

## Long Beach City Council Meeting

August 11, 2015

### Coyote Mitigation Plan comments

My name is Lisa Andria and I am a resident and homeowner in the city of Long Beach, 5<sup>th</sup> District. I would like to first thank Stacey Mungo for presenting her coyote mitigation plan to the city council tonight. I would also like to thank the people that created the Seal Beach, Long Beach, Lakewood and Bellflower Facebook pages as I wouldn't have been educated about the urban coyote behavior and safety measures to take to protect my two small dogs if these didn't exist. Thank you!!

As you have heard from many of the Long Beach residents tonight, there are a larger number of coyotes roaming our streets during the day and night to hunt their prey for feeding, have exhibited a more aggressive behavior and lack of fear of humans, have set up dens very close to children's schools and playgrounds, and generally pose a threat to the quality of life in our great city.

Since I am not an expert, I solicited help from James A Schmidt II, retired Wildlife Specialist, also known as a Biological Science Technician from the United States Department of Agriculture in the Wildlife Services division. He was the first USDA employee in over it's 100 year history to receive certification from the National Animal Control Association. He did a coyote project that required him to live in a remote location among coyotes near the Grand Canyon for a collective 210 days. He kept live coyotes on his property for the USDA to observe and monitor for over 2 years. He has extensive knowledge and experience in how to deal with and find aggressive coyotes and received national recognition for removing a single coyote that bit 8 people unprovoked. He has been an expert witness concerning coyotes and, YES, he has extensive knowledge of all the devices used to trap, disable and euthanize wild animals. He has 55 years experience in this field, so to say he's an expert, is really an understatement.

Here are some points that I learned in my research:

- Coyotes are attracted by the screaming and laughing of children. Children often think a coyote is a pet, a nice doggie, and try to pet it or play with it without realizing the threat.
- Coyotes are active in both nighttime and daytime although they prefer nighttime for protection around humans – as the fear of humans diminish – their hunting times will move more and more to daytime.
- Coyotes can kill a horse, German Shepard, goat, or mouse with equal skill.
- Removing the experienced coyotes is the only way to stop their training of others with the same behavior
- Coyotes do not self-regulate their numbers – without a natural predator - if nothing is done to curb the population – they will keep increasing
- The coyote issue may have been caused by human interaction with expanding our footprint but, after decades of existence, the current coyote generation has their fear of humans very heavily diminished and have multiplied to a level of concern.

While I am very appreciative that Stacey Mungo has presented some great ideas to help combat this threat in our communities – I have some additional approaches and actions that I ask to be taken into consideration.

- With all due respect, a volunteer “hazing” team is not a good idea as the volunteers will be expected to do what a highly trained and governmental employee should be doing and they could be put in danger... plus, coyotes don’t wait until someone gets to a park or playground to stop their aggressiveness. I believe that calling 911 is more appropriate when someone is in eminent danger and cannot mitigate the coyotes’ aggressive behavior.
- My suggested approach also includes a community action committee but includes a team of skilled, knowledgeable parties from both the private and government sector. Everyone involved would be given a specific task and have a clear understanding of their role on the committee. Volunteer citizens can be used to keep records, maps, and identify habitat areas. I believe that citizens who have the time would be interested in helping the city with this effort. Use the people that need your help!
- It’s very important that the people who work on any plan have extensive knowledge, training and background on coyotes and Jim Schmitt has offered his expertise and would come speak to the city council if asked. He is providing this service as a donation since he normally charges \$5000-\$10000 for his input.
- As Stacey’s plan states – the removal of food, water and trash in open areas is extremely important along with the cleaning up of vacant lots and heavy brush areas near the freeways. This needs to be done quickly, not waiting for next year.
- Hazing a group of coyotes in one area will basically move them to another community, thereby not solving any issues, only moving them for someone else or another city to deal with. And, unlike the information presented in the R-26 proposal, there are no known successfully used coyote deterrents. Keeping a coyote from entering your private property means spending thousands of dollars on rollers and raising the height of all your surrounding walls to over 8 feet. Do you expect us to cover all our properties with heavy duty screens? Even that will not deter all coyotes...
- If the taking of experienced coyotes is put into the plan you need to also create a city ordinance that requires signage at all traps that advises of the penalties for tampering with the devices and efforts. This appeared to be an issue when Seal Beach enacted that effort last year.
- As with all plans put into place to combat a wild animal threat issue – there needs to be time spent on identifying exactly how many coyotes exist and where – that is the only way to determine the progress of your efforts. Specific volunteers on the committee can be used for this effort from a distance viewing point only so they are not put in harm’s way.
- Reviewing the migration of the coyotes in the area of Cypress to Seal Beach to Long Beach over the past 5-10 years could prove helpful in identifying where the coyotes originated and, perhaps, where they are looking to in order to be back on their own turf... like, perhaps, to the foothills North of our area.
- A Bakersfield resident stated that there are no coyote sightings or problems in that large, open farmland area and wondered why there is coyotes in our urban areas but not in the wide open spaces that would be beneficial and sustain coyotes for generations to come. Perhaps that needs to be researched and could shed light on the reason in order to find a true, long term solution.
- And, the plan, whatever is put into place, needs to have a clearly stated start date with a comprehensive reporting system to monitor progress. We need a plan that makes the city ultimately accountable for the results. If you choose or don’t consider the taking of any of the

coyotes, the city needs to be aware that the responsibility of an attack on any domesticated pet, child or adult lies with the governmental agency that made the final determination regarding this threat. If no plan is agreed upon or put into action today, the same will hold true on any attack since the proof of the issue has been presented by affected residents.

This issue is not going away... in fact, it will only get worse or progress to more attacks on humans or, the worst scenario, an attack on a child like the 3 year old at the Forest Lawn cemetery on July 18<sup>th</sup> who was bit on her back and dragged by her leg toward some bushes before her Mom rescued her. If the coyotes are left to naturally migrate, once all the small wildlife is eaten and our community efforts keep them out of harm's way of domestic animals and children, they will only go to another city or neighborhood – they will not go down in numbers or have an “about face” in their perceptions of humans.

I know there are many people at the city council meeting that feel that humans have expanded our footprint into the areas that wildlife roamed freely. Basically, that we caused this to happen. They are probably correct, but finger pointing doesn't help the situation. And resorting to name calling doesn't solve anything. They are mostly large national organizations with specific agendas and big budgets. We ask that you listen to and consider the residents that are coming together with a common cause without having a fully orchestrated organization behind us.

This has come to a point where you have to decide.. who do you intend to protect in the City of Long Beach? If you intend to protect the residents and owners of property along with their families (and I include pets as family members) then a really comprehensive plan needs to be done... If your intention is to protect a wild animal that is not endangered and doesn't have a threat of endangerment then you need to take on the risks that will come with that... meaning dissatisfied constituents, lawsuits and the possibility that home sales will be negatively affected if it gets even more out of hand.

And here is my emotional plea – I didn't pay a half a million dollars to finally own a home in an urban neighborhood with a backyard where I could rescue two adorable 20 pound dogs only to be told I can't let them roam in my backyard by themselves. I didn't pay all that money in property taxes to be told that I need to account for how my dogs will be able to survive while I am gone from the house for several hours. And I don't have the stomach or emotional strength to overcome an attack on my dogs – whether they survive or not. Please do something to stop putting me and my fellow neighbors in this position.

Thank you,

Lisa Andria

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