

Local falconer granted exemption for raptors from Town of Shelburne's Animal Control Bylaw

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A Shelburne resident will be able to keep a bird of prey at his residential home.

During their meeting on Monday (April 14), Shelburne Town Council approved granting relief of the Animal Control Bylaw, allowing resident Julien Wong Lun Hing Devonish to keep a hawk on his property.

Wong Lun Hing Devonish initially approached Shelburne Town Council with the request during a council meeting in February. He currently owns one raptor and works with two others for animal control.

“As falconry is provincially regulated, it is entirely possible for the township to make an exemption to the current ban on exotic pets for those who hold a valid provincial license,” wrote Wong Lun Hing Devonish, in the February delegation letter

Falconry is a regulated heritage practice of training birds of prey to hunt wild game, including assisting in the conservation of wildlife and pest control.

To practice falconry in Ontario, an individual must obtain an Apprentice Falconry Licence, which requires a small game hunting license, an apprenticeship under an experienced falconer, and a completion of the Ontario Hawking Club Apprenticeship Program.

It was recommended that Shelburne Council implement conditions for granting relief of the bylaw.

The five recommended conditions include:

• **Proper Enclosure and Housing:** The resident must construct a secure enclosure for the bird to prevent escape and minimize any risk to the public or neighbours. The enclosure must meet the standards set by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Town's Zoning Bylaw, and receive approval from the Ministry.

• **Animal Welfare Standards:** The resident must ensure that the bird is provided with appropriate care, including a balanced diet, veterinary care and adequate shelter. Assurance will need to be provided by the resident.

• **Noise Control:** The bird should be housed in a way that minimizes noise disruptions to neighbours. Measures must also be taken to ensure the bird is not left unsupervised in public or residential spaces for prolonged periods.

• **Compliance with Licensing Requirements:** The resident must maintain an active falconry license issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and provide proof of compliance with any applicable regulations

• **Duration of Permit:** The approval will be subject to an annual permitting process with the resident needing to submit a yearly request to staff if they wish to continue keeping the bird beyond the first year.

Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills clarified that should any of the set conditions not be maintained, council has the authority to revoke the exception.

Residents living within 60 metres of Wong Lun Hing Devonish's residence were given the opportunity to provide input on the decision.

Jennifer Willoughby, director of legislative services for the Town of Shelburne, told Council that no responses, questions or concerns were received regarding the exemption.

While Shelburne Council has granted relief from the bylaw, allowing Wong Lun Hing Devonish to keep his hawk, the exemption does not permit him to train, hunt or allow the bird to fly freely within the Town of Shelburne's boundary.