

Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre

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April 3, 2024

Dear Mayor and Councillors

Residents and environmental, conservation and wildlife organizations, frustrated by the on-going lack of transparency and willingness of city staff to work with local stakeholders on the Wildlife Strategy, held an emergency meeting on April 2nd.

Many of the 40 people at the meeting expressed anger that the promised 'As We Heard It' (AWHI) report on the public consultations carried out more than 7 months ago was withheld until last week. And, then, only 'quietly' posted by the city to the Wildlife Strategy website, without any notice to those who had registered and participated in these consultations.

Has this report been given to councillors and, if so, would they not have shared it with their residents, many of whom participated in the consultations?

It was particularly concerning to those at our meeting that the AWHI report lists the "other subject matter experts, municipalities, and interest groups" consulted by the city but excludes the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre and the environment, conservation and community organizations that supported the detailed Position Papers and Recommendations submitted by the Centre to the City on October 19, 2023.

At that time, the Centre was told that the Wildlife Strategy which was scheduled to go to the ECC Committee in November 2023, "might be delayed so staff can incorporate and respond to the briefing notes from the OCWC". It is deeply concerning that neither the Centre nor the other organizations supporting the Position Papers have been consulted by city staff.

We were informed in November that the Wildlife Strategy would go to Committee in Q1 2024, a timeframe confirmed in the AWHI report. We next heard that it was expected to go to the ECC Committee on April 16th, yet a CBC interview with a city councillor a few days ago, mentions it would be tabled in September. So, why the delay and why the secrecy?

It is a concerning reminder of the Wildlife Strategy process that was dragged out by the city from 2010 to 2013, with the substantial input of community organizations ultimately ignored in favour of an unseen proposal (obtained through ATIP) from a hunting and trapping advocacy group that categorized all urban wildlife as a 'nuisance' subject for removal.

We urge councillors to read the 'As We Heard It' report. It clearly demonstrates the overwhelming support of Ottawa residents for progressive wildlife policies and the specific actions the city must take to support coexistence. The report shows the frustration that many people expressed with the outdated lethal approaches taken to species such as beavers. The AWHI report can be found under Documents at: <https://engage.ottawa.ca/wildlife-strategy-review>

Can we assume the voices of Ottawa residents will be reflected in the draft Wildlife Strategy Report and ask, when will it be going to the Environment and Climate Change Committee?

Sincerely

Donna DuBreuil
President