



# Town of Carlisle

## Deer Control Committee

66 Westford Street  
Carlisle, MA 01741

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### Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2020

Zoom Meeting 7:00 PM

Committee members present: Jonathan DeKock (Chair), Dejan (Dan) Bojanic, Todd Thorsen, John Keating, Barney Arnold

Committee members absent: Alex Parra

Community members: Stephen Keele, Jeannie Geneczko

Chair Jonathan DeKock opened the meeting at 7:08 PM.

#### Agenda Item 1: **Approval of meeting minutes**

Minutes of the April 15, 2020 meeting were approved (5-0-0)

#### Agenda Item 2: **Succession planning for 2020 Deer Agent**

- George Michalik no longer interested in serving as the 2020 Deer Agent

- Stephen Keele is willing to serve as the 2020 Deer Agent

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Chief Fisher wishes to discontinue having a police liaison for the Deer Committee, as he does not feel that the program poses safety concerns and there is not a member on the force that can assume this role at night.

- With Stephen coming on as the Deer Agent, the committee will consist of three hunters (Dejan Bojanic, John Keating, Stephen Keele) and four non-hunters (Jonathan DeKock, Alex Parra, Barney Arnold, Todd Thorsen)

(Barney Arnold)

- The BOS is taking appointments for all Boards and Committees in June. As all present are willing to continue for the 2020 hunt, plus the addition of Stephen as Deer Agent, we can convey this information to the BOS. We need to confirm with Alex Parra that he is willing to continue.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Per the April 15 minutes, all Deer Committee members said that they will continue for the 2020 hunt, with Dejan Bojanic moving from Deer Agent to a regular committee member.

(Barney Arnold)

- We need a brief bio from Stephen listing his qualifications. We also technically need a resignation letter from Andrew Corwin, police liaison.

- Jonathan DeKock will send an e-mail to Tim Goddard, BOS, stating who will be reappointed.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- For next meeting, all should think about who should be Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary for the 2020 hunt

#### Agenda Item 3: **Discuss Board of Selectmen feedback for setting direction for Fall 2020 bow**

## **hunt**

(Barney Arnold)

- Based on the joint BOS/Deer Committee meeting on May, 12, the BOS wants to hear from the Conservation and Land Stewardship committees. There are some members on the BOS that are not as supportive of the bow hunt as they were originally and are looking for feedback from committees that have more of a stake in the health of the Carlisle forests. The BOS needs to take a firm position either for or against the bow hunt.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- We have a support statement for the hunt from the MetroWest Conservation Alliance, which conserve and care for over 5000 acres of fields, forests, and farms in the 36 communities surrounding the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers. This statement was signed by several prominent community stakeholders in land stewardship from the community at large, including representatives from the Sudbury Valley Trustees, the Harvard Deer Management Committee, Ashland Conservation, Concord Land Conservation Trust, the Southborough Open Land Foundation and Weston Conservation Administrator.
- We also have a support letter from David Stainbrook, the deer and moose project leader representing MassWildlife.
- Dr. Alan Rutberg, of Tufts University researching deer control methods in Eastern Massachusetts, declined to start a new deer contraception study in Carlisle. In an e-mail, he stated his reason as having too many ongoing projects at the moment.
- I (Jonathan DeKock) also reached out to deer contraception program called White Buffalo out of New York. They stated that, as they are not a research organization, they can not carry out deer contraception work in the state of Massachusetts.
- MetroWest Conservation provided a name of a researcher Anne Short at Boston University that is planning research at the intersection of public policy and environmentalism. In a future year, her group plans to look at forest health in Carlisle.
- David Stainbrook is planning to do a forest health assessment in Carlisle in 2021. Additionally, he wants to do a deer pellet count every 2-3 years in Carlisle. He planned to do this in March/April this year, but could not do the planned work in the Great Brook/ Estabrook woods due to COVID-19 related restrictions.

(John Keating)

- There are several private properties with deer fencing. Maybe we could use these as controls to study the deer impact on the forest understory?

(Dejan Bojanic)

- Difficult to use fenced private properties as controls as we don't know what kind of vegetation work was done inside the fences by owners.

(Barney Arnold)

- For the June 9 BOS deer hunt public hearing, the message that we need to convey is that in order to take more deer, we need to increase the hunt effectiveness. This will be accomplished through the changes proposed for the 2020 hunt by the Deer Committee. As committee, we need to convey the message that we believe that the data shows that the damage to the understory in the Carlisle forests is significant. The BOS would like a goal was to the number of deer that need to be taken through the bow hunt in order to be impactful.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Referencing David Stainbrook, MassWildlife: Mr. Stainbrook states that it is not right to use hard numbers for a hunt without cross-referencing forest health. Per estimates presented in the 2019 talk given in Carlisle by Mr. Stainbrook, the town of Carlisle has an excess of at least 140 deer based on 30 deer per square mile beyond numbers that are sustainable for a healthy

forest (10-15 deer/square mile). Without hunting, Mr. Stainbrook felt that the herd could grow 4-10%/ year, rising to 400 excess deer in Carlisle if the deer population reached a density of 50/square mile over the next 10-15 years. However, it is better to do assessments rather than rely on mathematical formulas for deer population growth. While including more Town land would increase hunt effectiveness, the reality is that some Town parcels will never be integrated into the bow hunt. More significantly, for the hunt to be effective, we need to hunt all regions of the town to avoid having pockets where the deer population remains high.

(Dejan Bojanic)

- We are covering the Town fairly reasonable by adding the proposed Hart farm parcels to the 2020 hunt. We may want to add others in future years.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- If we are doubling the size of the program this year to 34 hunters, we could hypothetically double our yield as an estimate for the BOS. However, there are many uncertainties, including how often the hunters will be hunting throughout the duration of the program.

(Dejan Bojanic)

- 50% is not an unreasonable estimate, or 17 deer for 34 hunters, but we should not be judged on absolute numbers as we have just been through two pilot programs.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Suggest 17 as a number for the BOS. If we can't meet the goal, we will have to discuss the shortfall with the BOS. We really need to explain to the Town people that this is a safe program that needs to be run for five years in order to get data to assess hunt impact.
- As we discussed in previous meetings, having the hunters keep a log of their time spent hunting and the deer taken would significantly help the Deer Committee with program management and efficacy.

(Stephen Keele)

- Asking the hunters to log this data, which could go just to the Deer Agent, would show how committed the hunters are to the program.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Action item: Jonathan will come up with a concise statement for the June 9 BOS public hearing to brief the Deer Committee plans for the 2020 Town bow hunt, highlighting changes from the hunts over the previous two years.

(Barney Arnold)

- We, as a committee, need to emphasize that the number of hunters will be restricted by the size of the parcels available for the hunt. At 10 acres per hunter, no more than 25 hunters at any given time would be hunting.
- As the BOS liaison to the Deer Committee, looking for guidance on how to present my support for the Deer Committee.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- As BOS liaison, Barney should broadly support the positions off the Deer Committee.

### **Agenda Items 4-7 Tabled**

#### **Agenda Item 8: Discuss Financial Management for the 2020 Deer Hunt**

(Jonathan DeKock)

-Regarding finances for the June 9 BOS meeting, the message of the Deer Committee is that we are shifting the bulk of the labor to the Committee (vs Town employees). As far as other minor cost saving measures, we could ask the hunters to provide a SASE and an address for items that would be mailed to them, which would be used by the Deer Committee/Deer Agent to send out relevant documents.

(Barney Arnold)

- Would any Town employee need to spend significant time supporting the program?

(Jonathan DeKock)

- We will work to minimize Town employee labor. We understand the labor cost incurred by Mary (ConsComm) last year, so we know what needs to be done by the Deer committee to take on these responsibilities for the 2020 hunt.
- As long as we can show that we are not costing the Town money, keeping the application fee the same is reasonable. With 34 hunters, we would have ~\$1000 in revenue from application fees and \$500 in expenses (Deer Agent stipend plus signage).

### **Agenda Item 9 Tabled**

### **Agenda Item 10: Public input**

(Jeannie Geneczko)

- Would like the name of the researcher from Boston University working on public policy and environmentalism. Jonathan DeKock to provide contact info.
- Was there a phone call with Dr. Rutberg? Just e-mail correspondence.
- For the two deer taken by Dejan Bojanic in Town Forest, was it one per year? Yes
- Would like copies of the correspondence from MetroWest Conservation Alliance, David Stainbrook and Dr. Rutberg. Jonathan DeKock to provide.

Next meeting: June 17, 2020

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted: Todd Thorsen