

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

MEETING OF THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2011, 4:30 PM, TOWN OFFICE

MINUTES

Present: Pete Anderson, Jacob Bethune, Linda Gillies, Paul Hatch, Jr., Philo Hutcheson, Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay (via speaker phone), Gilbert Rivera, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Scott Sienkiewicz, Fred Thomas (chair), William Tilden

Absent: Andrew Coombs

Approval of Minutes. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes of the committee's meeting of October 13, 2011 were approved as written.

Schedule for the Committee's Work. The committee reviewed a draft schedule that had been circulated before the meeting. Fred Thomas highlighted that at its October 13th meeting, the committee had set December 2012 as the target date to begin a deer reduction implementation program. He also encouraged all committee members to express their views during the meetings. Several issues relating to items on the schedule were discussed:

- Deer numbers. Pete Anderson questioned whether in beginning to work with the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W), we should use the Stantec deer survey numbers. Fred said that at the October 13th meeting the group had agreed to embrace those figures, but that because we will be having a third count, we can be flexible about the numbers.

Babe Hatch suggested that the committee should investigate whether there were companies in addition to Stantec that did deer survey work. If so, we should get a proposal/s. Linda Gillies said that the "tick" committee believed Stantec was the best in this field, but that she would look into alternatives and report at the next meeting.

It was agreed that deer surveys would have to be conducted every year for the next few years.

- Working with IF&W. Committee members suggested that we should keep IF&W informed of our work from the outset and that we should begin to work with their staff as soon as possible.

MOTION: The committee will forward meeting minutes to the Department of Inland Fish & Wildlife immediately and will keep staff there informed with a view to working with them at the earliest opportunity. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

- Survey of Island Residents. Several suggestions about the survey were made:
 - In addition to seeking permission from landowners to hunt on their land, the survey will have to specify what kind of reduction plan the committee is proposing. There may be more than one option.
 - The survey could ask residents whether they would like to receive a deer taken in a special hunt.
 - Sending out the survey is a big job, for according to Town Assessor Vern Ziegler, who attended part of the meeting, there are 1,224 taxable parcels on Islesboro and 953 individual property owners.
 - To facilitate responses, the survey should include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

- Lyme Disease Prevention. As discussed at the October 13th meeting, in a letter to the Selectmen the committee will propose that the Health Center mount a Lyme disease prevention campaign in the summer of 2012. The campaign should include information about prevention measures such as clothing to protect against tick bites, landscaping, sprays, guinea hens, deer licks, and field burning.

- Budget for the Committee's Work. After discussion, the committee formulated the following budget:

Deer survey to be conducted by Stantec Consulting (or other company)	\$14,000
Resident survey – printing, postage, etc.	1,500
Other costs	<u>500</u>
	\$16,000

The committee will submit the budget to the Selectmen, requesting that it be considered at a Special Town Meeting to be held in February or March.

Letter to the Selectmen. The committee will send a letter to the committee presenting the schedule of work, the budget and the suggestion about a Lyme disease prevention campaign to be organized for spring/summer/fall of 2012. Linda Gillies will prepare a draft for committee review/approval at our November 17th meeting.

Updated Health Center Statistics. Linda Gillies reported that the Health Center has diagnosed 27 new cases of Lyme disease since May, all of them contracted on Islesboro. In 2010 there were 9 cases of Lyme disease.

Vector-borne Disease Laboratory Tick Survey Results. Linda Gillies reported that three staff members from the lab conducted a tick survey on October 22nd. Twenty-five ticks were found per hour (as opposed to 8.3 per hour in 2010). The lab's figure for what percentage of ticks found were infected will be available in about a month.

Other Matters. A number of points were made about a possible deer reduction program:

- There was opposition to the possibility of professional sharpshooters. It was the sense of the meeting that there were plenty of qualified hunters on Islesboro who could participate in a special hunt and eventually reduce the herd to 10 per square mile.
- Fred Thomas reiterated a point he made at the October 13 meeting – that because of its proximity to the mainland, Islesboro attracts many hunters from the mainland who are inexperienced, do not know the island and are disrespectful of other hunters. Because of the danger they present to island residents, Islesboro should never have an open season.
- Scott Sienkiewicz suggested that IF&W could issue depredation permits to caretakers, who would enlist hunters to hunt on the properties which they oversee.
- Fred also said that any special hunt would be highly controlled, with a rigorous screening process; it would probably last about two weeks.
- Several committee members said that any deer taken in a special hunt should be tagged on the island. They also felt that it should be mandatory for deer to be tagged on the island during the regular extended archery season; this might necessitate additional tagging stations. The reduced per-deer fee paid to the tagging stations is problematic.
- Suggested methods for special hunts were: archery, possibly using lights and bait; a special hunt using cross-bow; shotgun using buckshot (no rifle barrels); rifles.
- Deer taken could be given to the needy. The committee should ask IF&W about the process/expenses for dressing the deer that are donated.
- Philo Hutcheson questioned whether the committee had a realistic idea of the magnitude of our mandate to reduce Islesboro's present deer herd to 10 per square mile. It is a big job, he said, one that will take at least a couple of years.

Homework. In preparation for the November 17th meeting, Fred suggested that each committee member should jot down possible methods to be used in a special hunt, putting them in priority order.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies

11/4/11
Amended 11/17/11