

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
DEER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 17, 2007**

The East Goshen Township Deer Management Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, September 17, 2007 at 7pm at the East Goshen Township Building. In attendance were: Chair, Jim McRee, and members Steven DiAntonio, Albert Zuccarello, Matt Keating, Walter Wujcik and Linda Polishuk. Also in attendance were Mark Gordon (Township Zoning Officer), Don McConathy (Board of Supervisors), and Jack Yahraes (Municipal Authority).

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:

Walter moved that the minutes of July 16, 2007 be approved as corrected. Al seconded the motion.

Public Comment:

Abbas Rahberi, 1613 Manley Road – suggested that meetings be recorded on tape and used as a back-up to the written minutes, ensuring an exact record of what transpired, as is done in other townships.

No further public comment or discussion was heard. The motion was unanimously approved with one abstention by Linda Polishuk.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Jim reported that Sue Vanasse and Maria O'Hara resigned from the committee due to personal commitments. Jim welcomed new member, Linda Polishuk to the DMC. Linda said she lives in the Grand Oak neighborhood and was one of the first to write a letter to the BOS about the deer problem. She is very concerned about the deer problem in the township. The goal of the DMC is to have a broad representation of residents on the committee. Jim recently discussed with the BOS the number of members the DMC should have. They started as a committee of nine, they currently have 7 members and are looking to fill at least one more position if possible.

Since their last meeting in July, Jim asked for feedback from the BOS on gaps in their report that should be addressed before a public meeting. After discussing potential fall programs, Jim developed a list of "Practical Recommendations for Action in 2007."

A. Deer Population Size Reduction

The township would solicit proposals from established deer management groups to perform archery-only deer management on privately owned land in the township. The township would then provide contacts to land owners who would engage in deer management through private agreements. Sample letters to both the deer management groups and residents were provided to board members. Linda asked why it was restricted to archery hunting only and Mark explained that firearm usage in the township is dependent on property size and setback restrictions; sharp shooting requires a USDA permit. Jim said the goal of the program is to have landowners share information about deer/hunting activities on their property to serve as a building block for a

potential township deer management program. Jim said there was not enough time to develop a thorough program for the township this year but said if 60% of all neighborhoods bordering a particular township open space petitioned the township for hunting, they could do it on that land.

Mr. Silvestri, QDMA member - requested a copy of the list of hunting clubs that the township has contacted. Jim explained that there were 8 groups that responded to their letter and that QDMA should have received an invitation.

B. Lyme Disease

Don McCarthy and Al put together a cost analysis of the 4-Post Feeders based on the following assumptions:

- Each station is independent and maintained by a property owner.
- Each station will use 50 lbs. of corn per week.
- Township purchases all supplies – distribution TBD.
- Township would support up to five stations.

Start up costs per station are approximately \$1200 plus \$600 in corn. Annual recurring costs are roughly \$1100. Al explained that it is recommended that posts be spring loaded for safety reasons. There are many variables including replacement of tickicide following heavy rains, potential damage to posts by bucks, unknown amount of tickicide and corn needed and various kinds of feed to consider. Jim said they need to define operational costs and develop a program for private landowners. They need to determine how much maintenance is required and who would be responsible, the township or landowner. Al said the 4-Post Feeder is only one prong of their strategy to effect the tick/deer population.

C. Ordinance Changes

Some options to consider would be to ban the feeding of deer, require deer resistant plants in new developments' landscape plans and consider adding deer management to the township's comprehensive plans. Linda said there is essentially no such thing as "deer proof" plants because deer will eat just about anything.

D. Education & Communication

The QDMA video tonight, although geared towards high school students, is a good example of a township activity to consider for educational purposes. The website should be developed further and articles in the newsletter should continue, as well as e-mails, flyers and handouts.

E. Information gathering

- a. Traffic Accidents – Mark is working on getting GPS locations of deer pickups; more information is needed to substantiate this area.
- b. Survey – the BOS is concerned about the \$20,000 cost of sending out surveys to township residents. The DMC offered to tally the results and a smaller version included the newsletter is also an option. The BOS is not convinced it is necessary.
- c. Surrounding Townships – they need to gather information from surrounding townships about their deer populations and what actions if any, they are taking to manage them. This will help define what is happening in the region at large.

F. Contraception

After discussing the issue with Mr. George Timko, Urban Deer Biologist with the Maryland Deer Project in July, Jim recommended tabling this idea until more research is done. Mr. Timko

said the number one controller of the deer population right now is traffic accidents. In 2008 the EPA may approve a contraceptive drug for deer and suggests waiting for that decision.

Sam Long, Kennett Way, Hershey's Mill – heard that 7 municipalities tried contraceptives and five of them gave it up. He suggested getting a deposition of their programs to analyze its success/failure; it would be helpful to the public. Jim agreed but said he understands they were shut down administratively because the contraceptive can only be used as part of a research program and they were having trouble controlling the herds. The results were compromised and the programs shut down. At a cost of approximately \$1000 per deer, it is too much for the township to manage.

Marcia Gordon, 3008 Valley Drive – disagreed that deer needed to be in an enclosed space because it was used very effectively on Fire Island, all be it surrounded by water, which is 25 miles long. If the township becomes part of a research program is costs them nothing except the cost of the darts. Jim said it's challenging to do any kind of drug research.

G. QDMA VIDEO PRESENTATION – PART I & II

Those in attendance watched the high school version of QDMA's deer education program. Part I of the video was a teacher guide. Part II of the video covered *History* including wildlife displacement and *Living with White-Tail Deer* including their biology, biodiversity, population growth, browsing, community impact (ticks & traffic accidents) and community impact (special interest groups, professional wildlife biologists and various associations and advocates, both for and against hunting).

Joseph Silvestri, QDMA members – recommended watching Part II. Mr. Silvestri explained that QDMA is not advocating hunting or actively soliciting additional areas to hunt. Members of the group are all volunteers and personally he is interested in helping to solve the problem not just killing deer. Members agreed to watch Part II at their next meeting.

H. ASSIGNMENTS

After reading through and seeing all their materials tonight, Matt believes they have the genesis of a program:

IMPACT	ENDS	WAYS	MEANS	COST
Reduce the risk	Lyme Disease	Info. & Action	Campaign through website, newsletter, 4-Post Feeder, & more	Twp. Cost
Prevent	Unhealthy, Overpopulated Herd	Action	Lmt. Private Property Hunting and potential Twp. Hunting Program	No Cost
Minimize	Landscape Damage	Info. for Township/ Action for Resident	Homeowner change plants, Twp. update ordinances	Resident Cost
Reduce	Traffic Collission	Info. & Action	Twp. message and unconventional signs, etc.	Twp. Cost

If they focus on these 4 items, Matt said they could formalize a plan with options and cost for the BOS – members agree. Jim agreed that it was a great summary of their goals; success on one plane will affect success on another. Linda questioned the use of feeders saying it would draw deer closer to people/neighborhoods where we don't want them. Jim explained that through their research they have learned that deer stay within a 1 sq. mile territory so the feeders will not be drawing more deer to the area because of these natural boundaries. Also, the feeders are said to be 92-98% effective at reducing ticks. Baiting is different because it is feeding for the sake of feeding where this will reduce

ticks and could potentially draw deer in for hunting purposes. Al said ideally they could be placed deep in wooded areas, away from people.

Assignments:

- Lyme Disease – Al & Jim will gather more information.
- Unhealthy/Overpopulation of Deer – Linda & Steve will work on this, including gathering information from any hunting on private land in the township.
- Landscape/Ordinances – Linda will work on suggested recommendations for the BOS.
- Traffic – Matt and Walter will look up more information on deer pick-up numbers and locations, strider lights, signs, etc.
- Communication/Education – Jim will continue to write newsletter articles. Matt would like to help develop other messages and means of communication. Al said the video tonight was a great informational tool. He questioned how much longer the DMC would need to meet and suggested ultimately having the Park & Recreation or Conservancy Board taking over the management of this issue following their recommendations. Don said the DMC was originally formed to free up the BOS and township staff, but he foresees the need to continually monitor the progress of the program by the DMC - although meetings could be limited to quarterly or on an as needed basis.

Public Comment:

Joseph Silvestri, QDMA members – said it seems that the DMC is open to the idea of hunting and cited that although the fall hunting season has begun in this area, there is a “split season” in January-March that the township could take advantage of for hunting on township open space, especially because it is a time of year when most people aren’t out in the parks/woods. He knows there are surrounding areas that do various hunting at different times of year, including Ridley Creek’s one-day hunt, once a year - just another option to consider. Jim explained that the township is held to a higher standard than a private landowner; they need to formalize a program and present it to the residents of the township. They are working on building a partnership with private landowners that will provide better references and support a township-sponsored program.

Sue Berhard, 220 Lochwood Ln. – was strongly against Mark Gordon being involved with the DMC and said that hunting only started in this township because Mark is an avid hunter. Don stated that the BOS charged Mark with starting a program two years ago. Jim said Mark is the township liaison on the committee and has a right to express his opinion. Since the beginning, everyone has expressed ideas and opinions and members have learned a lot, both from their research and public attendees. They have found no single answer to the problem but have set goals, which include limited hunting. Ultimately it is the BOS decision. Ms. Berhard maintained that Mark’s presence on the committee was a conflict of interest. Jim restated that the BOS charged the DMC to make recommendations that will solve or mitigate the deer problems. Ms. Berhard disputed the number of deer in the township and said hunting will not solve or reduce any problems. Steve said they continue to sift through a long list of educational materials, educating themselves and then the public. As a hunter on the committee, his goal is to educate. They cannot debate unsubstantiated numbers and need to continue to be diligent in developing a program.

Marcia Gordon, 3008 Valley Drive – said the QDMA video did not talk about *food sources* actually dictating the expansion/contraction of herds and that *hunting* actually increases the size of herds due to compensatory reproduction. Steve strongly disagreed and Jim said both issues have been discussed at previous meetings. Ms. Gordon maintained her position.

Abbas Rahberi, 1613 Manley Road – agreed with Ms. Berhard that Mark Gordon is at the heart of the hunting program. He said the township has a history of doing things differently for the public than behind closed doors. The DMC is a classic example of conflict of interest because members on this board also serve on other township boards. Residents have a right to protest hunting and he continues to attend meetings to voice his opinion. He said it is clear that the DMC is pro-hunting and although they may personally want to do the right thing, they are controlled by the BOS; it's an on-going problem in the township. Sam Long pointed out that the committee members are all volunteers.

I. NOMINATIONS:

Jim said Al did a great job while he was out of town so Jim nominated Al to be the Vice-Chair on the DMC. Walter seconded the nomination. Jim explained that the Vice-Chair is responsible for filling in for the Chair in their absence and reporting to the BOS at monthly meetings or as the agenda demands. Al accepted the nomination.

Public Comment:

Abbas Rahberi, 1613 Manley Road – based on the fact that Al is also a member of the Planning Commission, he recommended appointing a neutral party resident, such as Matt Keating, otherwise they are crafting the board to control the outcome. Mr. Rahberi challenged the validity of the DMC. Jim said Mr. Rahberi previously applauded Al's work for the township and therefore would consider that an endorsement. If anyone else were willing to serve, they would certainly consider them, but positions are clearly difficult to fill. Mr. Rahberi explained that his compliments of Al were in reference to a particular piece of paperwork and that as a whole, the appointment is flawed. Ms. Berhard agreed that they need a neutral party. Al explained that because Jim and he serve on the Planning Commission together, it is easy to confer. He also pointed out that when the committee originally formed, there were 2 anti-hunting members, 1 hunter and the rest were basically neutral members, willing to listen and learn. After their research, they voted 6-2 that there was a deer problem. Because the aerial survey revealed 297 deer in the township, and they found 150 within 300 yards of the township borders, Al said we could have up to 450 deer +/- at any given time. They have been skirting around the hunting option but have determined that it is a legitimate method to manage the deer. At this point, it will be limited to areas where residents endorse hunting and on private land. Al applauded the fair and balanced content of the QDMA video.

Marcia Gordon, 3008 Valley Drive – disagreed that the video was fair. Jim said all messages are flawed but when you are compressing complex issues into a one-hour time period for the general public, you need to keep it simple. Ms. Gordon said if the video has a skewed point of view, it should be presented as such. She agreed with Steve that all material is skewed towards the point of view of the sponsoring party. Steve said all groups have been given an opportunity to have their positions heard at the DMC. Jim said they were all given equal consideration even if they weren't part of their recommendations to date. Members agreed that just because PZP has been tabled until 2008, doesn't mean it will never be an option. Ms. Gordon expressed her absolute and total objection to bow-hunting as it is very cruel.

The motion to appoint Al as Vice Chair of the DMC was unanimously approved. There was no further discussion or public comment.

J. OTHER PUBLIC COMMENT:

Abbas Rahberi, 1613 Manley Road – said his expertise is to expose the weaknesses of the township committees. He is not opposed to any DMC member in particular, they are all intelligent people. He agrees that bow-hunting is barbaric.

K. ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on October 15th but Jim will see if they can meet on October 1st and confirm. Matt made a motion to adjourn. Steve seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or public comment. The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by: _____
Tracie Hill, Recording Secretary