

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: March 21, 2023
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Melinda Moritz, Public Works Director
THROUGH: Crystal Caldera, City Manager

SUBJECT: Presentation and Discussion to Consider Approval of an Ordinance Amending the Leon Valley Code of Ordinances, Chapter 1 General Provisions, Article 1.09 – Parks and Recreation, Division 1 Generally, Sec. 1.09.036 - Pets and Other Animals, (e), to prohibit the feeding of deer in city-owned parks and drainageways (1st Read as Required by City Charter)

SPONSOR(S): Mayor Chris Riley

PURPOSE

This item is to consider amending Chapter 1 General Provisions, Article 1.09 – Parks and Recreation, Division 1 Generally, Sec. 1.09.036 - Pets and Other Animals, (e), to prohibit the feeding of deer in city-owned parks and drainageways.

Several residents whose property abuts Raymond Rimkus Park routinely feed the deer that congregate at the park and in the Huebner-Onion Natural Area Park. This activity makes the deer less afraid of humans and may have contributed harm to deer, persons, vehicles, and other property. Deer biologists discourage it for numerous reasons. Decades of research have shown that supplemental feeding leads to increased risk of disease, long-term habitat destruction, habituation to humans, alteration of other deer behavioral patterns, and a decline in the value of deer-related recreation (Please Don't Feed the Deer, PA Game Commission 2012). With chronic wasting disease now prevalent in the state, the increased risk of disease transmission from feeding in a concentrated area is one of the most significant reasons not to feed.

Deer are extremely well-adapted animals and in general, don't need supplemental food. The most used supplement is commercially processed corn, along with breads, tortillas, cakes, cookies, etc., which have no nutritional value to the deer. Commercially available corn was created to be used as bait by hunters and not as a supplemental food source contributing to the health of a herd. It may also contain a fungus known as Aflatoxin, which is harmful to other wildlife. This code does not prohibit the feeding of deer on privately owned property.

SEE LEON VALLEY

Social Equity – Prohibiting the feeding of deer on publicly-owned land protects the

health, safety, and welfare of deer, persons, and property in these areas.

Economic Development – The feeding of deer in concentrated areas may contribute to habitat destruction, as evidenced by the damage to city-planted trees and other vegetation in our parks and recreational areas.

Environmental Stewardship – Prohibiting the feeding of deer in our parks and recreational areas encourages natural feeding and other normal behaviors, which contribute to the regrowth of forbes and other native plantings.

FISCAL IMPACT

Signs have already been placed in the park discouraging persons from feeding the deer. These signs cost the City \$780.00.

STRATEGIC GOALS

N/A.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the amendment to this code.

APPROVED: _____ DISAPPROVED: _____

APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENTS :

ATTEST:

SAUNDRA PASSAILAIGUE, TRMC
City Secretary