

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, May 7, 2015, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

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

Absent: Michael Boucher, Andrew Coombs, Carol Macaulay

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

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

Report on Stantec pellet count, April 27-30, 2015. Linda Gillies reported that three biologists conducted the count; Michael Johnson led the team. Ken circulated Michael's preliminary report of May 4, which states that in general, "deer density appears to remain high." Initial figures, which do not take the 2014/15 deer harvest into account, show that Islesboro has 52.1 deer per square mile (+/- 4.6) as opposed to 49.2 (+/- 4.1) in 2011 and 62 (+/- 6), 700 Acre Island has 46.5 (+/- 8.1), as opposed to 53.3 (+/- 4.3). Linda said that the draft report will be ready in the week of May 11th.

Ken said that this information is counter to what people on the island are saying, and that deer are not being seen anywhere near the numbers in recent past, even from airplanes that make deliveries daily. Gil said that as this is an island, there is no way the report's figures can be accurate. He suggested that it would be helpful if Michael could come to explain the report's findings. Babe Hatch said that his explanation would be just science. Ken said that if there was such a meeting, perhaps Gunnar Gunderson would attend the meeting as well. Linda said that the biologists were struck by the damage to the forest from deer browse; barberry has spread since Stantec's 2011 count, and there is no regeneration of hardwood trees. They were also surprised to find so much blow down. Babe said that he had taken 20 loads of blow downs from the woods; several committee members said that they removed barberry.

Estimated number of potential new hunters due to permitting all landowners. Ken said that Town Assessor Vern Ziegler had said there were approximately 300 landowners on Islesboro. Ken estimated that under the new DRC provision allowing all landowners to participate in the Special Hunt, there would potentially be 10-15 additional hunters.

Report on meeting with MDIF&W Advisory Council (AC) on May 6, 2015, attended by Ken Smith and Gil Rivera. Ken said that it was a good meeting. He and Gil found it interesting to hear about all the issues that the AC deals with. The Commissioner, Gunnar Gunderson, and Keel Kemper were helpful and stated to the AC that the DRC had worked hard and that they are representing the will of the people. One AC member was against the DRC plan, that the deer reduction process on Islesboro should go faster. Another member agreed and suggested that the hunt begin in early October rather than early November. The next AC meeting is on Tuesday, June 16 in Bethel. If the DRC plan is approved at the June 11th Special Town Meeting, it would be included on the AC agenda as Step 1 of the approval process.

Articles to be considered at Information Meeting/Special Town Meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 11.

Gil suggested that the DRC should consider an article proposing that the Special Hunt begin in October, as one of the AC members had recommended. He said that having archery and hunting with firearms simultaneously was never a problem on the mainland. Bill agreed that it was a good idea if doable and that we should talk with Keel. Linda said that if the DRC wanted to propose an October starting date, a decision had to be made now, for a new article or articles would have to be approved by the Selectmen at their May 20th meeting. Don said that the townspeople would not approve extending the Special Hunt to October, nor will they go for the past December-February schedule, for hunting in January and February is difficult, and few deer are harvested during that time.

Bill said that we had two options - to leave the articles as approved by the Selectmen at their meeting of March 25, 2015 or to propose new ones. Gil made and Ken seconded the following MOTION:

The Deer Reduction Committee will recommend the following articles to the Selectmen for consideration by the voters at a Special Town Meeting on June 11, 2015:

A. To see if the Town will vote to authorize a three year Special Hunt beginning on the first Saturday in October and ending on the last hunting day of December in the years 2015, 2016, and 2017.

If the voters reject the first article, then a second would be considered:

B. To see if the Town will vote to authorize a three year Special Hunt beginning on the first hunting day of November in the years 2015, 2016, and 2017 and ending on the last hunting day of January in the years 2016, 2017, and 2018.

The motion carried by a vote of 4 (Gillies, Rolerson-Smith, Smith, Tilden) - 2 (Hatch, Johnson).

Ken said that he would discuss the changes with Keel. Linda said that she would contact Janet Anderson to request that the new articles be included as an agenda item at the May 20th Selectmen's meeting.

DRC meeting schedule. It was agreed that the next DRC meeting will be held at 4:30 on Thursday, May 21st. As the Town Office meeting room is booked, Linda will see if the Public Safety meeting room is available.

New business/old business. Ken suggested that if a DRC member did not attend regularly, he or she should not be reappointed to the committee. Linda said she would ask Janet if there were Town rules pertaining to attendance at committee meetings. She added that as a rule committees review their memberships in June and make recommendations to the Selectmen for their consideration in July.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow up:

- Discuss changes to articles with Keel Kemper. (Ken)
- Contact Janet about including the new articles on the BoS May 20th agenda. (Linda)
- See if Public Safety room is available for DRC May 21st meeting. (Linda)
- Ask Janet about Town rules pertaining to committee meeting attendance. (Linda)

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

Approved 5/14/15