

MEMORANDUM

To: Town Council
From: Jester Gibson & Moore, LLP
Robert R. Marsh, Esq.
Date: April 9, 2024
Re: Ordinance Amending the Nuisance Code re: Wildlife

Section 7-2-10 of the Town code defines the term “nuisance.” Other provisions of the code enable to Town to, among other things, require property owners to abate or remove circumstances that constitute or have been declared nuisances.

An amendment to Section 7-2-10 of the Town code is proposed to include within the definition of a “nuisance” any act, condition or use of property that creates a hazard to the safety of wildlife, including but not limited to circumstances that cause a demonstrable risk of wildlife injury or fatality. Other minor amendments are included to conform the existing definition to nuisance law generally. The proposed amendments clarify and strengthen the Town’s ability to require removal or abatement of hazardous conditions to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents and visitors and eliminate demonstrable risks of wildlife injuries or fatalities. Consistent amendments to the Town’s fencing regulations are simultaneously proposed under separate cover.

Over the years there have been various injuries to and/or fatalities of wildlife within the Town caused by fences. These events in proximity to the Town’s residents and visitors create a variety of risks, including but not limited to attracting predators, foul or offensive odors, growth or propagation of disease-carrying insects, and psychological or emotional trauma from witnessing dead or dying animals. Various areas within the Town are also frequented by wildlife and/or constitute their accustomed fawning/calving grounds.

The amendments clarify that portions of the code other than Chapter 7, Article 2 can identify nuisances subject to abatement under Chapter 7, and that any condition declared a nuisance by a state agency may also be considered a nuisance by the Town. The words “welfare” and “morals” are also added to the definition to conform the regulation to nuisance law generally and strengthen the Town’s ability to protect the wellbeing of its residents and visitors.

The remaining changes are to make clear that conditions that are hazardous to wildlife also present identifiable risks to the human residents and visitors to the Town and, therefore, those wildlife hazards are also nuisances. The amendments are consistent with the positions of Colorado Parks and Wildlife regarding areas frequented by wildlife or constituting their accustomed fawning/calving grounds.