

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
DEER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 10, 2008**

The East Goshen Township Deer Management Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, March 10, 2008 at 7pm at the East Goshen Township Building. In attendance were: Chairman Jim McRee; members Al Zuccarello, Walter Wujcik and Bob Huebner, along with Mike Merwin (Township Building Inspector) and Don McConathy (Board of Supervisors). Also present were Jim Benoit (Main Line White Tail Organization); Joe Sebia and Cy Shickora (Tri-County Deer Management Association).

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Jim McRee called the meeting to order at 7pm and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. No one is recording the meeting.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of February 25, 2008 were reviewed and corrected. Bob moved that the amended minutes of February 25, 2008 be approved. Walter seconded the motion. There was no public comment or discussion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- A. The group could not agree on a mutually convenient date to have a field trip to select locations for the 4-post stations. Jim M. will follow up with everyone by email. He will also talk to Willistown about putting one in Ashbridge. Mark Miller has marked up a map of the open spaces with locations he thinks might be appropriate for the stations. Jim will get copies of the map for everyone. Jim Benoit suggested putting trail cams near the feeders.
- B. The tick tubes are in. Jim M. will have information about them put on the website.
- C. Bob will evaluate the stack of documentation received from Chester County regarding deer-related traffic accidents for the period July 2007 thru February 2008.
- D. The open space walk was held on March 2. Areas covered included Grand Oak, Millcreek, Bowtree, and a portion of Wentworth. Due to the weather Supplee Valley had to be omitted. The group noted a lot of trash, and Public Works staff was notified. They also found three permanent deer stands in Bow Tree and learned from a resident of some unintentional poaching taking place there. Jim M. noted the need for better marking of Township open space to help the hunters from inadvertently trespassing on private property.
- E. Jim M. acknowledged receipt of two emails from residents and an inquiry from the office of State Rep. Barbara McIlvaine Smith.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Jim M. is working on preparing a program budget report.
- B. Proposal from Tri-County Deer Management Association (TCDMA) - Joe Sebia from Tri-County Deer Management Association (TCDMA) distributed a proposal from his group, which he reviewed with the DMC. To develop their plan and a deer reduction goal, they would first like to do a pellet count, a fawn count, and to determine the density and sex ratio of the herd. Mr. Sebia said the group's 19 members are not trophy hunters. He said TCDMA can work around "reasonable" blackout dates, but they like to get on a property at least once per week. Bob expressed concern that none of the members live in the area. Mr. Sebia said that's not an issue, as the members love to hunt and consider this their hobby, so they don't mind driving.

Mr. Sebia was asked if TCDMA would be willing to work with other hunting groups. Mr. Sebia said yes, but the DMC should bear in mind that different groups may have different hunting philosophies, so it might be best to assign parcels to different groups, and each can hunt their own parcel their own way. He also noted that TCDMA's liability insurance covers only TCDMA members.

Public Comment: Ron Zeleski, 218 Lochwood Lane – asked if TCDMA members use crossbows. Mr. Sebia said he doesn't have an objection to crossbows, but their group chooses not to use them. They use compound bows.

Jim Benoit said he personally has to use a crossbow due to a shoulder injury. He said crossbows do not shoot any farther than compound bows, and no movement is needed by the hunter to shoot the arrow, so there is less chance of startling a deer. Jim M. asked if there is a risk of accidental discharge with a crossbow, Mr. Benoit said no; they have safety features which prevent that. Mr. Benoit said that while TCDMA uses temporary tree stands that are removed after each day of hunting, his group (Main Line White Tail) prefers to install a tree stand for the duration of a hunting season. He said it can often be a challenge to locate a suitable tree in suburbia so they find it easier to leave the stand in place. They are always well concealed and locked up at the end of the day, and theft or vandalism has never been an issue.

Joe Sebia said he will email TCDMA's success rate stats to Jim M.

Cy Shickora of TCDMA then spoke about the importance of arrow tip weight. Also, he said the DMC goal of harvesting 35 deer the first year is very doable, and TCDMA may be able to get more than that. Jim Benoit said that a harvest of 10 deer (or more) per parcel would be a reasonable expectation considering the herd density in East Goshen. Jim M. asked the TCDMA reps what they thought of the Wentworth parcel. Mr. Shickora said he does consider it huntable, but it depends on how the hunters will get access to the property. He said TCDMA successfully hunted another very small property in Maryland.

Jim Benoit asked if it would be possible to get prior permission from homeowners to track a wounded deer on their property. That will save hunters having to knock on doors and taking folks by surprise, assuming they are home to answer the door. Jim M. said the DMC will talk to the Police Commissioner to see what the rules are. Mr. Shickora said the TCDMA hunters make it a practice to change into street clothes before they go knocking on doors, as showing up in camo might be a little intimidating to some folks. Their hunters also change into street clothes before going off the parcel for lunch, or whatever.

Joe Sebia said it would be good to alert residents ahead of time that hunters may be out after dark, tracking deer by flashlight. Jim M. said that kind of information will be provided to the residents via the Township newsletter.

Jim M. thanked Mr. Sebia for his proposal, and said he would work on structuring a hunting plan for the Township based on the input received from the various groups thus far.

Bob said the prior group recommended having parcels shared among hunting groups, and TCDMA recommends limiting a parcel to one group, so he's not sure what approach the DMC should take. Walter said it makes sense to him for each parcel to be limited to one group, because then that group would manage it. If more than one group hunts a particular parcel, the

DMC will have to get involved as coordinator/administrator. Al agreed that it makes sense to deal out the parcels to separate groups. Jim Benoit said his organization would prefer it that way too. Mike Merwin noted that the parcels can be rotated annually among groups.

Jim M. asked the hunters what they thought of splitting up Bow Tree, as it's rather large. Both Jim Benoit and the TCDMA reps said they'd be fine with having the parcel split in half. Jim M. then asked if the groups were comfortable with East Goshen's proposed reporting requirements, and they both said yes.

Jim M. asked for input on how the Township could best handle any complaints from residents. Jim Benoit said in the case of a "he said/she said" issue of resident vs. hunter, he understands if the Township feels obligated to lean toward favoring its taxpayer. Mr. Sebia said TCDMA finds its "single point of contact" philosophy helpful in these instances, as the contact person serves as the intermediary between the parties and the Township.

The DMC then discussed how complaint calls will be handled at the Township. Bob suggested that should be routed to the DMC, who will then work out the issue with the TCDMA contact person. Don McConathy suggested the DMC members speak with someone at the Game Commission to find out how to address complaints.

The DMC agreed that there is no need to hire an additional Township employee at this time to handle deer issues. At this point the bulk of the work will involve the upkeep and management of the bait stations, and the Public Works Department has already been committed for that purpose.

Jim M. asked the hunting groups if they had any experience working with special-needs residents, such as the hearing impaired, blind, etc. Jim Benoit said he had no experience with that, but should a situation arise he would strive to be respectful and would do his best to effectively communicate with the person.

Don McConathy said he is against the idea of the hunters getting prior permission from residents to track deer on their property. He said the residents should not know the hunters are even out there, and trying to get permission ahead of time might cause concerns. He also noted that it would not be an easy thing to get permission ahead of time, because there would be such a large number of residents involved. Mike Merwin agreed with Don, and said it would be a bad idea to send out a letter about hunters possibly tracking injured deer through a neighborhood.

Joe Sebia recommended educating residents ahead of time that it's possible a hunter may have to knock on their door and get permission to get onto their property. When doing so the Township should emphasize that it would be for the good of the injured deer, so it can be dispatched quickly.

Mike Merwin said he was told that Mark Miller's group would be the one in charge of taking complaint calls. The initial calls will most likely go to Sue Smith or Terry _____, who will refer them to Mark. Mike also confirmed that he was told the Public Works crew will manage and maintain the bait stations.

5. FUTURE ROLE OF THE DMC

Jim listed the functions of the DMC for the near future, based on his understanding from the Board of Supervisors:

- To oversee the hunting program
- To oversee the bait station and tick tube program
- To work with private landowners, encouraging them to have their land hunted
- To keep data on deer-related traffic accidents within the Township

Jim said the BOS is considering making the DMC into a formal ABC. There has been some discussion of whether it should exist as a subcommittee, perhaps to Park & Rec, but it will probably be made into a standalone body.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be March 17.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Walter made a motion to adjourn. Al seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or public comment. The meeting adjourned at 9:12pm.

Respectfully submitted by: _____
Anne Meddings, Recording Secretary