

Council Communication

December 15, 2014, Study Session

Update on deer education program

FROM:

Dave Kanner, city administrator, dave.kanner@ashland.or.us

SUMMARY

The Council, at its October 21st business meeting, requested that staff prepare a program to educate the community about living with deer. Staff has assembled such a program, which includes print materials, electronic communication and a community forum just before the start of fawning season. This is presented to the Council for information only.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The Council has requested that staff propose a deer education program, the goal of which would be to inform Ashland residents on the ins and outs of living with wildlife. In order to successfully execute such a program, the City would have to partner with local agencies, in particular the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the OSU Extension Service. This ensures that any information given to the public is sourced and accurate.

To that end, staff proposes the following:

1. Produce a “Living with Wildlife” brochure that is distributed to all utility customers through utility bills and provided to all new utility customers at sign-up. This brochure could also be given to local nurseries and garden stores (if they’re willing to distribute them).
2. Staff has already created a fixed, front-page “Living with Deer and Wildlife” button on the City web site. As new information is gathered and created, this page will be updated.
3. Stage a “Wildlife Summit” in the spring. This would be a community meeting, similar to what we’ve done with drought and emergency preparedness, as which local wildlife management agencies can present information and engage in direct Q&A with citizens. We’d propose doing this in April, when fawning season is beginning.
4. Invite the same presenters who would speak at the Wildlife Summit to appear on the mayor’s Town Hall TV show.
5. Connect presenters with local service clubs.
6. Make it a practice to include articles about living with deer and wildlife in the City Source in the spring and fall when deer are most problematic.
7. It may be possible to offer “Living with Wildlife” classes in Ashland as part of our recreation class offering. We could then include information about living with wildlife in the Parks Department’s recreation guide.
8. Op-ed pieces in the Daily Tidings.

There was some discussion at the October 21 Council meeting of warning Ashland residents of the dangers of potential deer attacks. Staff has been unable to find any information about preventing deer



attacks or what to do if attacked by a deer. State wildlife managers say such attacks are so rare that no one has compiled or provides information on the subject. According to Dr. Michael Parker, chair of the Biology Department at SOU, there is no scientific literature on the subject. The brochure mentioned above will contain a section on what to do when you encounter deer (taken from a Cody, Wyoming, brochure and verified by ODFW), but as noted above, we are extremely reluctant to offer information on this subject that is not sourced from the experts in this area.

COUNCIL GOALS SUPPORTED:

N/A

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUESTED ACTION:

N/A

SUGGESTED MOTION:

N/A. This item is scheduled for information only.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

