

TOWN OF ISLESBORO
DEER REDUCTION COMMITTEE

Meeting of Thursday, April 24, 2014, 4:30 PM, Town Office

MINUTES

Present: Paul Hatch, Jr., Don Johnson, Carol Macaulay (by phone), William Tilden (chair), Doug Welldon

Absent: Andrew Coombs, Gilbert Rivera, Scott Sienkiewicz, Rachel Rolerson-Smith

By invitation: Linda Gillies

Ex-officio: Sandra Oliver

Bill Tilden called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes, meeting of March 13, 2014. Upon MOTION made and seconded, the minutes were approved as written.

Election of new board member. Bill Tilden proposed that the DRC recommend to the Selectmen the nomination of Linda Gillies as a DRC member, replacing Jacob Bethune, who has resigned from the committee. She would serve as secretary.

MOTION: The Deer Reduction Committee shall recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Linda Gillies be appointed as a member of the committee and secretary.

The motion was seconded and carried by a vote of 5-0. Linda said she was glad to come back onto the committee. She circulated a draft contact information sheet for the committee's review. She also reported that she has organized a large collection of newspaper articles and other printed material about Lyme disease/deer/tick issues into notebooks, which are available to the committee; she encouraged DRC members to send her additional material for this "archive."

Deer count. Doug Welldon reported on his research about the aerial visual surveys:

- The helicopter survey taken by MDIF&W in January 2011 was deemed to be invalid, as Islesboro's "good cover" (spruce trees) prevented sightings of enough deer.
- Doug contacted Lee Kantar, Maine Moose and Deer Biologist, who said that the Maine Warden Service has acquired a Cessna airplane equipped with a FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared) camera. The camera is not appropriate for a deer survey on Islesboro because 1) it requires a qualified, operator who must be trained 2) thousands of photos must be examined in order to determine what an animal really is. FLIR is not designed for animal counting; it is more appropriate for locating missing persons, crime suspects, illegal night hunting/fishing, etc.
- Doug also investigated thermal imaging cameras, which are promoted for use in construction and energy efficiency management. They cost up to \$1,878 per week to rent, \$8, 875 to purchase.
- Lee Kantar recommends using the same methodology as the last count, so that we are comparing "apples to apples."
- Lee also noted that the 10 deer per square mile density is necessary to successfully combat the Lyme disease epidemic. All levels above this are too high when human health is the priority.

Babe Hatch said that we need more information about aerial surveying, as anything a camera picks up is likely to be a deer. Bill said we can keep an eye out for additional information, but bottom line, the pellet count should be used as the basis for comparison. Babe said that counting deer pellets is different on Islesboro than on the mainland, for because the deer are penned in here, the pellets are more concentrated.

Doug asked if funds for the 2015 deer count had been included in the Town 2014/15 budget. Bill said he thought the money would come from unused DRC funds carried over from 2013/14. Linda said she would check with Janet.

Tagging on 700 Acre Island. Carol Macaulay brought up her request to look into the possibility of training for her as an "apprentice" deer tagger so that she could do the tagging on 700 Acre during the very cold weather, when access to boats is difficult and costly. Bill said that he would check on this with Keel Kemper, who has been on vacation.

Correspondence. Bill called attention to a letter of April 18, 2014 to the Selectmen from Dr. Peter Rand of the Vector-borne Disease Laboratory (attached). Dr. Rand expresses concern over Islesboro's high number of Lyme disease cases in 2013 and the relatively low number of deer taken during the Special Hunt. He also notes the recent death of a midcoast resident from a rare tick-borne pathogen, Powassan virus, which causes "devastating neurological deficits." Linda said she had a Village Soup article about this case, which she would circulate with the minutes of the meeting. Sandy Oliver noted that in a talk at the Camden Public Library on April 16th, Dr. Stephen Sears, State Epidemiologist, reported that Maine had 1,374 reported cases of Lyme disease in 2013; of these, 86 cases were on Islesboro.

Deer taken on Islesboro in 2013. Bill said that we still do not have the total number of deer taken during the extended archery season and that he would check with Keel.

Vaccine for white mice. Babe noted an article circulated by Mike Boucher about an oral bait vaccine given to mice that prevents the transmission of Lyme disease. He asked why the Town wasn't doing something about this new technology, for every little bit will help. Doug said he questioned whether such a vaccine could be used effectively on an island-wide basis. Bill said that the tick surveys revealed that there were higher concentrations of ticks in some areas of the island than in others. Don Johnson said there were more ticks in areas where there was a lot of barberry.

Funding for the 2015 deer count. Doug asked if funding for the count had been included in the Town budget for 2014/15. Bill said he thought that the cost of the count would be covered by unspent funds carried over from the 2013/14 DRC budget. Linda said she would check with the Town office.

Upon MOTION made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary

Follow-up:

Bill Tilden:

- Check with Keel Kemper about the possibility of tagging training for Carol Macaulay.
- Check with Keel Kemper about the number of deer taken during the extended archery season.

Linda Gillies:

- Forward the committee's recommendation about her appointment to the DRC to the Selectmen.
- Circulate the Village Soup article about the recent death of a midcoast resident from the tick-borne pathogen Powassan virus (article included with these minutes).
- Check with Town office about funding for 2015 deer count.

C: Janet Anderson, Town Manager; Sandy Oliver; Maggy Aston; Keel Kemper; Peter Rand, MD.