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## City Council Regular Meeting

**DEPARTMENT:** Community Services  
**FROM:** DeAnna Phillips, Director of Community Services  
**MEETING:** November 18, 2024

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**SUBJECT:**

Receive a report, hold a discussion and provide staff feedback on a proposed egret deterrent program. (*Staff contact: DeAnna Phillips, Director of Community Services*)

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this memo is to finalize options for utilizing the \$30,000 allocated in the FY 2024-2025 budget to address egret deterrent measures in Burleson, particularly focusing on the recently established egret rookery in the Shady Oaks area.

**Background:**

Egrets have formed significant rookeries within Burleson in recent years, with a major nesting site established in Shady Oaks in May 2024. These rookeries create multiple issues, including excessive noise, droppings that damage property, health concerns due to bacterial contamination, and long-term damage to trees and landscaping. The protected status of egrets under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) restricts interference once eggs are laid, making proactive deterrent measures crucial.

**Challenges:**

- **No Interference Allowed:** Once egrets begin nesting, federal law prohibits interference until the end of the breeding season, limiting options.
- **Colonial Behavior:** Egrets tend to return to the same nesting sites each year, often expanding their colonies, which exacerbates the problem over time.

**Mitigating Best Practices:**

Based on recommendations from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, the following best practices are advised:

- **Landscaping and Pruning:** Reducing available nesting trees by pruning or removing them in the non-breeding season.
- **Exclusion Netting:** Installing durable mesh netting over trees to prevent nesting.
- **Laser Deterrence:** Using low-power lasers to disrupt birds in low-light conditions.
- **Noise Devices:** Employing clappers, air horns, and other noise-making devices.
- **Physical Deterrence:** Using methods like spraying birds with water to encourage them to leave.

**Deterrent Funding Program:**

- Deterrent Kits for Residents: Providing kits that include air horns, streamers, and other deterrents to residents in affected areas.
- Purchasing Noise/Laser Deterrents: Expanding the city's current noise deterrent inventory.
- Marketing Outreach: Expanding current efforts like door hangers and considering additional campaigns such as direct mail and public meetings to educate residents on upcoming egret seasons.
- Overtime: Increasing overtime for animal services staff to enact deterrent devices during dusk and dawn.

**OPTIONS:**

- 1) Move forward with the proposed deterrent options
- 2) Add additional funding options for deterrent program
- 3) Decline the proposed deterrent options\

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the proposed deterrent program.

**PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):**

City council received a report during their regularly scheduled meeting on October 4, 2024. The programs brought forward in this presentation are city council recommendations from the October 4 meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Proposed total program: \$16,700

\$13,300 remains in the allocated fund for additional go-kits, noise & laser purchases, direct mail pieces or overtime.

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