

TOWN OF ISLESBORO  
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, May 2, 2013, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Pete Anderson, Jacob Bethune, Andrew Coombs, Linda Gillies, Philo Hutcheson, Gilbert Rivera, Scott Sienkiewicz, Rachel Rolerson-Smith, Fred Thomas (chair)

Absent: Paul Hatch, Jr., Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay, William Tilden

Fred Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes, meeting of April 18, 2013. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Laura Houle resignation. Fred announced with regret that Laura Houle had resigned from the DRC. He said that having declined to join the committee when it was formed because of time constraints, she agreed to join after her involvement with the Special Hunt. Then after a few weeks “reality caught up,” and she realized her commitments were such that she could not continue. However, she said should there be further special hunts, she would continue to assist with hunter safety and tagging.

Review of Information Meeting of April 25, 2013. March 27, 2013. Fred reported that at the meeting, which was attended by 34-40 people, he summarized developments in the past year. He then presented the “new information” learned from a *The Wildlife Society Bulletin* article and conversations with Keel Kemper of MDIF&W and Anthony DeNicola of White Buffalo, Inc. which indicated that Islesboro was unlikely to meet the goal of 10 deer per square mile through special hunts and that sharpshooting would be more effective. Fred mentioned that Mike Boucher spoke at length and distributed information found on the internet claiming that deer reduction was not effective in reducing Lyme disease. A wide-ranging discussion followed:

- Pete Anderson said that the DRC must continue to focus on our mandate from the Town: to reduce the deer herd to 10 per square mile and maintain it at that level.
- Gil Rivera said the DRC should have a vote that would indicate where members stood in respect to continuation of the Special Hunt. Fred responded that as a committee we had agreed to disagree and that he didn't care if only as many as two DRC members favored suspending the hunt – we were obligated to give the Selectmen the new information. Once the DRC did that, the Selectmen recommended that we pass it on to the community through an Information Meeting and that there be a vote at a Special Town Meeting. We are doing what the Selectmen told us to do.
- Scott Sienkiewicz said that the DRC was mandated to look at all possible options, including sharpshooting.
- There was agreement that the DRC's first proposal to the MDIF&W Advisory Council suggested the Special hunt be held for five years. The AC responded that it should be held for three years.

- Philo Hutcheson asserted there was no chance that the Special Hunt could reduce the deer to 10 deer per square mile. He said that because the “tick report” came out two years ago and since then we have received other information, including that circulated by Mike Boucher at the Information Meeting, he is unclear about what is correct. He suggested, and others agreed, that we should ask Dr. Peter Rand of the Vector-borne Disease Laboratory to provide an update on the newest thinking about deer reduction. The question to him would be, “Is the information upon which the “tick committee” based its report and recommendation in 2011 still valid?” Fred said that both the DRC and the Selectmen should hear Dr. Rand’s presentation. Linda Gillies said that she would contact Dr. Rand.
- Fred said that in response to an email from Linda, who when working on the projected sharpshooting budget for the Information Meeting had written to verify the number of “assistants” required. Anthony DeNicola clarified that White Buffalo’s practice was to establish three or four baiting stations *per square mile*, not island-wide. Locations are chosen as shooting sites according to weather conditions and other factors.
- There was agreement that if the Town approves the use of rifles, whether or not they are used in any given area will be up to the property owner.
- Scott suggested that an interview in the May/June issue of Islesboro Island News could be helpful in clarifying issues relating to the June 10<sup>th</sup> vote. Linda said she would contact Maggy Aston Willcox.
- Gil said he had spoken to someone who was on Peak’s Island during the sharpshooting in 2000 and said it was “unnerving.”

Discussion of procedure for the special Town Meeting of June 10, 2013 and draft language for the article.  
The committee reviewed language that Linda had drafted and circulated. After discussion the committee agreed on the following.

*In order to reduce the deer herd to 10 per square mile, shall the Town*

- 1) *Hold a second Special Hunt within the coming year.*
- 2) *Suspend the Special Hunt within the coming year. Review current tick infection rates and Lyme disease statistics on Islesboro and investigate updated information about all effective alternative deer reduction methods in order to propose a new program to the Town and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.*

If #1 is approved:

*Shall the Town allow the second Special Hunt season to be expanded to include the first Monday after Thanksgiving through the month of February.*

*During the Special Hunt shall the Town allow the use of rifles.*

New business/old business. Linda reported that an appointment to update Commissioner Woodcock has been set for 10 am on Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at the MDIF&W office in Augusta. She, Fred and Pete plan to attend; any DRC member is welcome to join the meeting.

Next meeting. It was decided that the next DRC meeting will be on Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm at the Town Office.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow-up:

- Contact Dr. Rand about giving an update to the DRC and the Selectmen. (LG)
- Contact Maggy Willcox about an IIN interview. (LG)