

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
DEER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 5, 2007**

The East Goshen Township Deer Management Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, November 5, 2007 at 7pm at the East Goshen Township Building. In attendance were: Chair, Jim McRee, Vice-Chair Albert Zuccarello and members Steven DiAntonio, Walter Wujcik, Bob Huebner, Linda Polishuk and Matt Keating. The Township Zoning Officer, Mark Gordon was also in attendance.

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 October 1, 2007 be approved as corrected. Linda seconded the motion. There was no further public comment or discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Jim reported that they met with the Board of Supervisors for about 1.5 hours, 2 weeks ago. They reviewed the cost summary sheet of the 4-Post Feeders and the BOS accepted the recommendation; \$25,000 was budgeted. The matter was referred to the township solicitor for placement of the bait stations and liability issues. They are looking to order 10+ feeders in February/March 2008 and placing them March/April 2008. Jim also said that Marty Shane and Don McConathy watched Parts II & III of the QDMA video, receiving positive reaction.

B. BOS DIRECTIVES

Jim said the BOS wants to have a skeleton hunting program on the record. Members agreed that there are too many variables – including the number of properties involved in the program, number of hunters, weather, time of day, number of days able to hunt, etc. – to establish a specific number of deer to be harvested. However, Jim said if you calculate a 24-day program, hunting Monday-Saturday at three locations, 2 sessions/day, with a 50% effectiveness you could harvest 70 deer. This would require 100% coverage of the schedule and involve multiple hunting groups. Al said if you set a harvest number of 70 deer and don't achieve that goal, you could see a backlash from the residents and the program deemed a failure.

Linda said other townships have hunting programs on large private lands. Al said that according to Rick Smith, there are 6400 total township acres. Of that, 478 acres are township open space, including the 73 acres of township parks. There are an additional 700 acres of private open space, bringing to total open space acreage in the township to 1178 acres. Private land makes up 63% of the space and most of it is already privately hunted so Al suggested that hunting in the township parks is unnecessary. Steve said that just because there is acreage, doesn't mean it is huntable; you need a professional management group to evaluate the spaces. It is impossible to determine any projected number of deer to be harvested without scouting the land. Mark agreed that you need to establish the maximum number of deer in the huntable area and what percentage of *that* could be harvested.

Jim said the BOS would like to see a set number established, but if the harvest number comes in too small, and doesn't make an impact, causing public unrest in the process, it might not be worth it. Mark said that 10 yrs. ago there were approximately 150 deer in the township, now there are double that. If in 10 more years, the number stays the same, the program could be deemed a success because the community will not have become overrun with deer like Valley Forge or Gettysburg.

Linda asked who would set up the program. Steve said there are hunting groups like QDMA, in place on 2+acre properties. Mark reiterated that 60% of a neighborhood must be in favor of hunting for a program to take place there. Steve stressed that hunting groups need time to evaluate the land before developing an appropriate hunting program for that space and that we should see a lot of deer traffic in the next 3-4 weeks; the bucks are starting to roam and it's mating season.

The BOS also discussed the need for an on-going committee with as little as 3 members, to monitor the program in 2008. They would need to order the 4-Post Feeders and/or tick tubes, write newsletter articles and monitor the hunting decision in the summer. Members could meet bi-monthly or quarterly. Jim asked members to considering continuing on the committee next year. The BOS thanked all the DMC members for their service thus far.

C. ACTION ITEMS

A. Private Landowner Hunting (Steve/Linda)

Steve said there are multiple parcels being hunted by multiple groups. All the spaces are unique to the individual properties and he doesn't have information on how many guys are hunting per week, etc. He will try to get numbers from the homeowners. Linda will contact Willistown Tract to see if they can provide end of season harvest numbers. Harvest numbers probably won't be available until January '08.

SKELETON HUNTING PROGRAM

The four areas for consideration include: Mill Creek/Grand Oak, Bow Tree/Clocktower, Supplee/Rockland Village and Wentworth. Steve said even if they establish a program, they would have problems with individual hunters because the spaces are not posted. Jim said parking areas and entrances/exits should be downwind. Steve said it's not as big an issue around here because deer are used to humans' scent; good hunters are conscious of washing clothes, hands, etc.

1. Mill Creek/Grand Oak (17 acres)

Mark said this was an area of success during the pilot program. There is one active baseball field here but it would be off-season during the hunting.

2. Bow Tree/Clocktower (55 acres)

This is the largest township open space. There is a creek to the south and it borders the Willistown Trust Tract. Access/parking is not as good here and some land is not huntable. Steve said approximately 10 hunters could effectively archery hunt on this size tract, smaller land would need to be managed differently.

3. Supplee Valley/Rockland Village (17 acres East side, 26 acres West side)

Mark said the deer tend to follow the stream and it's a good bedding area. There is a farm just north of the East side that has a dense deer population, with big bucks spotted in the area right now. The West side, watershed area has numerous new plantings that have been

damaged by deer. Poachers are known to be active in this area as well. There was good success here during the pilot program but highly controversial by the resident.

4. Wentworth (20 acres)

This area, across from the township building, has good access/parking. Walter said this is among the top five areas for deer-traffic accidents. Mark knows of heavy deer damage along Cornwallis Drive. Jim said it looked narrow and asked if Mark could shade in the 150' setback areas for a better perspective.

PROPERTIES: Members agree to include all four areas in the program regardless of size, to maximize harvest potential. Jim suggested overlaying the aerial count photo to these areas to estimate density. Mark said there were 25 deer found within 500 yards of the Supplee East area during the count.

ARCHERY: Members agree that the program should be restricted to archery hunting only, with temporary tree stands that are removed daily. Steve said there is a state law that prohibits tree damage on public property.

GROUPS: Members agree that that program should be limited to township approved deer management groups.

HOURS: To be most effective, members agree that the daily schedule shall be sunrise to sunset as the PA Game Commission allows. Mark said the moon cycle greatly effects deer movement. Although hunters may go into the woods and set up, no one is allowed to hunt before sunrise for safety concerns.

DAYS: Members agreed that hunting shall be allowed Monday through Saturday. Walter is concerned about people using open spaces, especially on weekends but members agree that Saturday has to be included because that is when most hunters are available. Matt is also concerned about public safety and suggested blocking public access to these areas during hunting season. Steve said public trails in East Bradford are clearly posted with days/times of their hunting program at all access/exit points. Members agree to post similar signage but need to determine if it is the responsibility of the group or of the township to post them.

SEASON: Mark said the first hunting season starts mid-September/early October and runs through mid-November. Buck season closes until after Thanksgiving but doe hunting continues. Buck hunting then runs until mid-January. Members agree to follow the PA Game Commission hunting season. There is no hunting February–September. Only one antlered deer is allowed per hunter in PA.

HUNTERS: Jim suggested having hunters register with the township and require sign-in stations but Steve said it is really up to the management group. Members agree that groups should register for a particular area at least 48 hours in advance so the township knows who is hunting where/when. Mark suggested assigning parcels to a particular group and letting the group rotate hunters on that parcel. Al urged them not to make it more complicated than necessary. Members agree to use a lottery system to select groups in early summer, to allow for adequate time for scouting.

NOTIFICATION: Members agree to have a plaque in the windshield of each hunter's car. Mark said only residents bordering public properties (within the 100-200 ft. buffer zone) would receive the 1000 ft. notification letter. *Tracie Hill, 218 Baldwin Drive*, urged the committee to consider broader resident notification to avoid lack of communication complaints by residents during the pilot program. Mark said the BOS would need to determine how broad to include notifications – it could encompass entire neighborhoods if deemed necessary. Mark also suggested posting signs at bus stop locations. Members agreed that information should be included in letters to bordering resident, posted signs at bus stops and parking, entrance/exit areas, newsletter notices (summer & fall), and on the website.

HARVEST: Members agree that whole animals need to be harvested (no field dressing). Members agree that no ATV's or other motorized vehicles shall be allowed on public properties to aid in the removal of deer.

HARVEST REPORT: Steve said the PA Game Commission requires deer harvest reports within 10 days but 48 hours is a reasonable request. Matt said they should establish a specific person to monitor email communications of this type. Members agree that reports should include the sex of the deer only at this point. Tim Wisecaryer of Landowner Sportsman Alliance said they commonly provide harvest reports. Accidents should be reported to 911 and then to the PA Game Commission.

POLICE: The Chief of Police needs to be notified of all activity and should have a list of parking areas and make/model/license plate of all hunters' vehicles. Members agree that this will help protect against poachers or illegal hunter registration. Mark said this identification information is usually included in the information packet provided by the management groups. Members agree to defer identification of parking areas until parcels are officially selected.

Jim said they are not on the BOS' agenda again until January but he will send over their recommendations for review.

B. Lyme Disease (Al/Jim)

The 4-Post Feeders will be ordered in February/March 2008. Al said the Dandux Corporation wants records kept of where feeds are placed, amount of supplies used, etc. The township solicitor should also review the contract that needs to be signed. Members agree that the homemade instructions for tick tubes can be placed on the website. Although they are doing a lot to combat the tick population, ticks will not be eradicated. Members agree that it is impossible to measure the success of the tick program.

C. Ordinance Changes (Linda)

Members agreed that a list of deer resistant plants could be included on the website. The 4-Post Feeders and hunting program were effective enough that no ordinance changes, such as landscape restrictions or prohibiting feeding, are necessary.

D. Communication & Education (Matt/Al)

Matt suggested a 4-step education campaign to address foliage damage, lyme disease, traffic issues and deer management activities. Al suggested including a summary of their findings in the winter & spring newsletter to maintain education with the residents. Al & Matt will develop articles for the four quarterly newsletters. Mark reminded them to submit articles in a timely manner so they are reviewed before publication. Jim also cautioned against repeating

information. Matt has deer crash data from PennDot and what people can do to avoid accidents for the January issue; the deadline is November 9th.

Jim suggested holding a movie night for a public showing of the QDMA video.

E. Information Gathering (Walt/Matt)

Matt said there were 125 “reported” deer crashed to PennDot (state/county) – no fatalities but a lot of property damage. Walter has the deer pick-up report for East Goshen: 58 in 2002, 78 in 203 and 51 in 2004. There were 4-5 high risk areas including Airport Road, Paoli Pike (near Ellis Rd.), Reservoir & Strasburg Rds. And Rt. 352 & Boot Rd. PA is 4th highest deer-car collision rate state (West Virginia is 1st and Hawaii is last). November-December are the highest collision months of any given year.

F. Neighboring Township Actions (Linda) – none

D. SCHEDULE

Al is concerned about the unnecessary duration of the DMC. Matt said there seemed to be a need for on-going management on a quarterly basis. Jim said the hunting numbers won’t be ready until February/March and someone needs to evaluate them. Likewise, they need to be ready with a hunting program by June. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on November 19th. Jim will draft their recommendations for the hunting program for review. Steve, Linda, Jim and Mark are planning on attending the Chester County Deer Forum on 11/11/07. Jim went in January and there was a lot of useful information.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

F. ADJOURNMENT

Walter made a motion to adjourn. Al seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or public comment. The meeting adjourned at 9:32pm.

Respectfully submitted by: _____
Tracie Hill, Recording Secretary