

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, 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 (methods of retraining coyotes to avoid human contact) are less expensive and 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, 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 recommendations of ~~the AAC and~~ the PHHS Committee, attached as Attachment A, 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 and determine how hazing can be used and 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 PHHS 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 work with Travis County and Wildlife Services to encourage use of the coyote management techniques recommended by the AAC and the PHHS Committee.

ADOPTED: _____, 2014

ATTEST: _____
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk

ATTACHMENT A

City of Austin, Texas

Coyote Conflict Management Policy

October 8, 2014

The City of Austin recognizes that neighborhoods have encroached upon wildlife habitats, resulting in human/coyote interaction; however, the City also believes that the community as a whole benefits from the presence of wildlife. The City recognizes that a healthy ecosystem balances predators and prey.

The City and its citizens have an interest in strategies and planning for animal welfare programs community wide. In March 2009, the City became the largest city in the United States and the first in Texas to be certified as a community wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. In March 2011, the City became the largest no-kill city in the United States. In 2013 the City adopted a no-kill policy for the management of white-tailed deer. Therefore, the City of Austin will practice an attitude of tolerance for and co-existence with coyotes, with an emphasis on education, awareness and humane conflict management.

Coyotes are naturally reclusive animals that tend to avoid human contact. Food availability will tempt these intelligent, adaptable animals to test the boundaries of human interaction. Habituated urban coyotes can appear to lose all fear of humans and may appear threatening to some. These habituated coyotes may pose a danger to small pets; especially free roaming or unsupervised cats and dogs. Breeding pairs may present a danger to perceived rivals such as larger dogs. Fortunately, coyotes can be conditioned to avoid people through coyote "hazing."

Hazing is an inexpensive and proven method of re-training coyotes to avoid human contact. This method is far more effective and humane than trapping with leg-hold traps. Traps are not selective and have the potential to kill pets or other non-target animals. Therefore, the City will institute a public education and coyote hazing policy. A city policy of public education and coyote hazing will minimize the need for the City to remove coyotes.

Normal coyote behavior, including coyote sightings, presence of coyotes in yards and residential neighborhoods, and loss of free-roaming or unsupervised pets will not necessarily result in coyote removal. Lethal responses (coyote removal) will be considered only in the event of an incident* on a pet or an attack# on a human. Furthermore, the City will not sanction the use of leg-hold traps, neck snares, or chemical control for coyote management. Removal will only be implemented using live release box traps that are monitored at least twice a day, followed by euthanasia at the Austin Animal Center. Furthermore the contract between the City of Austin and Wildlife Services will be revised to reflect the provisions of this coyote policy.

**Incident is defined as a Coyote entering yard and injuring or killing attended pet or Coyote biting or injuring pet on leash.*

Attack is defined as a Coyote biting or injuring a person without provocation.