

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Monday, March 9, 2015, 4:30 PM, Public Safety Room

MINUTES

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

Absent: Andrew Coombs, Carol Macaulay, William Tilden

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

Approval of the draft minutes for the meeting of February 26, 2015. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Review of recommended changes to request to MDIF&W. Ken Smith said that most of the changes were recommended by Keel Kemper at a meeting that Ken had with him on March 2nd. Babe Hatch disagreed with the recommendation that in the long term there might be a "complete eradication" of the deer herds. Mike Boucher said that the possibility of a regular hunting season was included as a bargaining chip and that in reality the Town would never approve it. Ken said that the plan contains options for the DRC to consider if the new three year initiative isn't successful. These options show that we are willing to consider other approaches to reducing the herd and thus are "giving something back," as Keel suggested. After discussion, Mike Boucher made the following MOTION:

The Deer Reduction Committee moves to submit the revised draft request to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for permission to hold the Special Hunt for three additional years to the Islesboro Board of Selectmen for its consideration.

The vote was seconded by Ken Smith and approved: 6 in favor (Boucher, Gillies, Johnson, Rivera, Rolerson-Smith, Smith), 1 abstention (Hatch).

Review of draft articles to be submitted to the Selectmen on March 25, 2015 with a recommendation that they be considered at a Special Town meeting in May. Ken Smith circulated drafts of three possible articles. After discussion the committee selected the following:

A. To see if the Town will vote to authorize a three year Special Hunt beginning the first day of November, 2015 and ending the last day of January, 2016 and each successive years thereafter ending on the last day of January, 2018.

Note: Considerable progress has been made in reducing the deer herd to an acceptable level. However, the DRC recommends another three year Special Hunt to reach the goal of 10 deer per square mile. Adding all property owners and their immediate families will increase the number of hunters, dropping February and adding November to the plan will increase the number of harvested deer.

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 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.

Note: Recommended as another option for reducing deer but with far less results.

Discussion of meeting with Commissioner Woodcock scheduled for March 16, 2015 at 1:30 pm in Augusta. Mike Boucher, Gil Rivera, Ken Smith, and Bill Tilden will attend the meeting. Ken said he hoped that Gunnar Gunderson, Islesboro's representative on the Advisory Council, and Keel Kemper would attend. Ken will contact Mr. Gunderson; the decision about Keel will be made by the Commissioner.

Ken said that the principle point to be made by the DRC at the meeting is that Islesboro wants to kill more deer in order to reduce the herd to 10 per square mile and that the DRC believes that the strategy outlined in the new request to MDIF&W will work. Gil recalled that at past meetings the Commissioner has favored sharpshooting. Mike said the group should emphasize that the Town considered sharpshooting in a serious way and voted it down at two Town Meetings. He also thought the group should explain that Islesboro is not a "hunting club," and that during the archery season approximately 95% of deer are shot by mainland hunters. Finally, he said the group should stress that extending the Special Hunt to include November would increase the harvest by about 150 deer.

Linda said she had learned from Keel Kemper that Bill Tilden has requested to meet alone with the Commissioner in advance of Monday's meeting with DRC members. There was consensus that Bill should be able to say what's on his mind to everyone, and that the DRC should only meet with the Commissioner as a whole.

Ken said that getting Advisory Council approval for the DRC request will not be easy. He said that he plans to visit Advisory Committee members who have reservations about Islesboro's plan to provide up-to-date information.

Report on preparations for Stantec pellet count. Linda said that signed permissions had been received from approximately two-thirds of the property owners to whom letters had been sent. Marjorie Mills has been helping to record the responses. In the week of March 16th Linda will start contacting people who have not answered.

Ken said he had suggested to Linda that Islesboro Central School students could assist with both the count and with a possible mortality survey to assess the impact of the severe winter upon the deer herd. Don Johnson said that students were involved in the 2010 count, and that the numbers that the survey came up with were questionable. Only Stantec biologists conducted the 2011 survey, and the count was considerably lower. There was consensus that it was best to have only Stantec staff do the work in 2015. Linda read part of an email from Keel Kemper, who said that, "a mortality study doesn't have to be very formal. It's just getting out on the island and looking around for any dead deer." She suggested that as they conducted the count the Stantec biologists could keep an eye out for deer that did not make it through the winter and could incorporate any relevant information into their report.

Discussion of ways to explain and promote the DRC's request to MDIF&W to the community. It was suggested that there should be:

- One information meeting to be held at the school in late April.
- A summary of the request in the April/May issue of *Islesboro Island News* (deadline March 22).
- Perhaps an article in *Working Waterfront*.

- A summary of the request in the Town calendar newsletters for April and May.

All publications should mention that copies of the request are available at the Alice L. Pendleton Library, the Town Office, and the Community Center.

DRC meeting schedule. It was agreed that the next DRC meetings will be held at 4:30 on Thursday, April 9 and Thursday, May 7 in the Town Office meeting room. Mike suggested that those attending the March 16th meeting with the Commissioner should send a report to DRC members.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow up:

- Contact Gunnar Gunderson about attending the 3/16/15 meeting with the Commissioner. (Ken)

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

Approved 4/9/15