

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, April 9, 2015, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

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

Absent: Michael Boucher, Andrew Coombs

Also attending: Janet Anderson, Travis Stearns

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

Approval of the draft minutes for the meeting of March 9, 2015. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Preparations for the Stantec pellet count. Linda Gillies reported that the response to the letter to landowners requesting permission for the Stantec biologists to access their land has been good. Approximately 80% of property owners have given permission. If all the snow has melted, the survey will be taken in the week of April 27th. The two biologists will stay with Sue Hatch/Tom Tutor; they may be joined by a third during the course of the week. The results of the survey will be available within approximately a week. Babe Hatch said the count might have to be held later, as there was still a lot of snow in the woods. He added that there are not many deer yards on Islesboro - a few on the north end, none that he was aware of on the south end.

Report of meeting with MDIF&W Commissioner Woodcock, March 16, 2015. Ken Smith said that he, Mike Boucher, and Bill Tilden outlined the new DRC plan, pointing out that tick-borne disease prevention on Islesboro seems to be going in a positive direction. Although the pellet count has yet to be taken, anecdotally there is general agreement that the deer herd is down, and the number of Lyme disease cases on the island in 2014 was considerably lower than in 2013. The Commissioner asked if we thought the beginning of the Special Hunt overlapping with the Expanded Archery season would cause any problems. Bill responded that this happens in many other places in the state with no problems. The Commissioner said he felt the DRC plan was well done but made no commitment on it. In general, Ken said he felt that the meeting was somewhat disjointed, for several subjects were introduced that did not relate directly to the plan.

Bill said that fewer archers come to Islesboro in November because by then the season has opened on the mainland. Rachel Rolerson-Smith said a lot of hunters come from the mainland to hunt in November. Ken said that MDIF&W data would answer that question.

Bill then circulated copies of a letter that he had received via email from Keel Kemper on Monday, April 6; a copy went to Arch Gillies as Board of Selectmen (BoS) chair. Keel's concern relates to two commercial deer feeders that Mike Boucher has placed on his property. According to the letter, at a meeting prior to the meeting with the Commissioner on March 25th, Ken Smith told Keel that Mike had mentioned the deer feeders to him and said that he had "spoken with the biologist Keel Kemper to make sure that it was OK." At the meeting on the 25th, Mike mentioned to the Commissioner that he had purchased the deer feeders and "had spoken with Warden Mark Merrifield and that it was OK with him." In the letter Keel asserts that neither he nor Mark had such conversations with Mike about the deer feeders. Keel expressed concern about the

"lack of clarity, honesty." He also said that MDIF&W "would not be OK with a mechanism to help the survivability of deer on an island where we are trying to remove the deer."

Bill said that it wasn't the DRC's job to decide who is being honest and who isn't; the Town Manager and the Selectmen are looking into Keel's allegations.

Don Johnson said that it was not illegal to have deer feeders; he added that the DRC was not asked for an opinion about feeders. Bill questioned whether Islesboro residents should be feeding deer simultaneously with a deer reduction program. He proposed the following:

MOTION: While Islesboro is engaged in reducing the number of deer on the island, though not illegal, it is the Deer Reduction Committee's recommendation that people do not feed the deer.

The motion, seconded by Rachel, was approved by a vote of 6 (Gillies, Hatch, Johnson, Rolerson-Smith, Smith, Tilden) - 0, with one abstention (Rivera).

MDIF&W Advisory Council (AC) meeting, May 6, 2015, Augusta. Linda read part of a 4/6/15 email from Keel advising the DRC to attend the next AC meeting in order to gauge the opinion of the members and to get a sense of how the DRC should proceed. Ken said that he would be happy to go. Linda said that the meeting had been scheduled for May 6th in Augusta. Janet Anderson said that it was fine for one DRC member to attend, rather than two or three. She cautioned that gaining AC approval for the DRC request will be an uphill battle and that there would be hard questions.

Report on 3/25/15 meeting with Board of Selectmen. Bill said that he, Gil, and Linda had presented the new DRC plan as well as proposed language for articles to be considered at a Special Town Meeting. During discussion Arch Gillies and Sandy Oliver suggested that perhaps the Special Hunt should be suspended for a year in order for the controversy over the deer reduction issue to die down and to allow time to gather more information about the deer population and the incidence of tick-borne disease. Don said that during a deer reduction program, you just don't take time off; if you do, the herd will just grow again. He said we have to concentrate our efforts on deer maintenance after we reduce the herd.

The Selectmen recommended that the DRC's information session to explain the plan should be combined with the Special Town Meeting to vote on it and should be held in the second half of May. The first article authorizes a three year Special Hunt beginning the first day of November, 2015 and ending the last day of January, 2016 and each successive year thereafter ending on the last day of January, 2018. If that article does not pass a second article authorizes the hunts to begin on the first day after the close of Expanded Archery in December 2015 and ending the last day of February, 2016 and each successive year thereafter ending on the last day of February, 2018. Janet said that separate articles for each of the components of the DRC budget - \$4,000 for the tick survey, \$13,000 for the deer population camera survey, and \$6,700 for the first Special Hunt - will follow. Gil and Don said that no matter how the vote comes out, there should be a second count this year, as that's what the DRC approved.

Bill said that at the BoS meeting Gil mentioned that an article in the April *Working Waterfront* stated there were still ticks on Monhegan despite the elimination of the herd by a sharpshooter in the early 1990's. Bill asked how many people on Monhegan had gotten Lyme disease since then. Linda said that after the BoS meeting she contacted staff at the Vector-borne Disease Laboratory, who reported that there had been three cases of island-acquired Lyme disease in the last 15 years; according to the Town Treasurer, there is no Lyme on Monhegan at present. The ticks are brought in by birds, and Monhegan's Norway rats serve as hosts. However, because there are no deer or other large animals on which to breed, the ticks dead end in their life cycle. Babe asked whether ticks breed on other large animals, such as coyotes. Ken said that they will breed

on other animals such as moose or coyote but prefer deer. He added that the best article about the effectiveness of reducing deer to 10 per square mile in order to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease is by Kilpatrick, Labonte, and Stafford, "The Relationship Between Deer Density, Tick Abundance, and Human Cases of Lyme Disease...", 2014. The article documents the effectiveness of a deer reduction program in Mumford Cove, CT. Ken said that in his opinion we are working on a plan to reduce the likelihood of tick-borne diseases, not the total eradication of ticks.

Information Meeting/Special Town Meeting to vote on DRC proposal.

- Proposed date. Tuesday, May 19th or Wednesday, May 20th.
- Location: Kinnicutt Center. Linda will find out about availability.
- Program. Rachel said that she and Ken had considered some kind of Powerpoint presentation but concluded that because people are going to be ready to vote, any presentation should be short and sweet. Ken asked if the Sporting Club might want to participate; Babe said that the club doesn't want to be involved.

DRC meeting schedule. It was agreed that the next DRC meeting will be held at 4:30 on Thursday, May 14 in the Town Office.

New business/old business. Ken said that Keel Kemper had suggested the DRC should gather data to show the impact of the past winter on the deer herd. To that end, he circulated a Mortality Survey spreadsheet on which DRC members can note the deer identifier's name, the location where the dead deer was found, its sex and whether it was a fawn or adult. Linda said that the Stantec biologists would also be gathering deer mortality information during the deer pellet count and would include it in their report.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow up:

- Find out about availability of Kinnicutt Center for Information Meeting/Special Town Meeting proposed for May 19th or 20th. (Linda)

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

Approved 5/7/15

