



## **ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 10-12-2015-4-d**

Date: 10-16-2015

Subject: Wildlife recommendations

Motioned By: Chair Lundstedt

Seconded By: Vice Chair Shaw

### **Recommendations;**

1. The City Of Austin should develop a comprehensive humane wildlife management policy based on national best practices.
2. The City of Austin should create a new position, **Wildlife Management Specialist** to implement this new policy. This position would be partially funded by the \$10,000 currently allocated annually for the Wildlife Services contract and report directly to the Chief Animal Services Officer. An additional \$57,000 could be made available by Travis County.
3. The City of Austin should opt out of the contract with the Texas Agrilife Extension Service – Wildlife Services and negotiate with Travis County to do the same and create a county-wide program.
4. The City of Austin should initiate an audit of the contract between Texas Wildlife Services and the City of Austin as it pertains to the trapping of wildlife.

### **Description of Recommendation to Council;**

1. In the past several years the animal advisory commission has been tasked by council to address issues with deer/human and coyote/human conflicts. Two separate policies have evolved from these efforts. We have also heard from the public about issues related to peacocks, guineas, alligators, swans, etc. Due to this we recommend a comprehensive wildlife policy as the next appropriate step.
2. Past Animal Services Office leaders have not shown an interest in taking on wildlife management. We now have a Chief Animal Services Officer that is not only experienced in the field but enthusiastic to take on this role. The AAC has received complaints from the public that the items laid out in the deer policy are not being implemented in a timely manner. A city Wildlife Management Specialist could see to it that this is addressed. The commission also feels that the taxpayers would be better served by bringing wildlife management in house.
3. When this contract was first entered into in 2005 there was no expertise within the COA to effectively deal with public education or lethal coyote removal. This is no longer the case and the commission feels that the city and county are in a good position to take over all aspects of wildlife management. Please see *Attachment A, Contract No. 13-WS-01*.

Under services to be provided by Wildlife Services, items 1-4 and 6 are already being effectively performed by PARD, Water Utility and Animal Services. Only number 5, *extermination of dangerous animals* is solely performed by Wildlife Services. The City of Austin and Travis County are basically paying \$67,000 per year for a limited number of coyotes to be trapped and killed by Wildlife Services. This is not a good use of taxpayer dollars.

4. The commission feels that there is a disconnect between the recently enacted Coyote Management Policy and the actions of Wildlife Services. An audit of this program is necessary to ensure that the policy, along with **Article 3-2-4, Hunting and Trapping Wild Animals** of the city charter is being adhered to. The commission has received contradictory information from PARD, Water Utility and Wildlife Services regarding how wildlife issues are handled within city limits.

**Rationale:**

The Austin Animal Advisory Commission and Animal Services Office issue this joint position statement;

*The City of Austin should be modeling national best practices regarding wildlife management to include volunteer programs, education and outreach, community engagement, partnering with wildlife and animal welfare organizations on humane exclusion and deterrents. Lethal means of control should be permitted, documented, used as a last resort only with approval from the Chief of Animal Services.*

**Vote**

For: 10

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: Neuhaus

Attest: [Staff or board member can sign]

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