

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, January 24, 2013, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Pete Anderson, Jacob Bethune, Linda Gillies, Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay (by phone), Gilbert Rivera, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Fred Thomas (chair),

Absent: Andrew Coombs, Paul Hatch, Jr., Laura Houle, Philo Hutcheson , Scott Sienkiewicz, William Tilden

Fred Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes, meeting of January 3, 2013. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Review of meeting with the hunters 1/19/13. Fred said that the meeting, held at the Sporting Club, had gone well. Comments from the ten hunters who attended were positive and constructive. He reviewed the major points included in notes taken by Linda Gillies and circulated (copy attached). The responses to the hunter questionnaire, which has been sent to those who did not attend the meeting, will be compiled into a report.

Report on conference call of 1/22/13 with Keel Kemper, MDIF&W. Fred, Pete Anderson and Linda participated in the call to plan for DRC's report on the Special Hunt to the MDIF&W Advisory Council meeting on January 24th. They first discussed an article recommended by Keel – Williams et al, "Evaluation of Organized Hunting as a Management Technique for Overabundant White-tailed Deer in Suburban Landscapes," Wildlife Society Bulletin, 2012. The article describes four east coast communities whose deer reduction programs have been unsuccessful in bringing their deer populations down to 8-10 deer per square miles. The article recommends that state agencies and municipalities think in new ways about achieving deer density objectives. It was agreed that at the AC meeting, Keel and Fred would suggest to the AC members that it was time to think "out of the box." Keel agreed to send Fred material about rifle safety.

Report on 1/24/13 MDIF&W Advisory Council meeting. Fred, Pete and Linda attended the meeting, which was held at MDIF&W headquarters in Augusta. Fred said that Keel spoke first, reporting that the hunt had been well run. He also called attention to three documents that had been distributed to AC members - summaries of the incidence of Lyme disease on Islesboro, recent tick survey figures and copies of the Wildlife Society Bulletin article. Fred then spoke of a "paradigm shift" that must take place – that the glasses through which state agencies and local communities see deer reduction as being achieved through recreational hunts must be thrown

away and replaced with a different set of rules that provides communities with the tools they need to get the job done quickly and effectively. In post-hunt discussions hunters recommended the use of baiting, possible use of rifles, and moving the season earlier, to the first Monday after Thanksgiving. Fred suggested that eventually, with depredation permits issued by the State, 3-5 qualified local hunters could be designated and trained to hunt in specific areas using sharpshooter techniques. This would be the safest, least intrusive and most effective way to keep Islesboro's deer herd in check for the long term, thereby lessening the incidence of Lyme disease and damage to the island's forests.

Pete said that Commissioner Chandler Woodcock responded to the Islesboro report by saying that in view of the public health hazard caused by many deer on Islesboro, "adjustments" to State regulations could be made. He added that the DRC may have to involve legislative representatives such as State Representative Michael Thibodeau. We may also have to go through the AC's three-step process again. Fred said that changes such as rifle use and the timing of the hunt would have to be approved by the Town.

Fred said that changing the mind-set at MDIF&W and elsewhere will not be easy. At a reception following the AC meeting James Connolly, Wildlife Division Director, suggested that Islesboro needed more hunters and that the DRC should allow approximately 25 mainland hunters to participate in the Special Hunt through a lottery system. Fred said this is the old "recreational hunt approach" and that we should look to new solutions.

Fred encouraged DRC members to read the Wildlife Society article, which was circulated at the meeting (copy attached to these minutes).

Consideration of payments for services provided during the Special Hunt. The committee considered a list of proposed payments for services rendered during the Special Hunt (see attached). Payment to Moon's was considered first. It was agreed that in future years a minimum of \$3,000 (\$1,000 per week) should be established for butchering. There was discussion as to whether that minimum should apply to the 2012 hunt. To date Moon's has been paid \$1,280 for the 25 deer he butchered (not including deer that went to Hunters for the Hungry).

MOTION: In accordance with the establishment of a \$3,000 minimum for butchering during the Special Deer Hunt, the DRC will pay \$1,720 to Moon's Wild Game Processing for butchering during the 2012 hunt on the condition that Ron Moon guarantees he will be available for the butchering during the 2013 hunt.

Fred will call Moon about this proposal. The agreement should be documented in writing.

After further discussion:

MOTION: Taking into account the previous motion, the DRC approves \$2,420 in payments for services rendered during the Special Hunt.

Issues to be discussed. There was some discussion of unresolved issues.

- *Clarification of DRC guidelines for eligibility to participate.* Linda suggested that she would work with Philo to draft new, clearer language for consideration at the next DRC meeting. Fred said he felt that spouses of property owners should be allowed to participate, not partners.
- *Permit requirement.* Keel is working on this.
- *Policy for small island surrounding Islesboro.* Same as for Islesboro – must secure landowner permission.
- *Safety briefings.* Don Johnson said that hunters who had qualified both through the written test and the range test should not have to qualify again. Fred added that we want more hunters to participate and that having to qualify again might be a disincentive. There was agreement that if the regulations are changed to permit rifles, hunters using rifles should have to pass a range test.

DRC meeting schedule. The next scheduled DRC meeting will be held on Thursday, February 7, 2013 at 4:30 pm in the Town Office.

Fred concluded the meeting by saying, “The DRC can’t relax – we still have serious work to do.”

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow-up:

- Work with Keel Kemper to come up with a new proposal to the MDIF&W Advisory Council. (FT, PA, LG)
- Draft new language for hunter eligibility for consideration by the committee. (PH, LG)