

TOWN OF ISLESBORO  
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Wednesday, November 18, 2015, 4:30 PM, Public Safety Room

MINUTES

Present: Linda Gillies, Paul Hatch, Jr., Jon Kerr, Peter Mills, Gilbert Rivera (chair)

Absent: Michael Boucher, Don Johnson, Jr.

Also attending: Michael Clayton, Mo Drouin, Sandy Oliver, Fred Porter, Maggy Willcox

Gil Rivera called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. A quorum was established.

Approval of the draft minutes for the meeting of October 20, 2015. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Report on Board of Selectmen meeting of November 4, 2015. Linda Gillies reported that at the meeting the Selectmen (BoS) set forth their plan for putting together a new tick-borne disease prevention strategy for Islesboro, a process that will begin in November and conclude in the spring. The BoS will work with the DRC, the Tick-borne Disease Prevention Committee (T-bDPC), and the community-at-large to gather comments and ideas which will be compiled. The BoS will use the information as the basis for recommendations that will be presented to the Town, discussed, amended as necessary, and then voted on at a Town Meeting.

As an example of new ideas that are out there, Linda circulated an article of October 15th from the Boston Globe reporting on a four-day deer hunt to reduce the deer in the Blue Hills, south of Boston.

Report on telephone conference call with representatives of the Block Island (BI) Deer Task Force, November 6, 2015 (notes on the meeting previously circulated. Gil said that he, Arch Gillies, Linda Gillies, John Kerr, and Sandy Oliver had been on the call, during which three members of the Deer Task Force described the 2014/15 Tails Initiative season. It ran from October-February (archery only during October, then archery, muzzleloader, and shotgun November through February). 19 local hunters killed 346 deer and were paid a "bounty" of \$150 per "tail" with privately raised funds, 15 mainland hunters killed 110 deer and were not paid. Jon said he thought the call was productive and that that the BI Tails Initiative might work on Islesboro. A wide-ranging discussion followed:

- Securing approval for a bounty hunt from MDIF&W. Peter Mills said that giving a bounty could be an issue with the State. - the DRC should ask Commissioner Woodcock about our options, what the Department will authorize. Gil said the DRC will be talking with MDIF&W. Maggy Willcox said to keep in mind that there is also the Advisory Council, which turned down the DRC's request for a second Special Hunt because they felt that Islesboro was asking for something that didn't work.
- Cost. Gil spoke in favor of the Tails Initiative because it was less costly than sharpshooting and hunters can make money. He added that because the bounty funds would be raised privately, there would be minimal cost to the Town for the hunt.
- Timing of a possible hunt with a bounty. Gil said that the a bounty hunt with shotguns should be held beginning in December, after the expanded archery season. Babe Hatch said that would be the same as the Special Hunt, only hunters would be paid for it. Jon said that Islesboro should have a regular open season, which includes hunting with shotguns in November. Fred Porter said that North Haven had a lot of problems with their regular open hunt.

- Topography of BI. Gil pointed out that hunting is easier on BI because it is more open than Islesboro; he also mentioned that an aerial count on BI was not successful. Linda recalled that the State had conducted an aerial survey of Islesboro that was not successful because the island is too wooded and the deer were not visible.
- Enforcement. Gil said that on BI, deer had to be tagged near the police station. Fred said that with the bounty, hunters would be out at night and that enforcement would be hard. Babe said that the bounty would attract more stupid shooters.

Fred said that in 2008, the Selectmen asked Public Safety to become involved with hunting law enforcement, and they do the best they can, but there are other things to do. He said that at present Islesboro is expecting 24-hour enforcement of the hunting laws without a full-time police department, and it's more than he can do. "You are trying to make a bow out of a stick," he said. Babe asked why we don't have additional law enforcement in the fall. Fred replied that other law enforcement guys don't want to do hunting enforcement. He added that before making a decision about ongoing deer reduction strategy such as the Tails Initiative, the Town should be sure make sure that sufficient enforcement is in place. "Maybe something can be worked out with the wardens," he suggested.

- Gil took an informal survey of committee members' opinions of the Block Island alternative:  
     For - Gillies, Kerr, Rivera  
     Against - Hatch  
     Not sure - Mills

Preparation for meeting with MDIF&W Commissioner Chandler Woodcock and DHHS Commissioner Mary Mayhew, Wednesday, December 2, 2105. Linda said that the group from Islesboro will include Janet Anderson, Arch Gillies, Sandy Oliver, Gil Rivera, Derreth Roberts, Maggy Willcox, and Allie Wood. The Selectmen have scheduled these meetings in order to convey to the Commissioners and their staffs the seriousness of the tick-borne disease issue on Islesboro. The point of the visits is not to present a plan as to how Islesboro proposes to address the issue, for the community is not ready, but to ask for the commissioners' awareness and help. She circulated two charts that were included in the information packets for the meetings. They were prepared by Andy Roberts, Ph.D, who teaches biology and directs research at Ohio State University; he is the son of Islesboro residents, Derreth and Jim Roberts. The charts clearly indicate that the incidence of Lyme disease is considerably higher on Islesboro than in Waldo County and in the State.

Peter said that the charts indicated that Islesboro was "at the center of tsunami," and questioned the validity of the numbers upon which the charts were based. Linda said the numbers came from a table published by the Maine Center for Disease Control and available online; she said she would circulate it to the committee. Sandy suggested that Islesboro's numbers appeared to be so high in comparison to those in the county and State because the IHC is good at keeping the statistics up-to-date and reporting them, while other health centers around the state aren't as diligent.

Discussion of preparation for DRC recommendations to BoS, due January 15, 2016. There was a wide-ranging discussion:

- Tagging. Babe and Fred said that we should ask the State to require that all tagging during the hunting season should be done on Islesboro (a suggestion that Mike Boucher made at the October 20 DRC meeting). Babe said that more deer are killed than are reported by the State, for some mainland hunters do not tag here or on the mainland, others cut up the deer they have killed and put the meat in coolers without reporting them. Gil thought there should be a temporary tagging station at Grindle Point during the season. Linda said that the DRC wanted this for the 2012 hunt, but the cost was \$14,000, making the overall budget so high that the Selectmen suggested eliminating the tagging station.

- Deer numbers. Mo Drouin, a hunter from the mainland, said that he had been hunting on Islesboro for many years and that in recent years he had seen less deer; this year he has seen none. He suggested that somebody doesn't want him to get a deer. Sandy asked when he noticed the deer begin to taper off; Mo said about 3 years ago. Sandy added that hunters on the island are interested in protecting the herd; they are not interested in deer reduction. Babe said that seeing less deer was proof that the Special Hunt was working. Why won't they listen to the hunters?, he asked. Both Peter and Jon said they were seeing less deer. Jon said that several years ago it was the fishermen, rather than biologists, who had the right information about what was happening with fish off the coast of Maine.
- Peter asked how Cape Elizabeth has handled its deer population; he has heard that they removed many deer. Linda said she would find out.
- Prevention and research. Mike Clayton said that Islesboro should concentrate on tick-borne disease prevention and research, as they do in Nantucket, rather than deer reduction. He spoke of the romance of hunting, that it was like a religion.

Next DRC meeting. The next DRC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 9th at 4:30 in the Town Office.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

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

Follow-up:

- Linda - send CDC figures to committee.
- Linda - find out about deer reduction in Cape Elizabeth.

Approved 12/9/15