

New Shoreham Deer Task Force
Tuesday, February 2, 2010
Town Hall, Old Town Road, Block Island
7:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Mary Sue Record, Rebecca Ballard, Chris Blane, Chris Blansfield, Paul Deane, Maggie Komosinski, George Mellor and William Wilson. Absent was Patricia Doyle. Fiona Fitzpatrick was present to take the minutes of the meeting.

Public Input: Tijana Petrovic, a documentary film maker from NY via Serbia, told the group she is making a film about the community's experience reducing the deer herd.

Approval of minutes from January 19, 2010

Mr. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of January 19, 2010 with minor changes. Mr. Mellor seconded the motion.

Ayes: 8 (Record, Ballard, Blane, Blansfield, Deane, Komosinski, Mellor, Wilson)

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 (Doyle)

Deer Count

Ms. Record reported First Warden Kim Gaffett contacted Brian Tefft, of the RIDEM. The DEM conducted an aerial survey in January, 2010. He estimates there are 85 deer per square mile and reported 10-15 would be better for human and deer health. The date of the survey, the technology and protocol used are not know at this time. When the date is known, the number of deer taken since the survey was conducted can be determined. Mr. Tefft will be invited to a meeting soon.

- Information on aerial infrared counts

Ms. Record reported: AIT scan from North Carolina estimated \$25,000 for a survey; Vision Air Research, run by a wildlife biologist, could conduct an arial infrared video of 20 sq. mi. in late Feb-early March. VAR would provide a count with a video dvd \$4,950, or less \$350 if done in conjunction with Shelter Island's survey. There was no response from Four Star Aviation of Billerica, MA. Chopper Charter, a division of Davis Aviation, said they would provide a plane with an "easy to operate" camera for \$2,000 plus \$800 per hour, plus ferry costs of \$2,300.

- Infrared equipment from Fire Dept.

Paul Deane reported the hand-held device works during daylight; it works well with snow cover. He will determine the range and report back.

- Current deer tag count

Mr. Blane reported 99 deer were taken during shotgun season, 18 during muzzle loading season and an additional 21 at the check station he staffs.

Fish/Krause study update

- CDC grant

Bill Wilson, the Fish-Krause contact, reported he contacted Dr. Krause for Lyme diseased statistics from the medical center. Dr. Fish said to contact wildlife biologist Schmitz, who was unavailable. Dr. Fish also said there may be funding from CDC to support project. In the past the CDC has funded four poster and rodent insecticide pilot projects. Dr. Krause believes there may be funds for deer reduction, and the study of the correlation between deer reduction, tick density and disease incidence. Mr. Wilson will be the contact person with Dr. Fish, and will receive all the CDC grant material. The group will work in conjunction with the Town's grant writer. The Town Council alone has the authority to apply for grants on behalf of the Town.

Ms. Record moved to pursue CDC grant, seconded by Mr. Mellor.

Ayes: 8 (Record, Ballard, Blane, Blansfield, Deane, Komosinski, Mellor, Wilson)
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Doyle)

- Request to Medical Center from Kim

Ms. Gaffett had directed the Council's liaison on the Health Services Board, Henry Hill, to take the group's request for statistics to the Board. After conferring with Ms. Record, Ms. Gaffett asked Mr. Hill to convey the Council's request that the Medical Center work with Dr. Krause while he continues to gather statistics on the incidence of tick-related diseases on Block Island. Mr. Wilson said the CDC grant may include funding for an intern at the Medical Center.

Transfer station usage

Mr. Blane reported he has been using the new system at the transfer station to dispose of deer remains. George Mellor has received one bill as BIRA treasurer.

Opening more land

- Conservation lands
 - i. BI Conservancy

Ms. Record reported the BI Conservancy land adjacent to Plat 20, Lot 20 is restricted to hunting. Plat 5, Lot 120 also restricts hunting. Their other lands are not similarly restricted.

- ii. Land Trust

The group plans to approach landowners and conservation groups with the evidence of past safe hunts conducted on Plat 20, Lot 20. When the DTF has a deer reduction plan, the Land Trust will be asked to reconsider their past votes to prohibit hunting on their properties.

- iii. Rodman's Hollow

Ms. Gaffett was not available to report on the progress of the Town-DEM Management Plan.

- iv. Fish and Wildlife

There is a nation-wide prohibition against hunting on Fish & Wildlife lands as a result of a legal challenge to the agency. There is a conservation easement on part of the parcel, the location is disputed.

- Preparing for next year's hunting season
 - i. GIS mappings

Ms. Komosinski has been working with the Town's GIS system administrator to determine which lands were hunted in the past. She will be identifying conservation lands adjacent to currently hunted properties.

- ii. Permissions

Mr. Blane is opposed to helping hunters obtain landowner permission; he believes it is safer and more constructive to have hunters in direct communication with landowners. Mr. Wilson wants to create a list of hunting land for those who are willing to kill the deer.

Input for next meeting's agenda

- Set up a meeting with DEM and Fish/Krause
- George will summarize the 13-point deer reduction proposal
- Chris will summarize previous DEM proposal

At 9:00, Mr. Blane moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Mellor.

Ayes: 8 (Record, Ballard, Blane, Blansfield, Deane, Komosinski, Mellor, Wilson)

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 (Doyle)

Minutes approved 2/16/2010 with corrections

Fiona Fitzpatrick