

Walsh believes Town has responsibility to warn public about coyotes

Maple Avenue and north of Main Street. "I almost had a coronary," she said. "It's frightening that they're now being more visible and have no fear."

While Walsh and her dogs, a Yorkie and a shih tzu, waited on a nearby porch for the coyotes to pass and were unharmed, getting that close to wild and potentially dangerous animals left her shook up and wanting to do something to protect others.

Now, she's pushing for the Town to erect signs in the area that would warn the com-

munity, particularly those with dogs and children, to be cautious.

"I feel they (the Town) have a responsibility to some degree to warn the public. I know the deal that you can't move them (coyotes), but those in the area need to be warned that they're here. They're being seen during the daytime hours and appear not to be timid." This isn't the first time Walsh has seen what she believes to be coyotes in her neighbourhood, located east of Thompson Road and north of Main Street. She said she has also

spotted them while walking on the Woodward Woodlot Trail that runs between Thompson Road and Robarts Drive.

Ward 4 Councillor Rick Malboeuf said he's aware that coyote sightings have become an issue all throughout Milton, Oakville and Burlington.

"Signs may be a good way to go," he said, adding there also needs to be public education around keeping pets on leash and being cautious when going out for walks in the late evening or early morning.

But Town Clerk Troy McHarg — whose staff oversee animal control for Milton — told the *Champion* that "the posting of signs at parks and on trails is not something the Town is pursuing at this time."

He said the municipality is currently working on updating its website to include information on ways to prevent and manage conflicts with coyotes, similar to a web page currently published by the Province.

He added, "If a resident feels that a coyote poses an immediate threat or danger to public safety they're urged to call 911."

When asked if he would consider bringing the sign idea before council, Malboeuf said he'd first like to find out more about the costs involved and investigate whether or not they've been effective in other municipalities, such as

Burlington.

There've been a plethora of reports recently in the news regarding coyotes wandering into residential areas, including Campbellville, where residents are saying that coyote attacks on pets are prevalent.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the number of coyotes in southern and central Ontario peaked in 2010 and continues to climb, but their food sources are on the decline, leading them to engage in risky behaviour as they get hungry and desperate.

If a coyote is spotted, the MNR recommends backing away from the animal while standing tall and making lots of noise to scare it away. To protect dogs, the ministry suggests keeping them inside at night and cleaning up after them as coyotes are attracted to dog feces.

For now, Walsh said she's steering clear of the two trails where she witnessed coyotes.

"I'm scared to take the dogs anywhere except the backyard or the off-leash park, where there are always people during the day," she said.

"My close encounter was a reality check that I could've lost my pets or been attacked that morning."



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