

## **AD HOC DEER HERD COMMITTEE MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2015**

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Deer Herd Committee was held on Wednesday, September 2, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall.

**PRESENT:** John Brakora, Josh Penland, Barry Peterson, Roger Zielinski

**ABSENT:** Bob Hornkohl, Tom Bruce

**OTHERS:** Jill Fritz, Michigan Senior State Director, Humane Society  
Ari Cornman, LRBOI – Conservation Department Biologist  
Bob Sanders, LRBOI – Conservation Department Biologist  
Kristine Drake, Traverse City

**PURPOSE:** To develop a long-term strategy for deer herd management; providing recommendations to City Council.

***Ordinance to Ban Feeding.*** At the meeting of July 23, 2015 this committee requested an ordinance be drafted to ban the feeding of deer. City Attorney George Saylor drafted language to amend Chapter 606 of the Codified Ordinances of Manistee to include a Section 606.08 Feeding of Wild Mammals which was endorsed by the committee and forwarded to the Council Ordinance Committee. The Council Ordinance Committee met on September 1, 2015 and made changes to the language to also ban feeding wild turkeys and specifically exclude pets, chickens and ducks. It is anticipated that this ordinance will be before Council at their meeting of September 15 for the first reading; with a second reading and adoption at the October 6, 2015 meeting.

***Humane Society Presentation:*** The Chair introduced Jill Fritz who he contacted for a presentation by the Humane Society on deer herd management. (Recently consulted with the City of Ann Arbor who is moving forward with a cull.) Their advice: start by doing research, complete a survey to see if there really is a problem, set up a good data monitoring and assessment program, create a living with deer section on the City's website to educate the public; before setting a cull.

They have staff conducting a study on birth control for Ann Arbor and they will be moving forward on a PCP (contraception) program. Playing a numbers game is a losing situation; no evidence that killing deer works. Also discussed mitigating property damage through selected plantings, repellants or barriers. Public safety concerns will most likely be brought up in survey results; lot of varying factors on public safety. Suggested collecting and assessing numbers to designate hotspots to tailor mitigation and public education. Rochester Hills has had a very successful education program. Lyme disease is not reduced by a cull. Ticks are carried by many other mammals and birds and are not reduced by a cull. Deer are highly prolific; the more food, the more they reproduce. Culling can create a bounce-back. Culls divert attention from effective solutions. More information on their website, they advise against lethal control.

Numerous questions and comments by committee members and those in attendance. Discussion points included but were not limited to:

- Humane Society perspective on hunting.
- No magic number of deer for a certain area.
- Manistee has unique areas in town that provide deer habitat.
- Start education, continue to collect data and decide next spring on where to go from here.
- Has been an item of discussion by City Council since 2003.
- Socially / politically where does the City want to be?
- LRBOI has experience with studies of deer population and could provide technical assistance and help to the City through a partnership arrangement. They are neither for nor against a hunt; just needs to be effective. Tribe is opposed to any program that results in waste. Education is very important no matter what course is taken. Number one thing is an ordinance against feeding and you will see a marked drop if feeding is banned and they would love to see this state-wide. You will never reduce complaints to zero.
- Josh Penland believes the City needs an aerial survey with an estimated cost of \$8,895. Jill Fritz will check to see if funding is available through the Humane Society. (No committee consensus on the need for an aerial survey.)
- LRBOI recommended trying a combination of all strategies but it would have to be an ongoing commitment of the City to control the herd.
- Kristine Drake noted that the public needs to be educated on what a cull would look like.

Jill Fritz will send the committee supporting documentation on why a cull does not work and the cost for a PCP program.

Josh Penland has put together a binder of information and would like to schedule a work session with City Council. General consensus that the committee is not at this point and no formal request was made. The committee would like some direction from the City Manager on what should be prepared prior to requesting a joint work session with the City Council.

Discussed length of deer survey. MOTION by John Brakora, second by Roger Zielinski to shorten the survey deadline from January 1 to October 1. Discussion followed, voice vote-Motion carried. Josh Penland will work with City staff to have this corrected. Discussed who would be responsible for compiling surveys, with no formal appointment. It was suggested that results should be prepared for the next committee meeting.

At the suggestion of the Chair, the committee discussed moving to only one meeting per month. General consensus to meet the first Wednesday of each month at 3 p.m. Other meetings could be called as necessary. Roger Zielinski and Josh Penland will work on arranging presentations for the next meeting by the USDA and the MDNR. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room.

Call of the Chair to adjourn at 4:45 p.m.

Cynthia Lokovich, CAP-OM  
Executive Secretary