

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Michael Boucher, Linda Gillies, Don Johnson, Jr., , Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Ken Smith, William Tilden (chair)

Absent: Andrew Coombs, Paul Hatch, Jr., Carol Macaulay, Gilbert Rivera

Others attending: Maggy Aston, IIN

Bill Tilden called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm. A quorum was established.

Approval of the draft minutes for the meeting of December 11, 2014. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as amended.

Report of deer taken to date in Special Hunt. Rachel Rolerson-Smith reported that to date a total of 17 deer had been taken during the Special Hunt. She said that hunters are not seeing deer, either on Islesboro or on 700 Acre. Don Johnson said that he had been all over the Trautman property, and they're just not there. Bill recalled that when he was here in September, Tony DeNicola said that if the 2014/15 Special Hunt was held, deer would become more wary, and hunters would be lucky to harvest 40 deer.

Don Johnson said that the harvest numbers for the Extended Archery season are likely to be lower than in reality, because off-island hunters do not admit to mainland taggers that the deer were killed on Islesboro. Mike said that a number of deer are not included in the harvest totals because hunters wound but do not find them.

Consideration of Ken Smith's draft Islesboro Deer Reduction Plan from 2015/16 Forward, previously distributed. Ken said that Islesboro needs a plan that allows for killing as many deer as possible at a minimum cost. Discussion followed:

- DRC status. Ken proposed that because deer reduction/tick-borne disease is an important issue that isn't going away, the DRC (an ad hoc committee) should be made a standing committee of the Town. This will assure reliable attendance and proper procedures. Linda Gillies said that according to Janet Anderson, the Selectmen make changes to committees in early July.
- Hunters. Ken said that because off-islanders are effective hunters, they should be allowed to participate in the Special Hunt and that the State would support this. Mike Boucher thought that Islesboro voters would never agree to participation by off-island hunters. He said that under current DRC rules, hunters had to be living on the island; hunters who own property but do not live here are not allowed to participate. He proposed that anyone who owns property, including absentee owners, should be allowed to hunt.
- Special Hunt season. Mike proposed changing the Special Hunt with firearms to a November season that would run simultaneously with the Extended Archery season. Don proposed having the Special Hunt run until the second week of December, for during rut many deer would be killed. Mike suggested that the season could run until the end of February.
- Rules. Mike said if such a Special Hunt were approved, the hunting rules would have to be amended. He added that in order to manage the herd well, there would have to be some kind of limit on bucks; young ones shouldn't be shot.

- Baiting and attractants. Bill clarified the difference between baiting and attractants. Baiting involves the placing of food for deer; attractants involve other methods of attracting deer, such as the use of deer urine. Ken said the State should allow baiting. Bill said that if the hunt were in November, baiting would not be necessary because there would be plenty of food for the deer.
- Qualifications. Mike said that if there was a November hunt with firearms, participants should have more thorough hunter education and qualification standards than they have had during the three Special Hunts. He said that the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine is the most knowledgeable organization in the State and perhaps could be enlisted. Ken suggested that the NRA might be able to provide assistance. Don said that hunters must know the island and that a number of the hunters who have participated in the Special Hunts are not sufficiently qualified.

The committee then considered a month-by-month DRC task list for 2015, prepared by Linda at Bill's request.

- IF&W Advisory Council. Bill appointed Ken to contact Gunnar Gunderson, Islesboro's representative on the Council, and to set up a time in January for him to come to the island.
- Deer count/s. Mike said he thought pellet counts on Islesboro were not the most accurate, for the deer are too concentrated. Don agreed that the deer go around in circles. However he thought there should be two counts, a pellet count in March/April and a camera survey in November. Linda said that when the DRC contracted with Stantec, Inc. in 2010, they had been advised by the State that the company was the best in the business. She thought they should be used this year, as the count would be comparing "apples to apples."

Mike Boucher made the following MOTION:

The Deer Reduction Committee recommends that two deer counts be taken in 2015, a pellet count in March/April and a camera survey in November. The committee will request a proposal from Stantec, Inc. to conduct the March/April pellet count. The proposal will be considered at the next meeting of the DRC.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Linda said she would request the proposal from Stantec. She asked whether the baiting required for a camera survey conducted in November would conflict with the proposed hunting season in that month. Mike said that there would be no problem if the baiting sites were known to everyone and it was made clear that it was illegal to hunt near them.

- Community review of DRC proposal. Mike proposed that the DRC should come up with a written plan that then would be considered at a public meeting to be held in February. Ken said that in the next few days he would draft a plan that would be circulated to the DRC via mail and email. Members should give him their comments/suggestions so that a document can be voted on at the next meeting.

DRC meeting schedule. The committee considered a tentative meeting schedule. It was agreed that the next DRC meeting would be held on Wednesday, January 28th at 4:30, location to be confirmed. Setting a schedule for subsequent meetings was deferred.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow up:

- Prepare draft DRC plan. (Ken)
- Distribute plan to DRC. (Linda)
- Give Ken suggestions for the draft plan. (all DRC members)
- Contact Gunnar Gunderson. (Ken)
- Request proposal from Stantec. (Linda)

C: Janet Anderson; Sandy Oliver; Laura Houle; Fred Porter; Cindy Gorham; Maggy Willcox; Keel Kemper; Mark Merrifield; Peter Rand, MD; Chuck Lubelczyk

Approved by the DRC 1/18/15