

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
DEER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 19, 2007**

The East Goshen Township Deer Management Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, November 19, 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. Mike Merwin (Township Building Inspector), and Jack Yahraes (Municipal Authority) were 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:

The November 5, 2007 meeting minutes will be reviewed and corrected at the next meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- A. Chester County Deer Forum, 11/11/7 – Jim and Steve attended. Jim reported that about 65-70 people were in attendance and although it was not as well attended as the February forum, it was still informative, with 12 speakers giving a quick 5-minute presentation each during the first part. During the second part of the forum, people split up into three groups: Sportsman, Municipalities and Homeowner's Association.
- a. Jim joined the Municipalities group in which five township/groups were represented. Kennett Township explained that they have a strong deer management group and harvest about 300 deer per year. With no township land, they have developed a strong relationship with large, private landowners and act as facilitators in this private hunting program. Jim described the Kennett DMC as "deeply involved" in the program. To be cohesive and successful, Kennett Township representatives recommend a focused deer group in every township to establish partnerships between landowners, residents, the township and deer management groups; most members should be hunters themselves. Pennsbury Township, not Kennett Township, currently has the 4-Post Feeders. Jim also reported that West Goshen is not doing anything but is concerned about the future development of the Jerrochian Estate, on which they estimate there could be 400 deer.
 - b. Steve attended the Sportsman group and explained that they mainly discussed the concerns about individual sportsman vs. large deer management groups and the pros, cons and challenges of each. Bigger groups tend to be replacing individuals, especially in suburban areas. Keith Mullen was a key speaker. Jim said, as a township, they specifically excluded individuals from their hunting recommendations because they may not come with the same qualifications and liability coverage as an organized group such as QDMA.
 - c. Jim said "Hunters Sharing the Harvest" is a program that donates deer meat to food banks. He learned that grants cover all the costs except a \$15 fee. Normal processing costs are \$65-70+. They discussed other grant options to entice more hunters to participate in this program.
- B. Township Business – Jim mentioned that the Township's holiday party is scheduled for Friday, December 7th – all ABC's are invited. Also, the annual township meeting is scheduled for 1/12/08 from 7:45-10am. Committees evaluate their 2007 accomplishments and state their 2008 goals. The BOS is currently soliciting to fill vacancies on the ABC's. They decided to hold the

DMC size to seven people until the future of the committee is determined. Jack noted that the DMC is currently considered a “task force” not an ABC. Jim thanked Linda, Al and Matt for their newsletter articles.

- C. 4-Post Feeder – Jim said the solicitor is currently reviewing the 4-Post Feeder contract and drafting an agreement for private landowners to protect against liability. Although the BOS has budgeted \$25,000 for the feeders there is no commitment to buy, pending the outcome of the solicitor’s review. Steve mentioned that Betty Louis, who owns 40-acres, said she would be interested in having one placed on her property.
- D. Crash Data Report – Matt explained that police reports are filtered into a national database. These reports were created using deer-related crashes in PA and Chester County for 2005-2007 as the criteria; 2007 data was unavailable. These are only reports in which a fatality or disabled vehicle resulted. The total statewide crashes for 2004-2006 was 7,470, with 355 crashes occurring in Chester County during that same time. Members agreed that the numbers are probably low and do not include deer pick-ups and the countless, unreported deer collisions. No data at the township level is available.
 - a. Al also noted that although they relied on the Ridgefield, CT report for so long, there is now data from the Valley Forge National Historic Park that reports between 1993-1996 their deer herd doubled, and that 85% of deer deaths were the result of car collisions. Jim said there is a web article from the Pittsburgh Post Gazette that lists PA as 4th in deer-car collisions, behind Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin.
 - b. Linda contacted local auto body shops for deer-related repair work and received the following information: Grand Sport – 1-2/day during deer season, Pennington Auto – 15-20 per year, Sterling – 1/day during deer season, 3D – 4-5/week during deer season, and Wiley – 2-3/month. Al said they have compiled a lot of supporting data and thinks they are ready to make a final recommendation to the BOS; it’s now up to them to make a decision.
- E. Tick Tubes – The cost analysis report on the tick tubes was reviewed. Jim wants to contact the manufacturer to see about a bulk rate discount for approximately 1000 tubes. Although it is cheaper to make your own, Jim learned at the deer forum that a patent is pending on the tubes so the township should not endorse this practice.

B. 2008 DMC

Jim said they are moving forward with the 4-Post Feeders, possible tick tubes and providing information to private landowners about hunting. They need to determine if the deer issue warrants continued attention in 2008. Jim said someone would have to continue to monitor the program, write newsletter articles and collect data – the BOS wants to know whose charge it is. Al said there is enough data and evidence collected to use and recycle in articles for the newsletter; the BOS need to get on with doing something and the DMC charge is finished. Bob agreed except if they pursue a hunting program; he recommended meeting 3-4 times per year. Walter thought meeting quarterly was worthwhile to evaluate new data from road kills, follow the maintenance of the 4-Post Feeders and monitor the private hunting programs.

Linda said it’s a waste of the DMC’s time if the BOS is not going to commit to a hunting program. Bob said allowing an opt-out program wouldn’t be worth it; safety and moral objections were the big concerns two years ago. Al said the township needs to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the residents and that does not require a popular referendum. Walter said there is no guarantee of success.

Tracie Hill, 218 Baldwin Drive – said that she lives in Rockland Village by the Supplee Valley and that her 8, 11 and 13 year old children often play down by the creek and in the woods. Although she has attended all of the DMC meetings and is familiar with all of the facts, there would still be a level of anxiety that goes along with any hunting program. Two years ago, she did not receive the 1000 ft. notice because she did not “border” the open space, yet her children’s bus stops are right across the street from the woods. She is not against a hunting program but would prefer it to be during a limited time period rather than a 4-month stretch. Steve said deer are used to a certain amount of human activity, they recognize certain human pheromones and can sense threats. Going into an area over a sustained period of time is the only way to be effective. Steve said groups need to know by May/June what parcels they will hunt so they can be scouted. Bob suggested marking trees so residents would know where hunters would be but Steve said that wouldn’t work with multiple groups hunting the same parcels.

Al wonders if promoting hunting on private land and skipping the township open space would be adequate. Steve said there is always a higher tendency to take deer on private land than on public. Jim said the Kennett program involves making calls and knocking on doors, personally interacting with homeowners to build trust and share knowledge, as well as working with groups to understand their programs. Steve said it only takes 1-2 people to monitor groups and connect them to individual landowners but that the DMC should establish the requirements of the program (ie. Taking two does before a buck). Long-term success requires hunters to work proactively with homeowners, such as fixing fences, to gain respect and trust beyond just harvesting deer from the property. Mike Merwin said there are roughly 30, 4+acre parcels in the township, and 10-12 parcels that are 15+acres. Jim said the 2008 DMC could facilitate bringing private landowners and deer management groups together. Steve said they could create a committee with reps from 5 deer groups that met quarterly. Jim said they would need to interview groups and provide recommendations to the BOS.

Matt believes the DMC acts as a filter for the BOS and said there is a need for it to continue – gathering information and addressing public feedback. He said they should meet quarterly. Their main focus would be to keep abreast of new technologies, establish the rules/qualifications of hunting groups, disseminate information and capture the latest stats on hunting, accidents and complaints. Jim said if they are interested in developing a program similar to Kennett’s, then they would need to meet on a weekly basis and personally he can’t commit to that. Likewise if there is a hunting program, then a DMC should consist of more skilled members. Linda would like to review Kennett Township’s program information.

Walter, Bob, Matt, Linda and Jim are willing and able to meet quarterly. Steve mentioned that as of January 1st he will be serving on the board for QDMA and will no longer be able to serve on the DMC but is happy to act as a liaison. Al said the township could embrace the large landowners and develop cooperation between individuals and the hunting groups, and would see this partnership development as the main purpose of a 2008 DMC, not fact finding. Steve said they could invite reps from the 8 management groups they have and interview/outline their program. Members discussed whether this should be done during a meeting or on an individual basis. Mike Merwin said without a final recommendation to the BOS, it seemed they were getting ahead of themselves. Steve said at some time though, the BOS would need to approve a viable group to institute a township program. Jim pointed out that they made a recommendation in June and have met with the BOS every couple of weeks since, reviewing and modifying the program; the BOS wants more conclusive data with formulas to support a hunting program, but unfortunately concrete data doesn’t really exist.

John Gaul, 1323 Park Avenue – said they seemed close to a recommendation. He has attended almost all of the DMC meetings and he believes the DMC has fulfilled its charge to collect data. They have effectively educated the public at the meetings and raised awareness through the township newsletter. He asked about having pseudo-hunters in the woods during the hunting season but Steve said that probably isn't allowed with an organized group.

In summary, members agreed that the 2008 DMC should meet quarterly with a focus on:

- Facilitating deer management groups with approximately 30 private large landowners and/or the township open spaces.
- Monitor deer bait stations (4-Post Feeders).
- Continue their educational mission and feed recommendations to the BOS as needed.
- Act as a contact point for public concerns.
- Gather data and monitor programs.

They will recommend that the DMC be staffed with knowledgeable hunters. Currently four members of the DMC are cross-ABC members. Members agree to discuss tangible goals/objectives for the 2008 committee at their next meeting on December 3rd.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT – *none*

D. ADJOURNMENT

Walter made a motion to adjourn. Matt seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or public comment. The meeting adjourned at 8:54pm.

Respectfully submitted by: _____
Tracie Hill, Recording Secretary