

## MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

|               |                                                    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Meeting/Date  | COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (1) – JUNE 9, 2020          |
| Title:        | COMMUNITY SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDING NATURAL WILDLIFE |
| Submitted by: | Ward 5 City Councillor Alan Shefman                |

**Whereas**, the City of Vaughan is aware of reports of coyotes in Thornhill and is taking action to address this situation. The City understands that some people in the community are intimidated by the presence of these animals on local streets;

**Whereas**, the City continues to intensify its activities to do everything possible in line with best industry standards to deal with this wildlife issue;

**Whereas**, the activities of the City are supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, which guides the City's actions related to wildlife as defined by the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act;

**Whereas**, the City is committed to ensuring local streets, properties and neighbourhoods are unpleasant to coyotes;

**Whereas**, the City's prime focus is to create an environment that is uninviting to coyotes, encouraging them to exhibit more innate behaviours – including avoiding people – and retreating to more natural areas that people frequent less often;

**Whereas**, the possibility of relocating these animals is a potential strategy. While trapping and relocating is allowed under current provincial legislation, it has been determined that relocation is not an effective option as the animals can only be removed to a short distance of 1 kilometer from where they are captured as prescribed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Coyotes will return to their home territory in a short period of time if displaced. Additionally, removal of coyotes often has the opposite of the intended effect and actually results in an increase in the coyote populations and expansion of their territories;

**Whereas**, trapping in urban areas, is a safety hazard for the community posing a danger for household pets, other wildlife and people. Trapping is generally contraindicated in residential areas for these reasons;

**Whereas**, there are coyote populations in all municipalities bordering Vaughan as well as natural areas such as in the Don River valley area east of Dufferin Street which is a natural habitat for these animals, making any consideration of eradication of the coyote population unrealistic and ineffective;

**Whereas**, there are a variety of activities that the City is currently pursuing to create a less attractive environment for coyotes, including, with the cooperation of local residents, attempting to limit sources of food – including our garbage – that attract them and working with York Region Transit to ensure trash cans at bus stops are cleared on a more frequent basis. As well the City is urging residents to only put their waste out on their collection day, rather than leaving it on the street overnight;

**Whereas,** the City has also initiated a collaboration with Coyote Watch Canada – experts in this field – which has assigned a Canid Response and Outreach Team Representative to conduct an assessment in Thornhill with Vaughan Animal Services to advance our coyote strategy. We believe their assistance will result in intensifying our current efforts;

**Whereas,** we continue to liaise with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry on the application of the Provincial legislation;

**Whereas,** the City By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services department has entered into discussions with the University of Toronto Biology and Urban Studies Faculties to explore the possibility of partnering to conduct a data based and scientific analysis of coyotes in Vaughan;

**Whereas,** residents have an important role to play by making changes that will result in a less attractive environment for coyotes including:

- Removing food sources such as household garbage and bird feeders that attract rodents and vermin – which coyotes search for to eat.
- Placing waste out only on the collection day.
- Properly disposing of pet waste.
- Not feeding wildlife.
- Supervising pets – they should not be left unattended in the yard and dogs should be on a leash when on a walk.
- Carrying a bell, whistle or other noisemaker to contribute to hazing efforts, when on a walk in the neighbourhood. Make noise and then back away if a coyote is spotted – do not run.

**Whereas,** Vaughan Animal Services has continued to intensify its patrols in the affected area of Thornhill where coyote activity has taken place;

**Whereas,** Vaughan Animal Services is on call 24/7 to respond to residents concerns relating to the an imminent threat or emergencies involving coyotes in the Thornhill area;

**Whereas,** it is important for the public to remember that coyote sightings in urban residential areas is common and should not be cause for alarm. However, if a coyote poses an immediate threat or danger to public safety, people are advised to call 911 immediately;

**Whereas,** Thornhill Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) Gila Martow has, in a media release (June 2, 2020), stated that “The City of Vaughan has been offered the full backing of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to do whatever needs to be done to ensure public safety from coyotes.”

**Whereas,** in fact The Minister confirmed in his letter to the City (May 28, 2020), that the information provided within the letter is to assist the City “in making decisions and/or taking action with respect to protection of property related to coyote conflicts”

Whereas the City’s actions, even with the statements quoted above, must be in compliance with the Provincial wildlife legislation which, for example, restricts removal to only one kilometer from the capture site.

**It is therefore recommended:**

1. **That** Vaughan Animal Services immediately hire a staff person on a temporary basis (of up to 24 months) to be assigned to intensifying the City’s strategies relating to coyotes in residential areas.

2. ***That*** the City post signs in the area urging people not to feed and to raise general coyote awareness.
3. ***That*** the City of Vaughan By-law and Compliance Department continue its actions in the affected area to identify inviting conditions for coyotes that may be contributing to this presence. That the Officers observing property standards violations, uncovered garbage/compost, inappropriate food sources, littering in parks, long grass and unsupervised pets – all of which attract coyotes initiate strict enforcement to ensure properties are maintained in a manner that is less inviting to wildlife.
4. ***That*** the City of Vaughan write to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, requesting that the current legislation regarding wildlife be amended by adding a special section pertaining to managing conflicts between residents and wildlife in urban areas.
5. ***That*** it be noted in the request to the Minister the difficulties and dangers of trapping and removal in an urban area.
6. ***That*** the area MPP, Gila Martow be asked to lead the effort to update the legislation including bringing forward a private member's bill as soon as possible.
7. ***That*** the City of Vaughan, recognizing the special relationship that the aboriginal community has with wildlife, reach out to the local Aboriginal community to ask for advice and assistance in dealing with the current coyote issues
8. ***That*** this Council Member's Resolution be circulated to Vaughan's MPPs, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Shefman,  
Ward 5 City Councillor