

STOP MAYOR NEWTON FROM ALLOWING DEER TO BE KILLED IN PAINFUL WAYS



© iStock.com/luvemakphoto

To: mayorcouncil@rockvillemd.gov

Dear Mayor Newton and City Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our 6.5 million members and supporters, including many who live in Rockville, to ask that you reconsider your Pilot Archery Deer Culling Program. Allowing hobby hunters to use cruel and archaic weaponry to tear into the flesh of gentle deer, who are guilty of nothing more than having the misfortune to live in this area as their forebears have done for centuries, is unconscionable.

Before opening the public lands to allow this senseless killing, the council knew the program would be futile and inhumane. On December 16, 2019, Superintendent of Parks and Facilities Steve Mader conceded that bow hunting is not the most efficient way to kill deer. Mr. Mader noted that even if the deer were shot “ethically,” they might travel 30 to 50 yards before dying. **At the very least, if you insist on lethal measures, you should employ expert sharpshooters, who have an error rate of less than 1% and could kill the deer swiftly and definitively,** which would be far less cruel than tearing into their flesh with steel arrows and sentencing them to die slowly and painfully.

Mayor Newton, you questioned how killing deer in public parks would reduce conflicts between people and deer living in neighborhoods across town. Mr. Mader had no answer. He admitted that the program would not stop the deer from eating shrubs or being struck by cars. **He advised that the program could not be conducted in residential areas in part because if a deer “dies in somebody’s backyard, this program would be ended.”**

In light of his prior experience with the futility of bow-hunting exercises, Council Member Myles consistently voted against the program. With his hands tied by decisions made by previous councils, he was unable to consider more effective methods of reducing human-deer conflicts, such as fencing roads to reduce auto collisions—a suggestion the council failed to explore when it was presented in 2018.

Why does the council fall all over itself to open the parklands to recreational bow hunters while refusing even to consider building fences and providing safe-crossing opportunities?

Mayor Newton, you nearly did the right thing on June 1, 2020. Before casting yet another vote in favor of the program, you noted that you “woke up this morning to a brand-new fawn in [y]our yard, tucked up against the wall” and that the sight was “beautiful.” You acknowledged that “we have intruded on their space,” yet you accused the deer of “just overtaking nature, grass, plantings, everything.” **The deer have not overtaken nature—the deer are nature.** Your unwavering support of the program ensures that fawns like the one who took shelter in your yard will be left motherless.

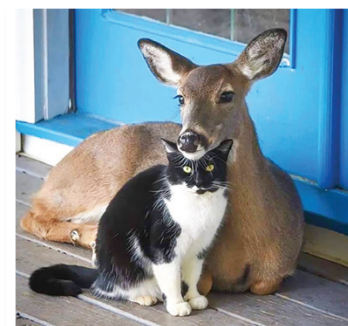
Council Member Pierzchala, on January 7, 2019, you rejected “anything that smacked of contraception” or other “nonlethal measures” as “just not worth the time and money.” Yet on December 16, 2019, you admitted that Rockville would not “get a handle” on deer population control until possibly 2055, and you opined that killing could be eliminated in 15 years when nonlethal options became more affordable.

What is a bigger waste of time and money than cruelly killing deer for years and years (to no effect) when you know a more humane alternative is on the horizon?

Mr. Mader advised that the program would only be considered a success if it were conducted without a public outcry. By his metrics, the program has already failed. Beginning on December 19, 2020, the people came out to protest your cruel hunt. You are hearing their outcry in your voicemail. **We ask that you commit to making this the final season of this cruel and ineffective hobby hunt.**

Very truly yours,

Ingrid Newkirk



**Deer deserve
protection, too.**