinking business. They want to give back. They want an opportunity to run a business that will bring money to Thames Centre and is exactly the sort of business that all of us should be supporting.

I hope, as elected officials, you consider being part of their success story. I strongly support their application and look forward to many years of bringing my dog to Doggo Den and spending my money in Thames Centre.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

I respectfully request that this be added to the July 15, 2024 agenda as a public document in lieu of a delegation request in case I am unable to attend the meeting.

