

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 090723)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing City Council's Committees on Licenses and Inspections and Public Health and Human Services to hold public hearings to investigate the state of intergovernmental and intragovernmental cooperation between the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health relating the protection of its citizens from exposure to wild animals which take shelter in vacant buildings and deteriorating alleyways.

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is charged with enforcing the state's Rabies Prevention and Control in Domestic Animals and Wildlife Act; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Game Commission is responsible for managing all of Pennsylvania's wild birds and mammals. As part of its operations the Commission issues all hunting and furtaking licenses and wildlife rehabilitator permits; conducts testing for wildlife diseases and licenses and regulates wildlife pest controllers; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections is empowered to take lawful actions necessary to correct dangerous and unlawful conditions, including making necessary emergency repairs to properties, cleaning and sealing abandoned buildings, and demolishing vacant buildings that pose a threat to public safety; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Department of Public Health oversees the prevention, timely reporting and control of diseases and conditions that are contagious and/or affect the public's health, including diseases such as rabies that can be spread from animals to humans.

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WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been awarded a contract by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health to perform animal care and control services for the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, There is a shared intragovernmental responsibility over the abatement of potentially vicious and/or rapid wild animals present in abandoned buildings. The Department of Licenses and Inspections is charged with the responsibility to clean and seal abandoned buildings to prevent the entry of wild animals and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, through its contractor the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, is charged with dispatching a licensed wildlife trapper to capture and remove any wild animals present in those buildings. and

WHEREAS, This shared responsibility over the eradication of invasive wild animals has frequently been marred by jurisdictional disputes and challenges between L&I and PSPCA, resulting in neglect and inaction of dangerous animal infestations which have exposed surrounding neighbors to potential exposure to rabid and/or wild animals; and

WHEREAS, According to published reports, the raccoons were not removed from the abandoned homes because L&I's clean and seal team would not enter the homes until the animals had been removed by PSPCA and PSPCA trappers would not remove the animals until L&I had sealed up the structure: and

WHEREAS, According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, raccoons have had the highest incidence of rabies in Pennsylvania since 1989. In 2008 a total of 326 raccoons were tested at the Pennsylvania Veterinary Laboratory with 142 testing positive for rabies; and

WHEREAS, The presence of raccoons poses multiple risks of other illnesses to humans if they handle or ingest raccoon droppings. According to a recent article in the Philadelphia Daily News: "The feces may contain a type of roundworm that infects raccoons, authorities say. If ingested, the roundworms' eggs can invade the body, and damage to nerve tissue and the brain can result. New York City Health Department officials recently reported that a teenager had lost sight in one eye after contact with raccoon feces, and an infant suffered brain damage from the raccoon roundworm"; and

WHEREAS, The failure of the L&I and PSPCA to faithfully cooperate with each other in the eradication of wild animals from abandoned buildings places the citizens of this City in peril; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Authorizes City Council's Committees on Licenses and Inspections and Public Health and Human Services to hold public hearings to investigate the state of intergovernmental and intragovernmental cooperation between the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and

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Inspections, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health relating the protection of its citizens from exposure to wild animals which take shelter in vacant buildings and deteriorating alleyways.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the eighth of October, 2009.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Jones, Greenlee and Sanchez

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Jones, Greenlee, Blackwell, Sanchez, Goode, DiCicco, Reynolds Brown, O'Neill, Clarke and Tasco