

TOWN OF ISLESBORO  
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Tuesday, September 22, 2015, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

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

Absent: Michael Boucher

Also attending: 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 August 14, 2015. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Report on MDIF&W Advisory Council (AC) meeting of September 16, 2015. Ken Smith reported that he attended the meeting; Maggy Willcox was also there. Ken called attention to his report of September 17th to the Selectmen, previously circulated, in which he described the AC's three-step process: at the first meeting in June the DRC presented the request, at the second meeting in August there were questions, at this September meeting there were no questions, just the vote. Dr. Sheridan Oldham, the AC representative from Rangeley, had prepared a motion opposing the request. Before the vote Commissioner Woodcock said that although he did not believe that the proposal would achieve the DRC's goal, he would accept the AC's decision. All the AC members voted against the proposal except for Gunnar Gunderson, who represents Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties and with whom Ken has worked.

Ken said Gunnar Gunderson told him that after the meeting Sheridan Oldham said to him that she had received numerous phone calls from Islesboro residents asking her to vote against the special hunt. Ken said this was unusual and he thought that some people from Islesboro were trying to undermine the DRC proposal by telling people to call Dr. Oldham, a crappy way to do business. He thought that Bill Tilden's letter of August 6th to the AC had not helped the DRC proposal, nor had the results of the Stantec pellet count. Babe Hatch said that the Special Hunt was working and that someone in the room with power around town was pushing the sharpshooter and had taken it too far.

Linda Gillies said that Dr. Oldham's opposition to the special hunt was a matter of public record, because Ken circulated her statement of June 13, 2015 at the DRC meeting June 24, 2015, and it was attached to the minutes. She added that she had not called Dr. Oldham herself, nor had she encouraged other people to contact her. Maggy Willcox said that she had not done so either, and that she thought AC members had made up their minds at the second AC meeting. Maggy added that in principle, she thought it best if two DRC members attended AC meetings. Gil said that he had intended to go, but that an important matter had come up at the last minute.

A wide-ranging discussion followed.

- Deer. Babe said he believed that the deer herd was way down, that people weren't seeing them. Rachel Rolerson-Smith agreed, saying that she had driven from work on many nights and had seen very few deer; she added that one hunter had seen a coyote. Gil said all indications except the science pointed to less deer. Don Johnson said that there were only three deer killed by cars in the pit, whereas there were nine or ten last year. Ken said that hunters continue to report fewer deer in their cameras and while hunting. He added that anecdotal reporting is a big part of estimating the deer.
- Deer hunting. Babe said the hunters feel that everything they have done has worked. Ken said that the committee's job is deer reduction. Gil said that we needed to come up with a plan and suggested that Islesboro should have an island-wide deprivation permit. He said that the Town Manager would

be in charge, we wouldn't have to go to IF&W. There was question as to follow-up on a motion made at the DRC meeting of August 14th proposing that Ken Smith, working with Janet Anderson, write a letter to the Commissioner asking for clarification of his statement made at the August 6th AC meeting, "There are options that the Town can pursue on its own." Maggy said that she would send Ken the minutes for the June and August AC meetings. Linda described the new "tails initiative" on Block Island, Rhode Island, which pays local hunters \$150 in privately raised money for each deer killed. The program ran from the beginning of October 2014 till the end of March, 2015. It is considered a success and will be repeated for the next two years. Don said that private funds could not be raised on Islesboro for such a program. Rachel said that hunters should be encouraged to get out during the current season.

- Deer counts. Don said that we really have to prove how many deer there are. Babe said that before the DRC decided not to proceed with a camera survey, which uses corn as bait, a company that does camera survey work had suggested putting out corn in several locations to see if the deer came. Babe reported that three weeks ago he and Don placed a bag of corn in four locations as well as cameras. He said that the corn was gone quickly in one place and was eaten slowly in two others; in one place the corn is still there. The cameras in one location showed five deer over two weeks and in another four-five deer over three weeks; the cameras in two other places showed two deer. The deer photographed were mostly bucks, not does.
- Ticks. Ken said that of the 18 deer taken so far in the expanded archery season, seven were brought to the Rolerson-Smith station, and he counted only three ticks..
- Other tick control measures. Gil said that there were other ways to take care of the tick population. Linda said that she had learned recently that on Shelter Island, NY the four-poster program conducted between 2008-2012 had reduced ticks, but had cost over \$1 million and was labor-intensive. Because of cost, the Town reduced the number of units from 60 to 20, and the ticks had returned. Don Johnson mentioned burning fields. Ken said that there could be spraying from the air, as a private company has done for years, eliminating mosquitoes and ticks. Two passes at night would do it. Linda said that the spray contained chemicals that were toxic to other insects and to shellfish. Babe talked about barberry removal, saying that he had removed two truck loads and could have taken 50 more. Linda said that removing barberry would not solve the tick-borne disease problem. Babe said that every little bit helps.
- Damage to forest from browsing. Babe said that there was regeneration in the island's forest, citing two specific locations.

Next DRC meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, October 20 at 4:30 in the Town Office meeting room.

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

- Maggy to send Ken AC minutes of June 13 and August 6.

Approved 10/20/15