Date: November 7, 2016

To: Rapid City Public Works Committee

From: Jeff Biegler, Parks and Recreation Director

Subject: Wild Turkey Recommendations

Earlier this year, Alderman Jerry Wright received a concern from a resident in his ward about an abundance of wild turkeys in his neighborhood, creating a mess and damaging his residence. The individual raising the issue requested the City take steps to rid his area of wild turkeys.

Alderman Wright requested the City Parks and Recreation Department and the Urban Wildlife Committee look into the issue and work with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to determine if there is a wild turkey problem in Rapid City and also to recommend measures, if necessary, to reduce the numbers of wild turkeys living within the City limits.

Over the past four years, the Parks and Recreation Department has kept a log of calls pertaining to wildlife concerns throughout the city. Of the 112 wildlife complaints received since October of 2012, 14 have involved turkeys at a total of 9 locations. All locations either directly abutted, or were near wild turkey roosting/nesting habitat.

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks recently issued a comprehensive Wild Turkey Management Plan for 2016-2020 that outlines the goals, objectives and strategies of GFP regarding wild turkey management throughout the state. This document can be accessed from the SDGFP website at: http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/docs/WildTurkeyPlan.pdf, and provides detailed information regarding historical introduction of wild turkey to the Black Hills, desired habitat, diet, depredation, economic analysis of turkey hunting, and management practices/harvest strategies.

The Urban Wildlife Committee heard a presentation from John Kanta, SD GFP Wildlife Manager who indicated wild turkeys are roosting in areas where they find an abundance of food. In many of the cases of wild turkey complaints, birds are being fed by residents in the area. According to Mr. Kanta, turkeys will remain and roost in areas where they are being fed and the single best effort to reduce the incidents of turkey damage within the city limits is to stop feeding them.
Recommendation

Rapid City Ordinance 6.16.020 prohibits the feeding of wild animals or waterfowl within the corporate limits of the City of Rapid City. It is the recommendation of the Rapid City Urban Wildlife Committee that the City of Rapid City actively enforce all laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to the feeding of wildlife within the city limits. The committee also recommends the City consult with and act in cooperation with personnel of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks to implement measures to mitigate damages caused by wild animals within the city limits.