

CNA General Meeting
November 9, 2015
Journey IFC

EC Members Present:

Dave Considine
Steven Knapp
Nancy Mohn Barnard
Anne-Charlotte Patterson
Ali Thompson
Elaine Stegant
Chip Harris

Absent:

Melissa Zone
Roland Rodriguez

Meeting called to order at 7 PM.

Agenda

Guest Speaker - Laura Jackson about Wildlife
ADUs
Larry Oulette and CNPCT
Child Care
Volunteer to Distribute Newsletters to Midtown Commons

Laura Jackson

Going Wild

512.203.2030

www.straydogstudio.net

- Has been working with wildlife for 10 years. Lives in Bastrop County.

Questions to be addressed:

1. Are there benefits to attracting wildlife? Problems?

"Nuisance Wildlife" any animal that can adjust to a fragmented habitat and a varied and different diet: fox, possum, raccoon, bobcats, snakes, skunks, etc. Even these animals are beneficial.

Skunks are very cat-like. Their defense is very non-lethal. Beneficial because they eat black widow spiders.

Possums - Eat ticks that cause Lyme disease. Underground group of people that nurse possums back to health.

Raccoons can be difficult and be a nuisance.

It's illegal to have wild animals as pets.

2. How do you humanely remove wildlife?

A. You can do a deterrent like a fence. You need to contain outside animals. Put your birdseed, cat food, etc. away. Once they discover you have food, they will remember it. BBQs smell like food from grease pit.

For snakes, you can use a snake tong.

B. Change their habitat - Divert them to other places.

C. Trap and Relocate.

To attract wildlife back to neighborhood, provide food, water and shelter.

3. What's the smart way to feed wildlife?

Be careful. If you start feeding them, you may get more than you want. Leave wildlife out for them. If you see an animal out during the day, it may not be rabies. They may be hungry or thirsty, particularly during drought. If an animal is turning around in circles, it may be dangerous.

4. How do you identify a poisonous snake?

Shape of their head. Bad snakes have triangular heads. Coral snake breaks that rule. They are deadly but their head is so small that you'd pretty much have to stick your finger in the mouth to be bitten. Water moccasins are not aggressive.

Every animal has a purpose. Get rid of one, it effects whole ecosystem.

5. How do you attract birds and owls?

Water. Shelter. Brush. No cats. Feral cats are as deadly as fire ants. Animals like Quail that nest on ground are not around in great numbers any more because of cats.

Owls - Can be affected by West Nile Virus. Any kind of nesting boxes are beneficial for urban wild life. Bird seed. Water. Once you start feeding birds you need to feed them year round because you become a food source.

Population and habitat loss is the greatest danger to the environment and the world. It's our social responsibility to help.

6. How to domestic pets adversely affect wildlife?

Dogs out at night impact nocturnal animals. Put dogs on leash at night. Feral and domestic cats and dog. Spread disease - Parvo and mange spread to wildlife. Be careful trying to rescue wildlife. Use a towel or blanket to pick them up.

Austin Wildlife Rescue - 512.472.WILD

More information online about trapping and relocating wildlife.

Audience Questions:

1. Squirrels - Neighbor feeds the squirrels and the population has exploded. Rarely carry disease but they impact Pecan trees. Can get into attics and chew wires. Can be considered nuisance. What good do they do? Perhaps pollination? Plant a lot of trees. Owls and Ravens both take squirrels now and then.

2. Blue Jays harass the Screech Owl - How can we dissuade Blue Jays from bugging the Owl? Hard to do because that's just nature.

3. What about dogs and cats outside at night and coyotes? Few pure coyotes anymore as many have bred with domestic dogs. Dogs and cats are food sources for these animals. If coyotes are hungry, they will go after your animals.

4. How do you help spread the word that you shouldn't use insecticides because of how it affects the wildlife? Educate yourself and educate the neighbors.

5. Female Fox has lived across street for many years. Its habitat has been developed. Is there anything I can do?

Foxes will sometimes nest in woodpiles and brush piles. Water. Food. Can buy cheap dog food and feed it to the foxes.

6. Egret nearby - what can we do to make sure it stays safe? Need to worry about whether or not the water is clean. They are pretty hardy birds and have a pretty wide range.

7. Rats in the neighborhood - are there natural predators? Raptors, raccoons, cats, foxes, etc. Be careful to keep the compost piles active. To keep them out of the house, contain food that is left out.

8. Butterflies - Plant attracting bushes

9. "Snag" trees - dead trees make great habitats for animals.

ADUs - Going to come up soon with the city. There may be an opt-in/opt-out option for the neighborhoods. Go out and research and form your own opinions.

Accessory dwelling units - City wants to change the conditions for building them. Right now you have to have a lot greater than 7000 sf. to build. They want to reduce that to 5700 sf.

Removed the cap of 850 sf. Not sure if there's still any restrictions on sf. Audience - you're still limited by impervious cover.

2 family residential now permitted under SF2.

Side yard setback used to be 15' and now is 10'.

There's also a provision allowing for the ADU to be a short-term rental.

With all the development in the neighborhood, suddenly flooding is a unit. In part because of the impervious cover.

Question - Is someone in this group working on CodeNext?

Dave - Not currently but that's a good point.

Larry Oulette and CNPCT -

Ray Lee - Has a property on Richcreek 90' x 145'. Wants to sub-divide it into two lots and put on single-family home on each lot. On a 90' the city won't allow one to create two SF lots because it needs to be at least 50'. Dividing in half will only get him 45' each. Asked city for options and the city said to put a house in the back and house in front. Asked about changing it to SF4a. City told him he could go through sub-dividing process and ask for a variance. Can go through a zoning change or get a SF3 with a variance.

Current lot has two driveways along with an office and a garage in the back. Layout is weird and small and is not appealing to home buyers.

Dave isn't bothered by a variance asking for 5' less in a lot. Chip is worried about the increase in impervious cover.

Members expressing discontent about the fact that the developer wants to tear down our mid-century modern homes.

Who has concerns at this point? - 4 members

Who would support this gentleman's plans? 7 members

On the fence - Majority

Each house would be a double story 2400 sf. house with a single car garage if possible. Developer is open to taking into consideration the neighbors' recommendations for blueprint and style aesthetics.

Larry - City has sent out a notification of a hearing for the demolition of a home with historical significance at 1208 Stobaugh.

December's CNA Meeting - Next month the CNA meeting will be a social. Meeting will be on the 3rd Monday of December (the 21st). We will meet at the IGA have warm cider and cookies and walk down and see the luminarias.

Childcare - Should CNA provide childcare at the meetings so more people can attend? Most people seem amenable to this idea and to paying someone. The EC will work on trying to get this together for January. It's good because it allows people to come and engage in dialogue and to build community.

Location

Is this going to be our permanent space?

One thought - let's move the meeting around and bring CNA to different parts of the neighborhood.

CUMP has been good to us but then the City told CUMP that the utility charges were going up. So we changed locations. But the price for utilities has changed again and the gym is back to costing for \$40 an hour, which is a good price and space to use for large votes.

What about St. Louis?

We may need to find a new building if we are going to provide childcare.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.