



February 16, 2023

FAQs – Trapping Incident

Please note: All traps were removed following the incident, as the City evaluates the best way to move forward.

Background

Over the last year and a half, Mission Hills (the "City") and our neighboring communities have received reports of multiple pets killed or injured by coyotes. One pet was killed in a City resident's back yard in December 2021. We have received several reports from walkers about coyotes following them and their pets during walks. There have also been multiple reports of coyote attacks on children in cities around the country over the last year.

Based on these incidents within the City and surrounding areas, and throughout the country, our residents are alarmed and have expressed urgent concerns about the threat posed by the presence of coyotes in Mission Hills. With public safety as our primary concern, the City engaged in trapping to minimize the impact of coyotes on our community.

What experts were consulted?

The City's Crime Prevention & Safety Committee ("CPSC") reviewed extensive online research and consulted with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, multiple trapping professionals, public safety officials, animal control officers, and other cities.

The Coyote Management Plan offered by the Humane Society appears similar to other education efforts the City previously undertook regarding living with coyotes and will be reviewed by the CPSC and City staff.

What type of trap did the City use?

The City has used both snare and foothold traps. In Peetwood Park, the City used foothold traps. These are steel traps that are placed on the ground. There are no teeth on the traps, just two metal bars that do the trapping also known as offset jaw traps. In order to make the traps as humane as possible, the traps utilize four swivels (one above the industry standard) to minimize potential damage to any animals that are trapped. The swivel allows mobility and can help minimize harm to the trapped animal.

Are there more humane traps that could have been used?

Based on our consultation with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and professional trapping companies, live box traps are ineffective for mature coyotes. The City of Leawood reached the same conclusion in May 2008 when they updated their trapping ordinance to address coyotes.

Did the City consider the possibility of pedestrians in the trapping area?

Yes. The City took numerous precautions—installation of trail cameras and signage around the trapping area, location of the traps in a remote area of Peetwood Park, postcard notifications to property owners within 500 feet of the boundaries of Peetwood Park, and timing (i.e., winter season)—to minimize the likelihood of any incidents.

The traps are designed specifically for coyote-sized animals. The location for trapping was selected based on the City's observation of the area for several months prior to placing the traps. For two weeks prior to the signs being placed, the location was monitored using trail cameras. No pedestrians (or pets) entered the area prior to the incident that occurred on February 6, 2023.

How did the City communicate about the trapping?

Per City Ordinance, any trapping in City limits requires signage on the perimeter of the grounds where the trapping will occur, and the signage must be posted for 7 days prior to commencing any trapping.

- 5 signs were placed in Peetwood Park around the trapping location on January 26, 2023 at approximately 9:45am.
- The signs stated: Nuisance Animal Trapping In Progress, Please Contact City Hall for more information at 913-362-9620.
- The signs were placed strategically on all sides of the trapping location.
- The only way to access the trapping site directly is from Indian Lane, which would require walking past 2 of these signs, or directly from Brush Creek by climbing over the bank where there was also an additional sign.

In addition to the posted signage, the City sent postcards to all neighboring residents notifying them of the trapping.

Additionally, the Summer and Fall City Newsletters (both available at <https://www.missionhillssks.gov/12/City-Newsletter>) discussed trapping and removal. The City's presentation to the Joint Homes Association Meeting in January 2023 also specifically addressed trapping.

The City should have a public forum to formally do a Q&A and answer people's questions.

The CPSC meetings are open to the public, and they are working to schedule their next meeting to discuss this issue again in light of the incident and public feedback. If, after the CPSC's next public meeting, a public forum makes sense, the City is happy to host one.