

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Tuesday, March 19, 2013, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Pete Anderson, Jacob Bethune, Linda Gillies, Paul Hatch, Jr., Gilbert Rivera, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Scott Sienkiewicz, Fred Thomas (chair)

Absent: Andrew Coombs, Laura Houle, Philo Hutcheson, Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay, William Tilden

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

Approval of Minutes, meeting of March 11, 2013. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Review of discussion at Board of Selectmen's meeting of March 13, 2013. Pete Anderson said that in accordance with the DRC's decision made at the March 11th meeting, he, Linda Gillies, Babe Hatch and Gil Rivera had reported to the Selectmen on new information recently received by the DRC from Keel Kemper at MDIF&W and Anthony DeNicola of White Buffalo, Inc. (WB). Pete explained that the Town could take different tracks going forward with deer reduction, including the possibility of sharpshooting with professionals. They circulated the second of two proposals submitted by WB and background information about the company, copies of Tony DeNicola's emails of February 26 and 27 strongly advising against continuation of the Special Hunt with firearms, and copies of the five-year budget projections showing the difference in the cost of three alternatives - continuing the Special Hunt, suspending the Special Hunt for a year, and the sharpshooting alternative (attached).

The Selectmen, who then discussed the DRC issues for about an hour, were divided in their views. Linda reported that Sue Schnur and J. T. Zlotkowski favored continuing the Special Hunt, Arch Gillies was for suspending it, Sandy Oliver leaned in that direction, and Craig Olson was non-committal but proposed that the \$17,000 cost of the Special Hunt be included in the Town budget as a "placeholder." The Selectmen advised the DRC to hold an information meeting for the community in April in advance of a vote at a Special Town Meeting in June. Pete said that the DRC would discuss these suggestions and report back to the Selectmen at their meeting of March 27, 2013.

Discussion of DRC plan going forward. The committee then reviewed a proposed schedule:

- March/April Keep MDIF&W informed, with a possible meeting with Commissioner Woodcock.
- April 4/25 - community forum to lay out the options:
 - Special Hunt with shotguns and extended Special Hunt season
 - Special Hunt with rifles and extended Special Hunt season
 - Suspend Special Hunt to develop an alternative plan, including the possibility of sharpshooting
- June Special Town Meeting to vote on the options.
- Summer Depending on the results of the vote, go to MDIF&W Advisory Council with a request a Rule change for the Special Hunt.

Discussion followed:

- Fred said the DRC owes it to the Town to give them the information indicating that the current strategy of having special hunts is not going to work. We should let the Town decide. Islesboro is not unique - other towns are facing the same issues. He added that MDIF&W would not allow more use of baiting in a special hunt, for if everyone baits it's not effective; the White Buffalo approach is to have baiting in 2-3 places.
- Fred and Pete Anderson said they had looked into what companies did sharpshooting and had not come up with any alternatives to WB.
- Gil Rivera said that the Town will never pass the sharpshooting alternative because the cost is too high.
- Babe Hatch said he didn't believe that Islesboro hunters will be able to do what WB does. He doubted that a sufficient number of volunteers could be found to provide support such as baiting to the hunters. It was suggested that perhaps students from the high school could be enlisted.
- Scott Sienkiewicz, who agreed that the final decision is up to the Town, said that Tony DeNicola at WB selects the hunters he wants to train. He added that the cost of equipment set-up for each hunter is \$4,000; the equipment would be owned by the Town.
- Maggy Aston asked if the hunting season could be in the spring. Several committee members replied that being around deer when they have their young is not advisable.
- Linda reported that she had asked Stephen Jacques of Hunters for the Hungry if the refrigerated truck could be made available in the event that the Special Hunt season was extended into January – March. He replied that Hunters for the Hungry would be using the truck for other purposes during that time but that their staff would be willing to pick up deer on the island and have them butchered for distribution to the needy. There was agreement that the meat from deer killed in December during the Special hunt had a strong taste and that in all likelihood those taken during the late winter months would not be fit to eat.
- Pete Anderson said that at the April information meeting he would not be comfortable speaking in favor of an option that he did not support. It was agreed that at the meeting Fred would explain the new information received by the DRC and lay out the options going forward. Individual committee members could then voice their own opinions if they wished.

DRC budget review.

- *To be included in the 2013/14 Town budget.* Linda said that the \$16,490 budget, which includes the cost of a Special Hunt as well as \$3,940 for the two tick surveys to be taken by the Vector-borne Disease Laboratory in Portland, would be included in the Town budget as a “placeholder.” DRC's actual budget will depend on the results of the vote at the Special Town Meeting in June.

MOTION. The Deer Reduction Committee approves the budget of \$16,490 for 2013/14.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

- *Projected 5-year budgets estimating the cost of three deer reduction options – a Special Hunt (extended season, rifles), no Special Hunt, and the sharpshooting alternative.* Linda said that after the Selectmen’s meeting on March 13, Babe Hatch had said that the projections should include WB’s estimate for sharpshooting and training if Islesboro holds further special hunts, approximately \$177,000 as opposed to \$80,440 if there are no further special hunts. She noted that the higher figure is now included in the projections’ footnotes.

Review of text for Town 2012 annual report (attached): After making one small change, the committee approved the report.

Review of DRC schedule. Committee members agreed on a DRC meeting schedule through the Special Town meeting in June (attached). The next DRC meeting will be on Thursday, April 18 in the Town Office meeting room.

New business/old business. Linda said that a number of community members had mentioned recent sightings of one or more coyotes on the island and had asked whether the DRC would be involved in deciding what, if anything, should be done. It was agreed that the matter should be referred to the Selectmen; Linda said she would inform them of the DRC’s discussion.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary