

# Spruce Haven narrowly wins vote to stay open

By **Christopher Shoust** - February 20, 2018



The animal care and control bylaw that would have affected Spruce Haven Nature Park, which has been pushed back twice this year already was dealt with tonight at city council.

"I truly believe that they love these animals," councilor Steve Butland said who wanted to grandfather the nature park into the bylaw. Councilor Susan Myers seconded the matter.



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Councilor Judy Hupponen came with a petition signed by 580 residents to close Spruce Haven down.

The bylaw was in part to prohibit zoos in the Sault, giving the zoo a 6 month window to close up shop.

It was amended by Butland and Myers to grandfather in Spruce Haven.

Council passed the resolution 6-4.

A representative from Zoocheck spoke before council first.

It offered to move the animals from Spruce Haven if it closes because of the bylaw.

Spruce Haven is home to bears, wolves, a cougar, a coyote as well as other animals.

Spruce Haven has had a wolf escape because of its poor fencing according to Zoocheck.

A representative from Little Ray's Reptile Zoo in Ottawa spoke.

They were not in support or disapproval of Spruce Haven but spoke of the educational aspects of zoos as well as tourism capacities.

It asked for a further delay until council had all the knowledge available that it can have.

It was representing CAZA or Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums which had a representative speak last council meeting.

City councilor Susan Myers asked the legal department of their opinion:

"We do not have proper resources [to deal with this matter]... my recommendation is to prohibit zoos."

Council for Spruce Haven said the escaping wolf is unfounded and that OSPCA inspections have been found to be in compliance.

This council for Spruce Haven Nature Park asked for an further delay until proper experts are consulted.

Spruce Haven said regular inspections from the OSPCA, the MNR and the local humane society have gone on for years.

They say they "are not sitting back doing nothing" but making regular improvements on the animal enclosures and resources on the animals for the public.

City councilor Matthew Shoemaker asked Spruce Haven if they would be able to meet CAZA standards.

They asked again for a delay until there were better expert opinion into the bylaw.

Shoemaker asked what would they do with the animals if the bylaw was passed in its current state.

Spruce Haven said they would look to other sanctuaries.

The discussion back and forth was summed up when councilor Hupponen tried to refute Spruce Haven's statements and while she was passing out information to other councilors, acting mayor Paul Christian said "please councilor Hupponen. This is turning into a circus."

The bylaw will be revised to come to a further council meeting.

### **Christopher Shoust**

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Christopher Shoust, Dip. J, BFA (honours), is a working artist in Sault Ste. Marie, who primarily works as a painter, writer, sculptor, filmmaker and reporter for SaultOnline.com He is excited to be a part of the SaultOnline team and has great things to contribute!

