



49651 Shenandoah Circle, Canton, MI 48187  
[www.attorneysforanimals.org](http://www.attorneysforanimals.org)

May 3, 2021

Ann Arbor City Council  
Mayor Christopher Taylor

*Via email: [CityCouncil@a2gov.org](mailto:CityCouncil@a2gov.org), [budget@a2gov.org](mailto:budget@a2gov.org); Mayor Taylor, [ctaylor@a2gov.org](mailto:ctaylor@a2gov.org)*

**Re: Oppose budget item for deer cull, 2022-23**

Dear Council Members and Mayor Taylor,

Attorneys for Animals, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) organization of attorneys, law students and animal advocates, founded and headquartered in Michigan. As advocates for animals who provide resources for attorneys and other advocates, we oppose the deer cull and ask the City Council to refuse to include it in the city's budget for 2022-2033.

Our opposition is based on reasons of ethics, efficacy, the divisive nature of this issue and fiscal irresponsibility.

To shoot deer year after year, rather than devise a comprehensive plan to assess the severity of the issue and implement a non-lethal program, is unsound policy and, we believe, unethical. Whether there is an overpopulation of deer is uncertain. The "damage" deer cause to vegetation cannot be properly assessed absent a concerted effort to educate the public and engage in real non-lethal management efforts. The statistics do not support the assertion that the deer cull resolves deer/vehicle collisions. In short, the Council has grown accustomed to a "quick" (although not so much now) fix to appease vocal interest groups, rather than engage in the much harder assessment of the role human behavior, and increased development contribute to deer population.

The cull occurred for 5 years (2016-2020), with a one-year hiatus in 2021, but is scheduled to be reinstated in the 2022-23 budget – this demonstrates the failure of the program. How long is the City willing to continue the killing?

The program has deeply divided the City (the City has acknowledged this fact) while continuing to accede to the wishes of a "portion" of its residents, over the objections of a

“segment” of its residents.<sup>1</sup> The Mayor has called this the most divisive issue he has seen, and one that goes against the City’s “ethos.”<sup>2</sup>

Continuing the cull is also irresponsible from a fiscal perspective. If approved, the \$240,000 for the 2022-23 budget will bring the total spent by the City to \$975,000+.<sup>3</sup>

At a time when the city administrator has described the city as in “turbulent waters” with as much as a \$9M shortfall and stimulus money uncertain, continuing this program is unconscionable.

We have reviewed materials from the early years of the deer management plan. With respect, it appears that the City would not address this as a regional issue, and instead listened to a small group of vocal (and connected) citizens to make their problems with deer browsing on private property, into a city-wide issue. It appears the City used a time-honored procedure of determining the desired outcome and then amassing data to support it.

We see no reasonable end in sight to the annual deer cull and urge you to look at the bigger picture and ask where your decision to fund yet another two years is actually leading the city.

Very Truly Yours,



Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD  
President

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/community-services/Pages/Long-Term-Objectives.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> [https://annarborobserver.com/articles/the\\_biggest\\_cull.html#.YJAE\\_LVKjIU](https://annarborobserver.com/articles/the_biggest_cull.html#.YJAE_LVKjIU)

<sup>3</sup> Over \$1M if \$66,788 in “other sources” of revenue are included, <https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2020/01/you-created-culture-of-hate-deer-cull-protesters-tell-ann-arbor-city-council.html>