

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, February 9, 2012, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Pete Anderson, Andrew Coombs, Linda Gillies, Paul Hatch, Jr., Philo Hutcheson, Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay (by telephone), Gilbert Rivera, Fred Thomas (chair), William Tilden

Absent: Jacob Bethune, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Scott Sienkiewicz

By invitation: Caitlin Anderson, Vernon Ziegler

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

Approval of Minutes, Meeting of January 26, 2012. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Preliminary Survey Results. The report was made by Vern Ziegler, Town Assessor, who has used the Town's database to put together the database for the survey, and Caitlin Anderson, whom the Town has hired to enter the data. They showed a slide of the spreadsheet and presented summaries calculated in two ways, one based on 1,266 properties and one based on 824 owners; copies are attached. Fifty-two percent of owners had replied to the survey as of 2/9/12. Of those, 87% favored the concept of a Special Hunt, and 12% would like to participate as hunters. Eighty-five percent favored the use of archery, 72% favored the use of shotguns and 49% favored the use of rifles. The percentages calculated on the number of properties were similar.

Vern explained that the survey analysis would include a color-coded map indicating where hunting during a Special Hunt would be allowed and what hunting methods could be used. During the hunt, hunters could obtain maps of specific areas from the Town office. The deadline for survey responses being February 10th, the final results, including the map, will be ready for the DRC's next meeting on February 23rd.

Follow-up from meeting of 1/26/12:

- *Butchering during a Special Hunt.* Babe Hatch and Andrew Coombs reported they had had not been able to identify anyone who would be interested in setting up a butchering operation on-island in 2012. Linda Gillies reported that according to Jeff at Thin Blue Line, who was originally interested in the Islesboro project, the company will not be able to accommodate Islesboro's butchering needs during a Special Hunt held after the regular hunting season, for by that time he and his partner will have to return to their jobs as policemen; furthermore, their facility is not heated. Jeff referred her to Ron Moon of Moon's Wild Game Processing in Waldoboro, who said he would be interested in the job at \$50 per deer, which includes custom cuts and distribution to Hunters for the Hungry. The deer would have to be brought to him.

Jeff gave Linda two additional pieces of information: 1) Butchering operations that process only wild game are not required to be certified by the State, and 2) The costs of equipment for a butchering operation total approximately \$30,000.

- *Liability.* Philo Hutcheson stated that when it comes to hunting, Maine has among the strongest liability laws in the country and that property owners are extremely well protected. “Liability,” Philo said, “is simply not an issue.” He quoted from Title 14, Section 159-A of the Statute.

Linda reported that several survey respondents had questions about liability and that she had sent them copies of the Statute as well as a brochure prepared by IF&W. The board of the Islesboro Islands Trust has decided to allow archery and shotgun (not rifle) on all its properties except for Hutchins Marsh and Turtle Head, where people walk at all times of year. The Islesboro Historical Society has decided not to permit hunting on its property. The Selectmen will consider the Town’s policy at their meeting on February 15th.

- *Number of deer taken on Islesboro in 2011.* Linda reported that Kendall Marden of IF&W will provide those figures in March.
- *People in violation of DRC rules during Special Hunt.* Linda reported that in an email of 2/9/12 Jim Connolly of IF&W wrote: “The rule would outline a process where the participants would be legal, anyone not hunting under those provisions and permits would be illegal and subject to either a rule or law violation...and subject to a fine at the very least.”
- *Forum.* Linda reported that according to Marc Schnur, an information meeting held in advance of a Town vote should be called a public hearing, rather than a forum. It was agreed that Thursday, April 26th would be a good date for DRC’s hearing, 6 pm, Kinnicutt Center. Linda will check the Kinnicutt Center’s availability.

Hunter Safety/Eligibility. As chair of the Hunter Safety Committee, Philo Hutcheson circulated three draft documents relating to the proposed Special Hunt on Islesboro in 2012: 1) Criteria for Participation 2) Application to Participate, and 3) Permit to Participate. Committee members made several suggestions:

- Babe Hatch said that the proficiency test should include hitting a target. It was agreed that the target size would be 9 ½ x 11 inches; the distance would be 15 yards for a bow, 25 yards for a shotgun or rifle.
- It was agreed that caretakers could distribute permissions signed by landowners.
- Philo suggested that Special Hunt hunters wear laminated permits on their jackets and display them in their vehicles.
- Philo suggested that hunters wear orange, rather than camouflage, during the Special Hunt.

After discussion,

MOTION: The Deer Reduction Committee shall approve three documents relating to the proposed Special Hunt in 2012: Criteria for Participation, Application to Participate and Permit to Participate, as amended.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Copies of the draft documents as amended are attached.

Hunting Methods. Philo expressed concern that problems might be caused by having bow hunters and gun hunters hunting right next to each other during the Special Hunt. It was suggested that perhaps only one firearm – shotgun or rifle – should be allowed. Linda said that the survey had asked what landowner's preferences were and that it would be difficult to restrict the hunt to one firearm. It was decided to defer further discussion about this issue until the meeting on February 23, when Vern's color-coded maps will be available and the committee can see how landowner preferences break down geographically.

Preparation of DRC's Plan for IF&W. According to the DRC schedule, the written plan should be approved by the committee on Thursday, March 8th and submitted to IF&W on the next day. As preparing the report will take time, Linda will start work on a draft now, before all decisions have been made. The committee can review and edit the draft at the 2/23 meeting. In his email of February 9th, James Connolly at IF&W said he believes that the IF&W Advisory Council will be able to review the plan during March, so that DRC can submit it for inclusion as an article at Town Meeting by early April.

Next Meeting. The next DRC meeting will be held on Thursday, February 23rd at 4:30 in the Town Office.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

FOLLOW UP

- Check April 26th for public hearing at Kinnicutt Center. (LG)
- Prepare draft of DRC plan. (LG)

2/13/12