

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-10-024

AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE FEEDING OF DEER AND RACCOONS WITHIN THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM.

WHEREAS, Research indicates that many species of wildlife are highly adaptable to urban environments, and their populations are increasing in urban and suburban areas in North America and Europe; and

WHEREAS, Urban landscapes with abundant open space and low-lying vegetation can result in populations of deer in higher concentration than would be the case in mature forests, where food is more scarce; and

WHEREAS, Other mammals, such as raccoons, also thrive in urban environments, where they can become nuisances and spread disease; and

WHEREAS, The feeding of wild mammals by humans worsens problems created by already unnaturally high numbers of certain species. By further increasing and concentrating populations, feeding can hasten the spread of disease among animals, and increase human-animal conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Wild mammals can become habituated to humans when regularly fed and as a result may become more dangerous and territorial; and

WHEREAS, Intentional feeding of deer by humans can contribute to their unnatural concentration, contributing to deaths of animals in traffic, destruction of gardens, and more dangerous human-animal conflicts; and

WHEREAS, The Bellingham City Council has received a number of complaints from constituents attributing negative events to highly concentrated animal populations resulting from intentional feeding, including cases of deer charging at dogs and cats, and increased vehicle collisions with deer; and

WHEREAS, Wildlife experts indicate that there is no benefit to wild mammals from receiving an unnatural diet, and in some cases it can lead to health problems for the animals, and even death, especially for deer.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM DOES ORDAIN:

SECTION 1. The following section shall be added to Chapter 7.12:

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7.12.130 Feeding of deer and raccoons prohibited.

- A. “Food” defined. In this section “food” means a nourishing substance that is eaten or otherwise taken into the body of an organism to sustain life, provide energy, or promote growth. “Food” also includes substances containing mineral nutrients, such as salt.
- B. Except as provided in subsection (D) below, a person commits an offense if the person intentionally feeds deer or raccoons, or makes food available for consumption by said animals on private or public property within the territorial limits of the city.
- C. A person shall be presumed to have intentionally fed deer or raccoons, or made food available for their consumption, if the person places food, or causes food to be placed, on the ground outdoors or in any outdoor area reachable by these animals.
- D. This section does not apply to an animal control officer, veterinarian, peace officer, City employee, federal or state wildlife official, or property owner who is authorized by a local, state, or federal government to treat, manage, capture, trap, hunt, or remove wild animals and who is acting within the scope of the person's authority.
- E. This ordinance does not apply to food that may derive from landscaping or gardening elements including shrubs, live crops, plants, flowers, vegetation, gardens, trees, and fruit or nuts that have fallen on the ground from trees.
- F. The feeding of deer or raccoons does not include a person placing food on a public or private property for the purpose of feeding domestic livestock, pets, or wild birds.
- G. The City shall identify and distribute materials to educate the community about the dangers to people and animals resulting from overpopulation of deer and raccoons in urban and suburban areas, and the contribution of feeding such animals to this overpopulation.
- H. Penalties. Any person violating any provision of this section shall be guilty of an infraction and shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$250.00.

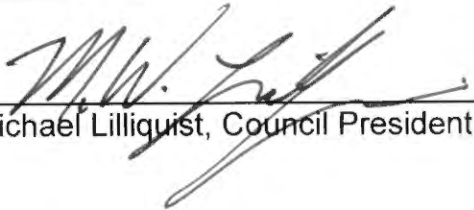
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SECTION 2. The following code sections shall be renumbered as follows:

7.12.130140 Infractions – Penalty.

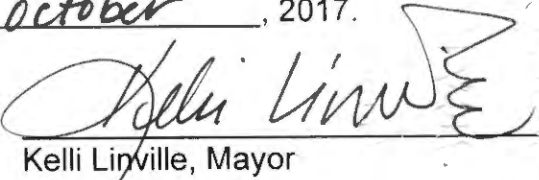
7.12.140150 Misdemeanors – Penalty.

PASSED by the Council this 23rd day of October, 2017.

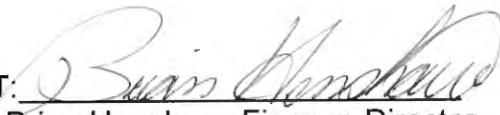


Michael Lilliquist, Council President

APPROVED by me this 30th day of October, 2017.

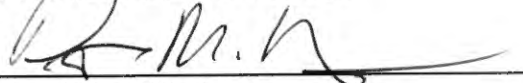


Kelli Linville, Mayor

ATTEST: 

Brian Henshaw, Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Office of the City Attorney

Published:

October 27, 2017

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