

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF TOWN & COUNTRY, MO
March 1, 2021
Via Zoom Videoconference
12:00 PM

Given the current public health crisis, various emergency meeting declarations, and in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 610.020, RSMo., this Conservation Commission meeting was held via Zoom videoconference and streamed live to YouTube. Public comments on agenda items were solicited via email. Real-time public viewing of the meeting was made available via the City's website at www.town-and-country.org.

Members: Alderman Jeff Wittmaier (chairman), Linda Robson (co-chairman), Sue Blake, Hera Gerber (absent), Linda Hultgren, Ann Marie Mayuga (absent), Sandra Murdock.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Communications and Administrative Assistant Morgan Kuepfert

1. Call to Order

Alderman Wittmaier called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM and the roll, as noted above, was called. There was a quorum.

2. Approval of February 1, 2021 Minutes

Ms. Robson moved for approval, seconded by Ms. Hultgren. The Minutes were approved.

3. Presentation from Missouri Department of Conservation regarding coyotes

Ms. Erin Shank, Urban Wildlife Biologist, and Ms. Tracy Boaz, Community and Private Land Supervisor, with the Missouri Department of Conservation were present via Zoom videoconference to give a presentation on coyotes. Ms. Shank gave an overview on her role with MDC noting that she provides technical assistance to communities on wildlife issues, such as coyotes, but also other conservation matters including tree work, pollinator plantings, landscaping projects and ecosystem services.

Ms. Shank began her presentation by giving information on the biology, behavior and identification of urban coyotes, which are most commonly seen in Town and Country. She noted that urban coyotes can be identified by their bushy and droopy tail, lean muscles, and yellow eyes. They typically weigh between 25-35 lbs. and can live 6-10 years in the wild. Ms. Shank explained that breeding season for urban coyotes begins in February, with cubs being born in mid-spring. Additionally, Ms. Shank described social patterns and behaviors as it relates to reproduction.

Also explained was disease in coyotes, most commonly mange. Mange can be identified in coyotes by lack of hair and scabs on the coyote's body. Ms. Shank stated that mange is not a human health risk. Coyotes can also host diseases such as heartworm, parvo, distemper and tapeworm which can be harmful to unvaccinated domestic pets.

With regard to human conflict, Ms. Shank explained that the best way to avoid is to stop feeding, intentionally or not (i.e. keep bird feeders clean, secure garbage, etc.), and to employ scare tactics such as throwing small sticks and pebbles or spraying with a hose. She noted that the intent is to create fear of humans, but not harm the coyotes. Ms. Shank indicated that if scare tactics do not work, trapping and removing is an option only at the cost/effort of the landowner. She explained that culling does not work for urban coyotes due to their social structure and culling could actually create more chaos within the population.

In response to questioning, Ms. Shank noted that the population is stable at this time, but residents may see an influx in early May through June due to the parents collecting food for the pups. She also reminded the Commission that since backyard chickens are allowed in Town and Country, to be sure that the pen is secure and a closed in run is provided.

Ms. Shank stated that residents are welcome to contact the Powder Valley location at 314-301-1500 for individual removal or trapping.

4. Preliminary Discussion – Green Thumb Awards

Brief discussion was held relating to the previous awards and categories for the same. For the 2021 Green Thumb Awards, categories will be as follows:

Residential Gardener
Residential Gardener with professional assistance
Pollinator/Native Veds
Non-Residential

Applications will be accepted until June 1, and judging will begin two weeks after. Discussion was held on advertisement, and Ms. Kuepfert noted that a flyer will be created to post on the website, Facebook, Newsletter, and throughout the parks in the City.

5. Chairman report

Alderman Wittmaier noted that a new sign ordinance and exterior lighting ordinance were approved at the last Board of Aldermen Meeting.

6. Adjourn

At 1:06 pm, Ms. Murdock moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Robson and approved.