



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: FEEDING OF WILDLIFE

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: B. RUSSELL, MANAGER, MUNICIPAL LAW AND PROSECUTION SERVICES, EXT. 4586

SUBMITTED BY: I. PETERS, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES, EXT. 4561 

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: E. ARCHER, CMA, GENERAL MANAGER OF CORPORATE SERVICES 

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: C. LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That staff utilize existing publications such as the Recreation Guide, Environmental Calendar, City Website and media opportunities such as the City news page to generally remind the public about measures which should be taken to reduce the attraction of urban wildlife.
2. That staff in the Building Services Department, Property Standards Branch investigate strategies to ensure that residents are maintaining their property in such a way as to mitigate attractants resulting from improperly stored garbage/waste and poorly maintained buildings and structures as required under the Property Standards By-law.

BACKGROUND

3. On October 22, 2012 Council ratified the following motion:

"12-G-274 That staff in the Legal Services Department investigate the possible options to deal with the feeding of wildlife resulting in urban nuisances, including obtaining information from other municipalities..."
4. As the City of Barrie has continued to grow, urban development has effectively continued to displace wildlife from their natural habitat. As such urban wildlife such as skunks, raccoons, groundhogs, etc. now inhabit what we categorize as urban areas.
5. In many instances wildlife are attracted by a food or shelter source which presents itself as a result of improperly stored/secured garbage including food waste, incidental food sources such as bird feeders or pet food, and/or poorly maintained buildings, particularly outbuildings such as sheds.

ANALYSIS

6. A number of municipalities were surveyed with the following findings:

Municipality	By-law	Explanation
Oakville	No	No by-law prohibiting the feeding urban wildlife on private property. Attractants such as food and shelter sources are addressed through enforcement of the property standards by-law.
Burlington	No	No by-law to prohibit the feeding of urban wildlife on private property.
Guelph	No	No by-law to prohibit the feeding of urban wildlife on private property.
Milton	No	No by-law to prohibit the feeding of urban wildlife on private property.
Toronto	No	No by-law to prohibit the feeding of urban wildlife on private property.
Thunder Bay	No	No by-law to prohibit the feeding of urban wildlife on private property.
North Bay	No	No by-law to prohibit the feeding of urban wildlife on private property.
Hamilton	Yes	Recently amended by-law to prohibit, in particular, the feeding of birds on private property, where the buildup of feces or the number of birds creates a nuisance to neighbours.
Mississauga	Yes	Recently amended by-law to prohibit food attractants for urban wildlife and other animals on private property.

7. Both the City of Hamilton and the City of Mississauga have only recently passed by-laws which deal with the feeding of animals. In each case they have advised that enforcement activity has been primarily to educate and seek voluntary compliance. No investigations have been launched requiring the collection of evidence or laying of charges. The success of these by-laws before the courts remains untested.
8. The Ministry of Natural Resources does not make any recommendation of by-laws pertaining specifically to nuisance animals such as skunks and raccoons, however their website is a good source of educational information.
9. In many instances the animals are not being intentionally or directly fed, but are attracted by food sources such as pet food left outdoors, bird feeders, and human food waste. Enforcement of a prohibition of feeding may face practical difficulties.
10. Active promotion and education of the public to encourage positive behavior that will serve to reduce the attractants for these animals in an urban environment will likely have a more positive result.
11. Educational materials can assist individuals in understanding the behaviours of these animals and in learning how to co-exist.
12. It is recommended that the staff in the Legal Services Department, Municipal Law Enforcement Branch together with staff in the Communications and Strategic Initiatives Department develop a variety of messages which can be utilized in various publications and media opportunities to educate the general public about urban wildlife and in particular, the importance of eliminating attractants on private property for such animals.
13. The City's Property Standards By-law, s. 11 currently requires that every building and every unit within a building utilize sufficient receptacles or garbage bags to contain all garbage and further, that outdoor garbage containers be made of rigid materials and with a tight fitting cover. It further requires that garbage and rubbish be promptly stored in receptacles. The provisions currently set out in this by-law, if adhered to by residents, would reduce the attractant created by garbage and waste left unsecured. By properly storing and disposing of garbage and waste, one of the

primary attractants for skunks, raccoons and other similar nuisance animals is significantly reduced. Without a reliable and available food source, such animals will quickly move to another more attractive area.

14. Section 15 of the Property Standards By-law sets out that the exterior of every building shall be free from loose, rotted, warped and broken materials and objects and requires that such materials and objects be removed, repaired or replaced. As with food attractants, by maintaining the exterior of buildings in good repair, the resident will remove the attractiveness and convenience of the area as a den or nest causing the animal to relocate elsewhere.
15. Property Standards staff have confirmed that Section 11 was enacted specifically to address improperly stored garbage as potential food attractants for rodents and wildlife. They have also acknowledged Section 15 as a means of reducing potential shelter options for rodents and wildlife.
16. It is therefore recommended that in addition to developing educational materials, the staff in the Building Services Department, Property Standards Branch be requested to explore opportunities to more effectively enforce the provisions of the Property Standards by-law to ensure that refuse is being properly stored and buildings properly maintained so as to remove attractants for these nuisance animals.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

17. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

18. There is one alternative available for consideration by General Committee:

General Committee could consider directing staff in the Legal Services Department to formulate a by-law which would prohibit individuals from placing or leaving food sources of any type outdoors on private property which could attract wildlife including skunks, raccoons, birds and similar creatures.

Additional staff would be needed to provide for evening and night enforcement.

The financial impact related to one additional staff member would be in the range of \$30,000 including salaries, uniforms, training, fleet, etc. Complaints received after regular patrol hours would be referred to the next operating shift for response.

It is recommended that this alternative not be considered by General Committee and that the recommendation to develop educational materials and reliance upon the Property Standards by-law to address food and shelter attractants be supported.

FINANCIAL

19. Costs associated with the development of educational materials in various forms including brochures, media bursts, publications, etc. will be incurred. There have been no monies allocated

in the 2012 or 2013 Legal Services budget to cover costs associated with this specialized communication related to this issue.

20. It is recommended that advantage be taken of existing publications such as the Recreation Guide, Environmental Calendar, City Website and media opportunities such as the City news page to generally remind the public about measures which should be taken to reduce the attraction of urban wildlife.
21. Development work could be carried out by staff but it should be noted that this work has not been specifically identified within the 2013 Workplan. The development of standard reminders which can be utilized in a variety of ways will have a limited impact on the 2013 Workplan. Consideration can be given to a more fulsome educational program in 2014 if deemed necessary by staff.

LINKAGE TO 2010-2014 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

22. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report are not specifically related to the goals identified in the 2010-2014 City Council Strategic Plan.