

# Edmonds Beacon

806 5th Street, Mukilteo, WA 98275

Volume XXXV

Number 4

December 12, 2019

## Law firm gets a new 3-year contract

*Acrimony marks process of renewal for Lighthouse Law Group*

BY BRIAN SOERTEL

EDMONDSEditor@YOURBEACON.NET

Edmonds City Council members have signed off on a new, three-year contract with its longtime city attorney, Lighthouse Law Group, but only after some acrimony and bruised feelings.

The group, founded by Jeff Taraday, has served as the city's attorney since 2011. The group also provides services to the City of Maple Valley.

The 5-2 vote was approved Nov. 27, with council President Adrienne Fraley Monillas and Mayor-elect Mike Nelson voting against. (Read Fraley-Monillas' editorial on page 4.)

One of the main issues regarding the contract was whether to continue to work with Lighthouse or switch to in-house counsel services.

The contract is scheduled to be reevaluated next year once a study of other cities' practices is completed. Both Fraley-Monillas and Nelson agreed that a one-year contract would make more sense because the reevaluation is ongoing.

Lighthouse has always worked at a flat rate, and will continue to do so under the new contract, which pays \$49,833 a month in 2020, \$51,878 a month in 2021 and \$53,953 a month in 2022.

Background: Lighthouse's contract for 2019 was the result of a one-year extension, in part for councilmembers to direct an evaluation of Lighthouse's services – as it had done three years earlier – by all councilmembers, the mayor, and several City staff.

The survey, distributed in July, gave overwhelmingly positive remarks by respondents, although not all those who were given the survey responded.

"Lighthouse actually improved on their services," said Councilmember Tom Mesaros, who compiled the survey along with Councilmember Kristiana

see **LIGHTHOUSE** page 15 ▶

## On the PROWL



Photo courtesy of Gary Haakenson

This coyote has made a habit of strolling around Gary Haakenson's Meadowdale home, seen here on a garden path.

### Winter is a peak time for coyote sightings and attacks

BY BRIAN SOERTEL

EDMONDSEditor@YOURBEACON.NET

Ted became one of the most recognizable dogs in Edmonds earlier this year after the fluffy and unbearably cute 10-pound Pomeranian went missing July 26. His owner, Mary McAllister – beyond tears with grief – stapled his picture on trees and telephone poles throughout town.

A few weeks later, McAllister – who lives in Edmonds' verdant Sherwood Forest neighborhood – discovered Ted in a wooded area near the former Woodway High School's tennis courts.

A scrap of fur was all that was left of the 5-year-old.

McAllister is sure that Ted



Beacon photo by Brian Soergel

Mary McAllister holds a flyer she posted for her Pomeranian, Ted, who was killed by a coyote.

became just another victim of hungry coyotes, who are especially ravenous this time of year. Almost daily, gossipy social media posts detail frightening encounters with coyotes, who seem increasingly brazen in their sightings and attacks – both under cover of darkness and even in broad daylight.

Although there have only been two recorded incidents in the United States and Canada of coyotes killing humans, anecdotal evidence suggests that more than a few vulnerable cats and small dogs have been lost.

"We have received several phone calls of coyote sightings within the city limits," said Tabitha Shoemake, Edmonds' senior animal control officer. "(But) we normally do not handle wildlife unless it is an

see **PROWLING COYOTES** page 16 ▶



Photo courtesy of Gabriella McIntosh

Melissa Hope, EdCC math teacher, uses the subject she knows best to explain the pay inequities.

## EdCC faculty picketing for pay raises

*Teacher: Colleagues are leaving for higher-paying jobs in high school*

BY BRIAN SOERTEL

EDMONDSEditor@YOURBEACON.NET

Faculty at Edmonds Community College have been gathering weekly at the school's entrance, clad in bright red shirts and hoisting signs protesting what they say are unfair wages.

Dec. 10 was the last picket of the year, but Karen Fenner, a full-time instructor at the Lynnwood college, said they will pick up in the new year.

"Other actions will likely be planned," she said, adding that mediation dates are rescheduled to begin in January.

"There was zero progress in last Wednesday's bargaining session. Al-

though we presented a comprehensive compensation proposal, we received a collective 'no' to all of it. The EdCC administration decided not to renew the faculty contract in July. Instructors have been working without a contract since then, which is unprecedented in the history of labor relations at the college.

"Even though Washington state community colleges were recently ranked No. 1 in the nation, we are already seeing faculty leaving EdCC to teach at the high school level, where they are paid about \$40,000 more per year, or at other area community colleges where they can earn a significantly higher salary."

The college released the following statement Tuesday, Dec. 10: "Edmonds CC is currently in the midst of contract negotiations with the faculty union. We're hopeful there will be a successful outcome for both the faculty and the college soon. We cannot comment further as we are fully respecting and honoring the process and are committed to a fair negotiation."

Faculty member Daniel Griesbach expressed his discontent with the current state of faculty compensation.

"We are out here this morning for comparable and competitive faculty salaries," he said in a video of the pro-

see **EDCC PICKETING** page 15 ▶

## ► from PROWLING COYOTES page 1

emergency situation, even in an urban environment. If it is not an emergency, we advise residents to contact Washington State Fish and Wildlife.”

Shoemaker’s suggestions for residents are echoed by Fish and Wildlife: Keep companion animals inside at night, as coyotes’ activity level usually peaks around dawn and dusk; never feed coyotes; confine chickens in secure pens; do not leave children unattended; keep area under and around bird feeders clean and free of food; do not leave pet food outdoors; and clean up trash.

These precautions are especially important this time of year, said Jennifer Leach, Edmonds’ environmental education and sustainability coordinator.

“Coyotes become more visible in the fall and winter as young animals search for new territories, and vegetative cover becomes less dense,” she wrote in a news release. “These shy predators make excellent neighbors by keeping rodent populations like rats and mice in check, and are a valuable part of a healthy ecosystem.”

And, Leach said, coyotes are wary of people, and avoid us whenever possible.

“However, in urban areas, people may unintentionally invite coyotes into the human environment by leaving unsecured pet food, garbage or compost outside,” she said. “Similarly, bird feeders can attract rodents that in turn lure coyotes into the yard where they may also prey on unattended pets. When coyotes lose their fear of people, they can become unpredictable and pose an elevated safety risk.”

If you encounter a coyote, Leach said, pick up your pets and/or small children immediately. Do not run away or turn your back. Instead, you’ll want to appear big and loud, making lots of noise by shouting or clapping to scare it away.

If the coyote looks weak or sick, call animal control at 425-775-3000. If the coyote is acting aggressively towards you, call 911.

### Why more coyotes?

In May 2018, the Beacon published a fea-

ture on Bridget Clawson, whose neighbor captured a cellphone video of her Shih Tzu in the grip of a coyote. Luckily, the neighbor’s screams saved little Oliver’s life.

Like Clawson, whose home sits opposite Pine Ridge Park, McAllister lives in the suburban woods, with a greenbelt just beyond her backyard.

But coyotes aren’t just in the woods these days.

Coyotes are generally timid animals, opportunists that feed on plants, small animals, carrion and garbage, according to Fish and Wildlife. They rarely attack unless protecting their young. But there has been an increase in coyote sightings in urban areas, a trend that could lead to more attacks as they begin to lose the fear of humans through close contact.

The department reports that there were no documented coyote attacks on humans in the state until 2006. Officers euthanized two coyotes in Bellevue after two young children were bitten while their parents were nearby. These coyotes’ unusually aggressive behavior likely resulted from being fed by people, the department said.

There are several common-sense factors that could add to increased coyote sightings in and around Edmonds. The first is that the city – like many – loves its pets, both dogs and cats. They are in abundance in every nook and cranny. The second is that development in and around the city has forced coyotes out of their habitats.

“I’ve seen them walking down Main Street,” said McAllister. “They hunt 24/7. They are looking in your windows, they’re coming into the backyard, they’re casing your place. It’s a double-edged sword. You can’t say that you have to live in harmony with wild animals, but let’s take all their land away. So we have thousands of coyotes that are going to become really aggressive.

“You know, it’s not fair to the coyotes that they’re tripling in numbers and there’s nowhere for them to go, and there’s nothing for them to eat except for people’s animals.”



Photo courtesy of Gary Haakenson

This night vision image was taken in Gary Haakensen’s yard. It demonstrates the ease with which coyotes are able to adjust to urban surroundings and the comfort they have in these settings.

### Everyday occurrence

Former Edmonds Mayor Gary Haakenson, who lives in the Meadowdale area, said he sees coyotes every day. He frequently posts pictures of them on his Facebook page.

“I don’t mind them being around at night, but (recently) they were around in the afternoon quite a bit,” he said recently. “It’s getting cold, and they are looking for food sources.”

He’s seen both young and older coyotes. Haakenson said he and his wife, Dolly, don’t have pets.

“But there are several cats that roll through. I’m not sure if they are feral or neighbor pets. As I drove out of my driveway this morning, a coyote came right up from the neighbor’s yard and cut through my yard to wherever it was headed.”

### What you can do

To report emergency dangerous wildlife complaints, dial 911.

Fish and Wildlife, on its website, has a place for reporting non-emergency, dan-

gerous wildlife complaints. However, it defines “predatory wildlife” as cougars, wolves, and grizzly bears only.

But it receives thousands of calls every year from citizens seeking advice on how to deal with unwanted wild animals. Although laws give citizens substantive latitude to deal with problems, many are either unwilling or unable to handle human/wildlife conflicts.

Fish and Wildlife considers coyotes “nuisance wildlife” and does not generally support relocation or removal programs.

Instead, the department enlists the help of private citizens who have skills and training in the capture and handling of many wildlife species that commonly generate wildlife complaints.

Typically these individuals are referred to as Wildlife Control Operators, and there are many WCOs throughout the state. An operator must be certified through Fish and Wildlife and conform to its regulations, but they are not state employees, and operate as private entities, setting their own fees.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Wildlife Services last year reported killing more than 1.5 million native animals nationwide. In Washington state last year, the agency killed six black bears, 397 beavers, 376 coyotes, 429 marmots, 448 squirrels and thousands of other creatures.

For a comprehensive list of tips, see the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s “Living with Wildlife: Coyotes” webpage at [www.bit.ly/2IGue9u](http://www.bit.ly/2IGue9u).

### Vigilance

Above all, it’s important for parents and pet owners to be vigilant.

“Ted was taken out of my backyard behind a 6-foot fence, so neighbors know that it is not at all protection, and lends a false sense of security,” McAllister said.

“Ted was taken in broad daylight, so keeping your animals in just at night like advised won’t be enough to protect your pet, as I found out, unfortunately. I wish I would have known this myself. It may have saved his life.”

It’s Rewarding to Buy Efficient Appliances!

Get a PUD Smart Reward when you buy and install an eligible efficient clothes washer, dryer, refrigerator and/or freezer!

Compare eligible models at [snopud.com/smartrewards](http://snopud.com/smartrewards)

Visit our site for details!

[snopud.com/appliances](http://snopud.com/appliances)

smart rewards smart rebates



425-783-1700

Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

2019 Five Star Real Estate Agent Award Winner

Kippie Pasowicz

Your Home. Your Life. My Passion.™

KIPPIE PASOWICZ  
| 425.330.2811 |  
KIP@HOMESBYKIPPIE.COM

YOURHOMEYOURLIFEMYPASSION.COM

Windermere Real Estate Co. [in](#) [ig](#) [t](#) [fb](#)

SEATTLE BRAIN HEALTH

[www.seattlebrainhealth.com](http://www.seattlebrainhealth.com)

Providing exceptional psychiatric care

EDMONDS · GREEN LAKE · BELLEVUE