

Jen Nossokoff

Meet the candidates, week 29: “Neighbors report more sightings of coyotes around the neighborhood, and parents and dog owners are concerned. Tell me about your thoughts and how we can live in harmony with wildlife in our neighborhood.”

I understand the concerns many of us share about the recent increase in coyote sightings around our neighborhood. Having a small dog, a 17-pound chiweenie named Rocky Balboa who has been part of our family since we rescued him nine years ago, I feel this issue on a personal level. I also have a 1 1/2-year-old child who spends a considerable amount of time in Golden Gate Park, and their safety is always on my mind.

The conversation about coyotes in San Francisco, especially in areas like Golden Gate Park, has been gaining attention. Coyotes are a natural part of our urban ecosystem, but their presence can be unsettling, particularly for those of us with small pets and young children. The recent incident where a 5-year-old girl was bitten by a coyote in the Botanical Garden has understandably heightened concerns. For those who may not have followed the story, wildlife officials responded by shooting and killing three coyotes in Golden Gate Park. DNA testing later confirmed that one of the coyotes was responsible for the attack, and thankfully, the girl is reported to be “mostly fine.”

I commend the city and wildlife officials for their swift response to this unfortunate event, but it also highlights the need for a strong and coordinated effort from the relevant city departments to effectively monitor and address aggressive wildlife behavior. Additionally, there is a clear need for better preventive measures, such as improved signage and public education in areas known to be coyote habitats, to help prevent future incidents.

I believe that awareness campaigns and protective behaviors are crucial components of living harmoniously with wildlife. Simple actions like keeping our dogs on leashes, avoiding feeding wildlife, and understanding coyote behavior can make a significant difference. It's also important to share information with neighbors, so we're all prepared and aware of the best practices for safety.

As we navigate this situation, it's essential to balance our need for safety with the respect for the wildlife that shares our environment. By staying informed and

taking proactive steps, we can help ensure that our neighborhood remains a safe and harmonious place for everyone.