

CITY OF COOS BAY
Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
April 21, 2015	

TO: Mayor Shoji and City Councilors
FROM: Jim Hossley, Public Works Director *JH*
THROUGH: Rodger Craddock, City Manager *RC*
ISSUE: Geese in Mingus Park

BACKGROUND

Over the last several months, City staff has received several calls from the public about concerns with the aggressive behavior of geese in Mingus Park. Several individuals, including City staff and their family members, have been bitten by one or more geese. The geese in question appear to be domestic waterfowl that were illegally abandoned by their owners. There are less than a dozen of these geese. The domesticated birds are not owned by the City and are not regulated or managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W).

The Parks Commission has discussed this situation and strongly recommends that the geese be removed from Mingus Park. Should the City Council agree to remove the geese, one option would be to trap the birds and relocate them. Because they are semi-domestic birds they can't be released in the wild and would likely need to be adopted.

ADVANTAGES:

Removing the geese will improve the enjoyment of the park by many of the visitors.

DISADVANTAGES:

Many park users enjoy the geese.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

The cost will depend upon the direction the Council chooses.

RELATED CITY GOAL:

Not an adopted City Council goal

ACTION REQUESTED:

Discuss the issue and direct staff how Council would like to proceed. One option is to have staff at a future Council meeting provide possible courses of action based the discussions.



City of Coos Bay Public Works Department

Memorandum of Record

Date: April 13, 2015
To: Rodger Craddock
Jim Hossley
From: Parks Commission; Randy Dixon, Operations Administrator *Randy Dixon*
Subject: Aggressive Geese in Mingus Park

We, as the Parks Commission, would like to put before you our urgent concern regarding the geese that have made Mingus Park their “destination” or home. Because the geese usually have been dumped there as unwanted pets, they are now considered “domestic waterfowl.” The regulation of waterfowl in the park is not the responsibility of the City nor is it for the ODF&W, hence our dilemma.

Over the span of a few months, the Public Works Department has taken several calls from the public expressing their fear that the geese are trying to attack them and/or their children and pets. One terrifying call had been brought to our attention. A child had finally been bitten without provocation. The bite was located dangerously close to their eye. With spring and summer arriving and the influx of activities and visitors into Mingus Park, we can no longer ignore the aggressive behavior of the geese.

The Parks Commission has been struggling with this situation for quite some time but now, we must strongly recommend that the geese be removed from Mingus Park.

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CITY OF COOS BAY
PARKS COMMISSION MINUTES OF
October 16, 2014

Commissioners Present: Chair, Christine Coles; Ariann Lyons, Bill Otton, Patty Scott
And Jennifer Stephens

Commissioner Absent: Carmen Matthews; Bev Meyers

Staff Present: Randy Dixon, Operations Administrator, Pam Patton

Guests Present: Cricket Soules, Marshfield Pioneer Cemetery. Cricket was not present at the time the meeting opened.

Location: City Hall Conference Room
Coos Bay City Hall – 500 Central Avenue

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair, Christine Coles, called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

No Citizen Input / Public Comment taken at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Ongoing discussion regarding the geese located in Mings Park

A long and involved discussion pursued. In past discussions, it was requested to add bird feeders as a means of being proactive in the health of the waterfowl. Also suggested was the use of signage to educate the public regarding feeding, as well as looking at the park and city regulations to prohibit feeding.

Randy informed the commissioners that over the last 7 months, the city has taken 10 to 15 calls from various people in the community regarding the geese and how aggressive they've become. One call was that of a 7yr old being bitten in the face located dangerously close to his eye.

Randy reiterated that the geese were not wild waterfowl but considered domestic because the park has become their destination, as the public have discarded them as unwanted pets. The regulation of waterfowl in the park is not the responsibility of the city nor is it for the ODF&W.

Randy cited evidence of past experiences from other municipalities. The City of Bend had been dealing with a geese population in the thousands. They had 3 law suits around \$10 million each within an 18 month time period. One was a child who fell gravely ill, which resulted in emergency medical intervention due to contamination from fecal matter. Without further alternatives, Bend eventually approached ODFW, State and the public for their help. They first tried relocation to the Klamath area resulting in the waterfowl beating the caravan home. The only next option was extermination. ODF&W stepped in by placing the geese on a kill rotation over a period of four months.

The commissioner's would like to see the geese removed from the park. They would like to leave the existing ducks. Christine asked for a motion.

Motion: Jennifer motioned to have the geese removed with regulations in place for allowed waterfowl.

Second: Bill

Vote: Ayes were unanimous. Motion carried.