

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
DEER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 18, 2007**

The East Goshen Township Deer Management Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, June 18, 2007 at 7pm at the East Goshen Township Building. In attendance were: Chair, Jim McRee, and members Steven DiAntonio, Matt Keating, Susan Vanasse, Walter Wujcik, Bob Huebner and Albert Zuccarello, as well as the Zoning Officer Mark Gordon.

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairman Jim McRee called the meeting to order at 7pm and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Al moved that the minutes of May 21st and June 4, 2007 be approved as corrected. Bob seconded the motion. No further public comment or discussion was heard. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Jim said that articles about the DMC have appeared in the Suburban Advertiser, the Inquirer (Chester County section) and the front page of the Daily Local News. Jim discussed their plan to make their presentation to the BOS on June 19th but they ran into some scheduling problems as there is a development hearing at 8pm. Working it in before or after that hearing would not allow adequate time for public comment and there are advertising issues if they want to change the time. Since many people travel during July/August, the BOS recommended holding their presentation until September. Tonight they will review the Interim Report, make revisions and deliver it to the BOS tomorrow night during the workshop session as scheduled; no public comment is planned. The BOS will have a couple of months to review the report and provide feedback before their formal Power Point presentation in September.

Matt reminded them that they discussed not meeting in July or August but Bob said they could use the August meeting to prepare for their presentation; Jim will be on vacation from August 10th-22nd. Mark said the report could be linked to the website for public access. He also suggested setting up a brief Q&A period during the July 10th BOS meeting when they could identify any holes in the report and create an addendum if necessary. They could also determine the level of detail the BOS want for the September presentation. They will need to amplify some points especially the hunting aspect. The hunting program can only be discussed in general terms until a program is developed, perhaps in the fall. Members agreed to meet with the BOS on July 10th and then use their July 16th meeting to approve meeting minutes and work on any recommendations from the BOS to modify the report.

Mark said he used the GIS, which is a satellite interpretation of vegetation, to identify the forested area in the township. According to a 1995 report there were 2.5 sq. miles of wooded open space. According to the latest report in 2000, there are 3.3 sq. miles or 33% of wooded open space in East Goshen Township.

The police report for deer related accident reports was also included in members' packets. There have been four reports for 2007. They should continue to encourage residents to report incidents. Mark said these numbers could spike in July following the recent fawn births and again in

November. Steve said a doe was killed at 352 & Elridge about a week ago; it was cleared quickly. Mark will see if an updated report is available from PennDot.

Al updated his continued researched on Lyme disease and came across some information at aphis.usda.gov that stated that contraceptives are not an effective measure of deer management alone. He also found a chart that shows the greatest density of ticks to be in the Northeast part of the U.S.; they already know that CT, RI and MA have done a lot of research on the subject.

Jim said at the last meeting they were asked by the public to identify those large land owners in the township that currently hunt deer on their property but they do not feel at this time it would be appropriate to publish that information. If they establish a hunting program that private land owners participate in, that might change. Mark could only guess that there are maybe a dozen of these large landowners in the township. Jim said it would be interesting to calculate the combined square mileage of this land to see how large it is compared to the township open spaces.

4. INTERIM REPORT

Members of the DMC reviewed the Interim report and made corrections.

Page 3 – Introduction: The developments in which DMC members live were added to show the cross-section of residents that serve on the committee. Members agree to include their Charter in the report. Jim is also working on getting the Stockton Report open in Word so it can be included as well.

Page 5 – Carcass Pickups: Al asked if the PA Game Commission or PennDot were the main reporter of deer pickups. Mark said they are independent agencies and don't generally share information. The township does not contract private people to do deer pick-ups. Al noted that the number in the report only reflects those carcasses picked up within the right of way, and not those who run off and die in the woods. Steve said there are several variables and noted that of the 2153 pick-ups, not all would be road kills. Al thought the estimated breakdown for East Goshen was misleading and inaccurate because of the diversity of the townships/counties. Members agreed that it was important to give some kind of number but equally important to emphasize that it was only a "frame of reference." Members agreed that there are 67 counties in PA, not 36. Mark will reconfirm the number.

Page 6 – Lyme Disease: sources are references in the footnotes. Jim said new information is included in the last paragraph showing the number of ticks on the heads of deer, which is far less than they originally thought. If you find a tick on you and save it, Bob heard of a \$275 test that can be run to see if it carries lyme.

Page 7 – Landscape: this section was kept brief because of a lack of research information. Sue has found some additional research that shows the damage deer browsing has done on reforestation. They may want to recommend an aerial survey following a hunt to see if it's improving. Mark said there has been a lot of damage in the township from browsing, especially by Grand Oak, and they could easily do a study by fencing off an area.

Page 7 – Analysis: because the target deer population is a combination of things, Jim tried to give all the information then refute or defend it. Walter reiterated that there is no magic number to reach. Mark pointed out that this is the same dilemma the PA Game Commission is facing during their 3-year study of deer in suburban/urban deer areas. The BOS's request to determine how they can support deer in the "open space" may be a problem, as deer do not distinguish between areas. Walter

also pointed out that if surrounding municipalities do not also start programs, our efforts would be futile. Steve said it's not just the number of deer but also the nutritional value/health of the deer herd that should be considered and included in the report. Jim said they need tangible information and Steve said he would check with QDMA for nutritional reports on deer in certain areas.

Page 10 – Analysis continued: the estimated number of carcass pick-ups in EGT was changed to 44 per year.

Page 11 – Approaches: this section was broken down into four sections with a summary at the end.

1. Resident Communication & Education
2. Accident Mitigation
3. Commonly considered Approaches to reduce Deer Herd Size – section could be changed to “Hunting”
4. Lyme Disease Risk Mitigation

Jim will reference the Strieter-Lite website in the footnotes. Mark will get a copy of the QDMA education video that is currently available for high schools; they could watch it in July. Members agreed that the sharpshooter example was accurate. Steve said bow-hunting at night is too dangerous. Mark said the ordinance would need to be amended to allow for firearms. Jim will verify the cost of the 4-Poster Feeder. Baiting is not allowed on public/state land but would be okay for private landowners. Baiting could help to pull deer away from residential homes. Al said Hershey's Mill would be an ideal setting for the 4-Poster. Lyme vaccines for cats/dogs are available and might be good to include on the website or in the newsletter.

Mark suggested drafting an ordinance preventing the feeding of deer. Also, he recommended that the BOS send a letter to the PA Game Commission to show EGT's support of deer management, our interest in participating in any studies and might also help us get more specific information on deer pick-ups in EGT.

Jim suggested trying to do something during the 4th of July celebration. Bob said the Historical Commission already has a table. Mark ordered additional Lyme disease pamphlets. Members agreed that it would be a good opportunity to distribute information but littering is a concern.

The original hunting program was called a “pilot program.” Walter suggested calling this one a trial but members agreed it was more than a trial and needed to be a multi-year program with set expectations that could be refined as they go, so that data could be compiled. Someone would need to oversee the program. The BOS or other ABC probably doesn't want to take on that responsibility. Perhaps the DMC would evolve into a Wildlife Conservation Committee that could incorporate the geese efforts. Mark suggested a 3-person panel. Al believes in minimizing government and said continuing a deer committee gives too much credence to deer and should be dissolved. Ultimately the BOS will have to determine.

Bob moved to adopt the Interim Report as corrected. Al seconded the motion

Public Comment:

Elizabeth Anderson, 1607 Margo Ln. – just got off the phone with Dr. Fitzpatrick's assistant who said there was misinformation on page 13 in the section on contraceptives. She said the Fire Island

stats are misleading because the deer are not captive but Jim said they are contained on an island. She stated that in 1995 the National Institute for Standards & Technology found a 60% success rate on wild deer herds. Jim said he tried to look up that particular study and found only limited information. Considering this is a 12-year study, he expected to find much more. Ms. Anderson said the estimated cost is minimal and there is a grant available. Jim pointed out that just because a grant is available, doesn't mean there isn't cost involved, especially considering hunters may need special equipment and training but Ms. Anderson insisted that the grant would pay 100%. She also pointed out that the contraceptive drug has been approved by the FDA, just not for commercial use; it is available for pilot programs. She also refuted the handout with GonaCon information saying it was effective after 3-4 years.

Ms. Anderson argued that hunting has been done for years in PA and there is no evidence that it is effective. She feels there is a great opportunity here and EGT should take advantage of it. Jim said there is overwhelming evidence out there that you also need to dart deer annually to be effective but Ms. Anderson disagreed. Jim said they would need an itemized list of equipment cost, darts, etc. with grant references, as well as the complete report for consideration. Ms. Anderson said she would contact Dr. Fitzpatrick about getting his DVD on PZP and members agreed to watch it at their July 16th meeting. Dr. Fitzpatrick's assistant would be able to attend to answer brief questions.

Marcia Gordon, 3008 Valley Drive – asked where the two anti-hunting members of the committee where and Jim said neither Ellen nor Maria were able to attend tonight. She is concerned that the DMC members are not a good cross-reference of residents because the ratio is falling 6-2 in favor of hunting. Al said most members came to the committee with open minds and that the evidence has moved them to their conclusions. Matt agreed that only one member of the committee was a hunter and they have a good balance of opinions within the group.

Ms. Gordon said Mark Gordon approved the clearing of the YMCA forest but Jim was quick to point out that private landowners are free to develop their land within township ordinances and that was a combined decision of the township ABC's not the zoning officer's decision. Mark noted that they are currently looking into amending their ordinances to tighten up conservancy issues. Bob also pointed out that the YMCA is donating 200+ trees that will be planted within the township.

Ms. Gordon also took issue with calling hunting groups, "deer experts" because they were experts on hunting not deer; she considers someone with a doctorate to be an expert. Steve said that although some members of QDMA are hunters, they are an organization filled with experts and scientific people and having a doctorate was a matter of opinion.

She also suggested killing all the deer in the township and "getting it over with" so to speak. Jim said there is a practical limit to what they can do while respecting property rights. However, they can develop a structured program. Matt said 300 deer may be a problem but a smaller number may be perfectly acceptable and although killing deer is always a difficult decision, killing all of them is not their purpose. Al agreed that if you reduce the number of deer, you reduce the risk of lyme, accidents and improve the health of the deer. Ms. Gordon disagreed. Jim pointed out that in 1995 there were 152 deer and no one perceived a problem but now with 300+, we seem to have one. So if we can reduce the number, perhaps we can make life a little better.

Ms. Gordon doesn't understand how 60 people out of 17,000 residents started all this. Jim said that is the nature of government – you never get that many people coming out, just consider the number

of people who come out to vote! He thinks it is a great example of EGT listening to its residents who wanted something done about the deer and those concerned about the hunting.

No further discussion or public comment was heard. The motion was unanimously approved. Jim thanked the members of the DMC for their efforts and the public for their comments over the past several months.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The DMC will meet again on July 16th to approve meeting minutes, review the BOS's feedback and watch the videos (Dr. Fitzpatrick's and QDMA's). Mark will ask the BOS for "clear" direction as they move forward. Al also suggested creating a pamphlet that highlights "Steps to Protect Your Family from Lyme Disease" to raise public awareness and start discussion. Bob made a motion to adjourn. Sue seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or public comment. The meeting adjourned at 9:24pm.

Respectfully submitted by: _____
Tracie Hill, Recording Secretary