

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, as the City of Austin expands further into rural areas there is more encroachment upon wildlife habitats; and

WHEREAS, interactions with coyotes have become more frequent in recent years, even in central-city neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the City and its citizens have an interest in strategies and planning for animal welfare programs community-wide; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the City became the largest city in the United States and the first in Texas to be certified as a community wildlife habitat, and in 2010 the City Council voted for a plan to make Austin a no-kill city; and

WHEREAS, City Code section 3-2-4 bans all persons from knowingly shooting, killing or hunting a wild animal or using a steel-jawed spring trap or any other type of trap that could injure a trapped animal or person, with exceptions made only for City employees acting within their duties and those issued a permit by the Parks and Recreation or Watershed Protection Departments; and

WHEREAS, in February 2014, the Animal Advisory Commission (AAC) provided recommendations related to coyote conflict management; and

WHEREAS, the AAC recommendation stated that education and ‘hazing’ methods (proven methods of re-training coyotes to avoid human contact) are less expensive, and they are proven methods to help alleviate the potential dangers that may result from coyote/human interactions; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2014, the City Council Public Health and Human Services (PHHS) Committee voted to adopt the recommendations and

stated that lethal responses will be considered only in the event of an incident or an attack on a human; and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2014, the AAC provided additional recommendations, which included banning the use of leg-hold traps, neck snares and chemical control for trapping coyotes and only allowing for live-release box traps followed by euthanasia at the Austin Animal Center; and

WHEREAS, the additional AAC recommendations further defined an incident as a coyote entering a yard and injuring or killing a pet or a coyote biting or injuring a pet on a leash, and defined an attack as a coyote biting or injuring a person without provocation; and

WHEREAS, on October 21, 2014, the PHHS Committee voted to adopt the updated recommendations banning leg-hold traps, neck snares and chemical control and only allowing for live-release box traps followed by euthanasia, as well as the definitions of incident and attack; and

WHEREAS, to address public safety concerns the PHHS Committee coyote policy was further adapted to remove the limitations on trapping and lethal methods, give staff the ability and responsibility to investigate and analyze coyote incidents to assure that the City is addressing threats to public safety, assign City staff sole responsibility for making the determination to remove a coyote, adopt a coyote response guide, and allow for lethal action only in the event of an incident or attack, as defined in the guide; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is currently a party to an interlocal agreement with Travis County under which the City provides general animal services in the County outside of the City's corporate limits and the City receives wildlife management services, including coyote management, from the U.S.

Department of Agriculture, Texas Cooperative Extension – Wildlife Services (“Wildlife Services”) through the County’s agreement with Wildlife Services;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to adopt the coyote management policy (Attachment A) and coyote response guide (Attachment B) regarding coyote management, utilizing education and hazing methods as primary methods and utilizing lethal responses only in the event of an incident or attack, followed by an immediate hazing education program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to professionally assess an area to determine how hazing can be used and hazing initiated, in the event that coyotes are seen in and around school playgrounds and areas where children congregate; coyotes are approaching, following or chasing humans; or coyotes are acting aggressively towards humans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to provide a progress report to the Public Health and Human Services Committee on or before May 31, 2015 regarding coyote management efforts, including availability and distribution of educational materials about minimizing coyote attractants and hazing methods, the methods in use for trapping, the number of traps set, and the number of animals caught, as well as periodic 6-month reviews of the program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to develop appropriate procedures to engage and manage the City's relationship with Travis County and Wildlife Services to ensure public safety and the humane treatment of animals.

ADOPTED: _____, 2014 **ATTEST:** _____
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk