

Approved 12/11/14

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, November 13, 2014, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Michael Boucher, Linda Gillies, Paul Hatch, Jr., Don Johnson, Jr., Carol Macaulay (by phone), Gilbert Rivera, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Ken Smith, William Tilden (chair)

Absent: Andrew Coombs

Others attending: Sandra Oliver, Maggy Willcox

Bill Tilden called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes, meeting of October 23, 2014. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as amended.

White Buffalo budget for camera survey. Linda Gillies said she had checked with Tony DeNicola, who said that there would be no additional charge for his staff's survey work on 700 Acre Island. There will be a modest charge for two weeks of baiting. Carol Macaulay said that she would do the baiting unless the survey conflicts with vacation time.

Information from extracted teeth. Linda circulated an analysis of 66 teeth prepared by Kyle Ravana, wildlife biologist at IF&W. She said Keel Kemper noted that it was unusual to have so many deer that were 5 years of age or older.

Registration for the Special Hunt. Don Johnson said that Babe Hatch had done a good job at the range exercise of November 1 for returning hunters and the safety briefing/range exercise of November 9 for new hunters. Babe said that he was concerned that a few hunters were not sufficiently familiar with a gun. Mike said that the hunts were all about safety and that the DRC does not have to pass them. Carol said that the hunters who will be hunting on 700 Acre Island will be attending the sessions on November 15th or 30th.

Preparation for the Special Hunt.

- Hunter information sheet. Mike said that the description of the tagging procedure should be clarified. Linda said she would check with the Town office and send a revised draft.
- Community information sheet (to be sent with Town mailing). Mike said the sheet should encourage landowners who give permission to multiple hunters to inform the hunters about who is hunting where. Linda will include a sentence to that effect in both the community and hunter information sheets.
- Linda said that Maggy Aston would be glad to include information about the hunt in the upcoming issue of *Islesboro Island News*. Linda will send her the community information sheet once it has been finalized.
- Mike said that before the hunt begins on December 15th, the DRC should meet Fred Porter, Wardens Mark and Michelle Merrifield, and Keel Kemper to clarify the regulations governing the Special Hunt. It was suggested that they attend the DRC meeting on Thursday, December 11th. Linda said she would issue the invitation.
- Babe said that as Leach's Express has not yet been sold, their refrigerated truck is still available.

Deer reduction efforts in other coastal communities. Linda said that on October 27th she and Arch Gillies attended an information meeting organized by the Bar Harbor Deer Control Task Force in advance of a November 4th vote on a special hunt with firearms. The Task Force was convened in February 2013 by the Bar Harbor Town Council in view of an increasing number of car accidents, a four-fold increase in the incidence of Lyme disease since 2006, and property damage. The hunt would involve a 2-4 week firearm and archery season, "attractants" would be permitted. Hunters to include property owners, family members resident in the same house, and/or two designees. Property owners to specify hunting methods. The proposed hunt was voted down 53.85% against, 46.15% in favor.

Linda also reported that in order to reduce the deer population, Block Island had retained White Buffalo to do a privately funded cull in February 2014, but because of baiting problems and a Rhode Island law forbidding suppressors, the hunt was called off. Block Island is now organizing a privately funded "Tails Initiative." Hunters will be paid \$150 for up to 400 tails; the hunt extends from November 3 through February 2015.

Deer Reduction Proposal of October 8, 2014 drawn up by Ken Smith. Ken went through the six points outlined in his proposal:

- 1) Continue with the 3 year reduction plan as approved by the Town.
- 2) Identify best practices for increasing the number of deer harvested during the Special Hunt. Baiting is the best way to increase the success rate. Different weapons should be considered, rifles in addition to shotguns.
- 3) Initiate a deer count as soon as possible and report the methodology and results to Islesboro residents and IF&W. There are several companies that do deer counts and new technologies. The DRC should look at what's out there.
- 4) Identify those practices that will provide the greatest harvesting success during the regular season. Most deer are taken by off-island people, a few islanders take a lot of deer.
- 5) Identify the person/agencies/committees responsible for making decisions that will impact best practices. An advisory committee should do the leg work.
- 6) Develop a plan to provide for the greatest success rate at little or no cost to the Town. Deer reduction should not cost the Islesboro tax payer money. We should research organizations that give grants; Bar Harbor may be able to provide information.

Bill Tilden said that after the first hunt Keel had noted it was obvious to the Wardens that there had been baiting. Mike said that the law is being enforced - recently the Merrifields reprimanded two hunters for baiting. Islesboro must have something in writing that exempts Islesboro hunters from the baiting law. Mike recommended hunting over natural bait, cedar trees and seaweed. He said the DRC should offer classes to hunters in winter techniques, such as sitting by a cedar tree or on the beach.

Looking ahead - planning for after the Special Hunt. Mike distributed copies of the bylaws of the Bar Harbor Deer Herd Control Task Force and its Deer Herd Management Strategy, obtained from the task force's excellent website. Mike said that as their plan was well conceived, the documents could be useful in giving Islesboro ideas as the DRC formulates a new deer reduction strategy. He suggested that the DRC should make a list of the things that we want and could do differently and then talk with people in town. We should then petition the State for a new plan, asking for everything. We should go to the Commissioner; Arch Gillies would be willing to go along, as he has in the past. Questions should be asked such as do we want a Special Hunt season that extends from December through February and do we want to change the number of bucks? He added that if hunters buy in, you're going to give them a quality deer herd.

DRC meeting schedule. The last meeting of the year is scheduled for Thursday, December 11th at 4:30 in the Town office. Gil Rivera suggested that Linda prepare a draft schedule for 2015, to be discussed at the December 11th meeting. Ken asked if there could be regular meeting day other than Thursday, but it was agreed that Thursdays worked out well for pretty much everyone.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow-up:

-Information sheets:

Check with the Town office about tagging procedures and send a revised draft of the hunter information sheet.

Add sentence encouraging landowners who give permission to multiple hunters to inform the hunters about who is hunting where.

Send Maggy updated information sheets. (Linda)

-Invite Keel Kemper, the Merrifields, and Fred Porter to the December 11th DRC meeting. (Linda)

-Prepare a draft 2015 meeting schedule. (Linda)

C: Janet Anderson; Sandy Oliver; Cindy Gorham; Maggy Willcox; Keel Kemper; Peter Rand, MD;
Chuck Lubelczyk