



November 25, 2015

To: Members of the Licensing and Standards Committee

Re: **Agenda Item LS8.1 – Feasibility of Licensing Wildlife Control Operators**

Dear Members of the Licensing and Standards Committee:

I am writing in support of licensing wildlife control officers to protect residents and particularly seniors from unscrupulous wildlife control companies.

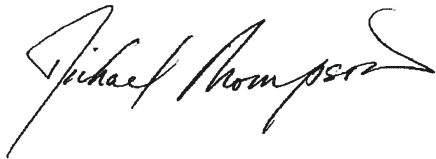
A year ago, I received a call from the son of a 97 year old senior citizen, Ms. Benn asking for assistance for his mother who had raccoons in her attic and was defrauded by a company that took the money and never removed the raccoons. Ms. Benn wanted to use a local company and found an ad in the Scarborough Mirror for a wildlife control company. The senior called the company, a representative arrived and went up on the roof to check the situation. The company representative then advised Ms. Benn that the cost to remove the raccoons would be \$864.00. Ms. Benn's son, who happened to be visiting, paid the \$864.00. After the son left, the contractor representative brought down a raccoon and advised Ms. Benn that there would now be an additional charge for catching the animal. A representative from the company asked Ms. Benn to sign a document stating that she was satisfied with the work, Ms. Benn did not sign the document. Additionally the company representative advised her that for an additional \$600 they would animal proof the house which Ms. Benn refused to pay. After paying, \$2,160, Ms. Benn still had the raccoon problem. My office called the Sheet Metal Workers Association because we had heard that they had helped a Scarborough resident that had the same raccoon issue. The Sheet Metal Workers Association visited the home and arranged for AAA Gates Wildlife Control to assist. Mr. Brad Gates the owner of AAA Gates Wildlife Control arrived at Ms. Benn's home and installed a one-way door and checked back with Ms. Benn 48 hours later to be advised there were no noises in the attic. Mr. Gates returned, removed the "one way door" and The Sheet Metal Workers repaired the roof. All work was pro bono.

Later that week, we learned that the same contractor who defrauded Ms. Benn had also defrauded another senior couple in Scarborough for nearly \$23,000. The owner of the company has since been charged.

These are only two examples of unscrupulous wildlife control companies taking advantage of residents and particularly vulnerable seniors throughout the city. It is important to license wildlife control offices who operate within the City of Toronto. This would provide a process where residents could turn for assistance if the removal of the wildlife was not completed satisfactorily. Presently they have absolutely nowhere to turn to for assistance. We owe this to the residents.

If you have any questions regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Michael Thompson
Chair, Economic Development and Culture Committee
Chair, Invest Toronto
Councillor, Scarborough Centre
Ward 37