

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Report

The 4th Meeting of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
March 5, 2020
Committee Room #4

Attendance PRESENT: W. Brown (Chair), M. Blosh, A. Hames, A. Hayes, P. Lystar, M. Szabo, M. Toplak and D. Turner (Committee Clerk)

NOT PRESENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: R. Oke

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM

1. Call to Order

1.1 Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

That it BE NOTED that no pecuniary interests were disclosed.

2. Scheduled Items

None.

3. Consent

3.1 3rd Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

That it BE NOTED that the 3rd Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, from its meeting held on February 6, 2020, was received.

4. Sub-Committees and Working Groups

4.1 2020 Work Plan Sub-Committee - Update

That it BE NOTED that the committee held a general discussion with respect to its 2020 work plan.

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 S.A.L.T. Rescue Organization

That it BE NOTED that a verbal presentation from B. Smith, Founder and President of the S.A.L.T. Rescue Organization, with respect to shelter/rescue intake capacities, was received;

it being further noted that additional research with respect to this issue will be undertaken at sub-committee.

5.2 2020 Go Wild, Grow Wild

That the expenditure of up to \$200.00 from the 2020 Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) budget BE APPROVED for the creation of a professional, reusable pop-up banner for use at Go Wild, Grow Wild 2020 and other AWAC-related community events.

5.3 Feeding of Water Fowl

That the attached revised 'Feeding of Water Fowl' document BE FORWARDED to Municipal Council and the Civic Administration for implementation/action, where appropriate.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Report

The 3rd Meeting of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
February 6, 2020
Committee Room #4

Attendance PRESENT: W. Brown (Chair), M. Blosch, A. Hayes, P. Lystar, M. Toplak and D. Turner (Committee Clerk)

NOT PRESENT: A. Hames and M. Szabo

ALSO PRESENT: R. Oke and M. Stone

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM

1. Call to Order

1.1 Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

None.

2. Scheduled Items

2.1 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Orientation

That it BE NOTED that the presentation from M. Stone, Supervisor I, Municipal Policy (AODA), as appended to the agenda, with respect to 'Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities' customer service training, was received.

2.2 Approved Fostering Organizations/Rescue/Foster - Premise Capacity Discussion

That the Civic Administration BE ENCOURAGED to meet with representatives from the rescue organizations operating in London in order to determine what they require for the appropriate/safe operation of their facilities and for the proper fostering of their intake animals with respect to health, safety and well-being standards; it being noted that a verbal presentation from R. Oke, Animal Control and Welfare Coordinator, with respect to this matter, was received.

3. Consent

3.1 2nd Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

That it BE NOTED that the 2nd Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, from its meeting held on January 9, 2020, was received.

3.2 Municipal Council Resolution - 1st and 2nd Reports of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

That it BE NOTED that the Municipal Council resolution, from its meeting held on January 28, 2020, with respect to the 1st and 2nd Reports of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, was received.

3.3 Municipal Council Resolution - Advisory Committee Work Plans

That it BE NOTED that the Municipal Council resolution, from its meeting held on January 28, 2020, with respect to Advisory Committee work plans, was received.

4. Sub-Committees and Working Groups

4.1 2020 Work Plan Sub-Committee Update

That the ~~attached~~ 2020 Animal Welfare Advisory Committee work plan BE FORWARDED to Council for its consideration and approval.

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 2020 Go Wild, Grow Wild

That the following actions be taken with respect to the 2020 Go Wild, Grow Wild event:

a) the expenditure of up to \$100.00 from the 2020 Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) budget BE APPROVED for the printing of the 'Living with Urban Wildlife' infosheet to be distributed at the event;

b) the AWAC BE PERMITTED to borrow Corporate accessibility equipment - including but not limited to an assistive hearing device - for public use at the event; and,

c) the Civic Administration BE REQUESTED to provide AWAC with a display copy of the revised 'Be Coyote Aware' signage found in London's Environmentally Significant Areas.

5.2 You, Your Dog, and Nature in London

That the following actions be taken with respect to the *You, Your Dog and Nature in London* brochure:

a) the expenditure of up to \$100.00 from the 2020 Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) budget BE APPROVED for the printing of a revised version of the above-noted brochure for distribution at the 2020 Go Wild, Grow Wild event;

it being noted that the AWAC encourages the Environmental and Ecological Planning Committee to destroy any remaining copies of the brochure containing outdated information and to have copies reprinted for distribution at the 2020 Go Wild, Grow Wild event; and,

b) the Civic Administration BE ENCOURAGED to update the "Coyotes in the City of London" web page by replacing any instances of or references to the outdated, reactionary coyote signage with the new, educational coyote signage being installed in Environmentally Significant Areas.

5.3 Feeding of Water Fowl

That consideration of agenda item 5.3, 'Feeding of Water Fowl', BE DEFERRED to the next meeting of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM.

Attn: Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

My name is Bonnie Smith, Founder and President of S.A.L.T. Rescue Organization. I would love to speak at your next meeting and address the situation of the fire at our main foster home on Friday January 17, 2020.

At that time I would also like to provide you with actual statistics and information to reassure you that we are a very well-run organization committed to playing an important part in decreasing the pet overpopulation.

We are so grateful for the amazing program that London Animal Shelter Program provides not only our rescue but many other rescues and low income families. Sometimes rescue organizations are faced with a situation where animals need to be removed from a home and be provided with medical help immediately. Putting a cap on responsible rescue foster homes will not allow us to provide the much needed care in circumstances like this.

I feel it is important that people know what the situation was. Hear the statistics to ensure them that we are doing and will continue doing what is best for the animals.

Thank you

Bonnie Smith
President
S.A.L.T. Rescue Organization
(Saving Animals Lives Together)
519-719-7133

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee would like to make the following recommendation:

City of London Environmentally Significant Areas and City of London Parks consider:

Signage to be located in ESA's and parks where hand feeding occurs most prominently regarding the adverse effects for both water fowl and to the environment. The purpose of this recommendation is to:

- Empower the public to consider the harm to waterfowl, other wildlife, fauna waterways, and to the environment overall
- Provide an effective tool through the use of such signage, to address the artificially inflated population of waterfowl and environmental consequences
- To enhance the welfare of wildlife in our city by discouraging feeding
- Reduce human wildlife encounters
- Assist our community with the enjoyment of wildlife in ways that reduce harm and increase the ability to co-flourish

Background information:

Water fowl have evolved biologically and with patterns of habitat use, migration, and foraging that support optimal health, perpetuation of the species, and survival. These preservation patterns are passed to each succeeding generation.

In Northern climates such as ours, accessibility, quantity, and quality of marsh grasses and grassland plants are severely reduced, thus each year, birds complete fall migration to wintering grounds, and return in the spring.

Water fowl may delay migration or forgo migration cycle due to human feeding.

Urban environments can provide sufficient food for small populations, however as thousands of waterfowl concentrate in these areas because of handouts. As a direct result, road and runway safety may be compromised by waterfowl as they move through traffic areas. Waterfowl often come into conflict with humans in defense of offspring, or close proximity to humans. The city must contend with complaints from the public regarding the safety, and human health consequences of supporting ever growing waterfowl populations. The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee has received a letter from a London constituent, having expressed concerns regarding the feeding of human foods, and the harmful effects for our urban wildlife observed in the City of London Parks.

“The Human future depends on our ability to combine the knowledge of science with wisdom of wildness” Charles Lindbergh. This quote speaks to need to find lasting and effective ways to protect and support the wildlife and flora that sustain healthy communities, and acknowledges to need to understand natural history and ecology in order to find long term solutions.

Adverse effects of feeding waterfowl:

- Disrupts natural and biological processes, migration
- Artificially inflates the population
- Health and Safety harmful effects to both humans and water fowl
- High concentration of zoonosis increases disease transmission between birds and through the water supply.
- Hand feeding leads to orphaned goslings, signets, ducklings as mass numbers of birds scramble for the handouts.
- Anthropomorphic foods are most often provided such as bread, popcorn provide no nutrition, can create blockages internally, and lead to mortality.
- Overcrowding, competition for handouts, lack of nutrition in the food, harsh weather combine to an increase in their susceptibility to life threatening diseases like avian cholera, duck plague, and avian botulism. The fact that these consequences may kill of large populations of birds is not humane.
- Wildlife rehabilitators receive calls annually regarding birds trapped in ice and increases the need for high risk rescue.
- Feeding and mass feeding of waterfowl degrades natural areas, brings birds of prey, wild canids, and other wildlife to the feeding area and into conflict with humans.

- Excess nutrients from droppings, handouts, may result in water quality problems such as noxious algal blooms in summer months.
- The end result of seemingly kind and generous acts of feeding waterfowl can be a continuing cycle.
- Feeding waterfowl inflates the population artificially, and may lead to complaint to take more lethal or drastic measures to address the issue and bring the public into conflict over issues of ethical animal welfare.
- Wildlife do not require our help to find food, nature will support only what it can feed and shelter.

Conclusion:

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee recommends that signage which provides key information regarding the harm to wildlife and ecosystems as it relates to feeding waterfowl as well as education regarding progressive ways to enjoy wildlife viewing while protecting natural areas, human and wildlife health, welfare, and safety.

Item 5.3

RECOMMENDATION:

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee recommends signage in City of London Environmentally Significant Areas and Parks, to provide key information regarding (1) the harm to wildlife and ecosystems as it relates to feeding waterfowl, and (2) progressive ways to enjoy wildlife viewing while protecting both (a) natural areas and (b) human and wildlife health, welfare, and safety. Signage should be located in ESAs and parks where hand feeding occurs most prominently.

RATIONALE:

The purpose of this recommendation is to:

- Empower the public to consider the harm that feeding causes to waterfowl, other wildlife, fauna waterways, and to the environment overall.
- Provide an effective tool, through the use of signage, to address the artificially inflated population of waterfowl in the city and the environmental consequences.
- Enhance the welfare of wildlife in our city by discouraging feeding.
- Reduce human wildlife encounters and conflicts.
- Assist our community with the enjoyment of wildlife in ways that reduce harm and increase the ability to co-flourish.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Waterfowl have evolved biologically and with patterns of habitat use, migration, and foraging that support optimal health, perpetuation of the species, and survival. These preservation patterns are passed to each succeeding generation.

In Northern climates such as ours, accessibility, quantity, and quality of marsh grasses and grassland plants are severely reduced in winter. Thus, each year, birds complete fall migration to wintering grounds, and return in the spring. Waterfowl may delay migration or forgo the migration cycle due to human feeding.

Urban environments can provide sufficient food for small populations, however thousands of waterfowl concentrate in these areas because of handouts. As a direct result, road and runway safety may be compromised by waterfowl as they move through traffic areas. Waterfowl often come into conflict with humans in defense of offspring, or close proximity to humans. The city must contend with complaints from the public regarding the safety and human health consequences of supporting ever growing waterfowl populations. The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee has received a letter from a London constituent, having expressed concerns regarding the feeding of human foods, and the harmful effects for our urban wildlife observed in the City of London Parks.

“The Human future depends on our ability to combine the knowledge of science with wisdom of wildness” Charles Lindbergh. This quote speaks to the need to find effective ways to protect and support the wildlife and flora that sustain healthy communities, and acknowledges the need to understand natural history and ecology in order to find lasting solutions.

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF FEEDING WATERFOWL:

- Disrupts natural and biological processes, migration.
- Artificially inflates the population.
- Negatively affects the health and safety of both humans and waterfowl.
- High concentration of zoonosis increases disease transmission between birds and through the water supply.
- Hand feeding leads to orphaned goslings, signets, ducklings as mass numbers of birds scramble for the handouts.
- Anthropomorphic foods that are most often distributed to waterfowl, such as bread and popcorn, provide no nutrition, can create blockages internally, and lead to mortality.

Item 5.3

- Overcrowding, competition for handouts, lack of nutrition in the food, and harsh weather combine and result in an increase in waterfowl susceptibility to life threatening diseases like avian cholera, duck plague, and avian botulism. The fact that these consequences may kill off large populations of birds is not humane.
- Wildlife rehabilitators receive calls annually regarding birds trapped in ice, which require high risk rescue.
- Feeding and mass feeding of waterfowl degrades natural areas, and brings birds of prey, wild canids, and other wildlife to the feeding area and into conflict with humans.
- Excess nutrients from droppings and handouts may result in water quality problems such as noxious algal blooms in summer months.
- The end result of seemingly kind and generous acts of feeding waterfowl can be a continuing negative cycle.
- Feeding waterfowl inflates the population artificially, and may lead to complaints to take more lethal or drastic measures to address the issue, and bring the public into conflict over issues of ethical animal welfare.
- Wildlife does not require our help to find food. Nature will support what it can feed and shelter.

CONCLUSION:

Signage in areas where hand feeding of waterfowl occurs is a straightforward, effective, and fiscally responsible way to educate the public about the negative consequences of food handouts to both waterfowl and the environment.