Memorandum

JOINT CITY OF BLOOMINGTON-MONROE COUNTY DEER TASK FORCE
Tuesday, 28 February 2012, 5:30 pm
Council Library (#110), City Hall, 401 N. Morton St.

PRESENT: **Task Force Members**: Iris Kiesling, Stefano Fiorini, Bob Foyut, Judith Granbois, Sarah Hayes, Thomas Moore, Laurie Ringquist, Dave Rollo, Susannah Smith. IDNR: Chad Stewart and Josh Griffin. Council Staff: Stacy Jane Rhoads
Public: Dave Parkhurst, Hal Turner, David Piezel and Ron Evans

I. WELCOME

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 26 January 2012

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Parkhurst said that residents experiencing the problem did not create it. Deer overabundance is a public nuisance and the Task Force should not suggest to lawmakers that affected residents bear the cost – leave that up to the policy makers.

Hal Turner said that he has been a Bloomington resident for five years. One of his pets was a victim of deer aggression. He understands that there is much damage to ornamentals, but there is significant damage to area's wooded areas. He pointed out that there are focused area of deer concern and problems. He furthered that the presence of deer in neighborhoods becomes especially problematic when does have young fawns. He is pleased to see a diversity of recommendations offered and glad to see the Task Force taking a scholarly approach.

David Piezel is a new Bloomington resident who lives in SoMax. He relayed that his wife had a "near miss" with a deer as she was trying to get into her car. A buck was chasing a doe and she almost got in the middle of the chase. He said that it is counter-productive to ask residents to install gardens, grow their own food and then lose those gardens to deer browse. For a new resident, the presence of deer in his neighborhood is disconcerting. His observation is that it will take a serious accident to galvanize the community to do something. He further added that to allocate the cost only to residents experiencing the problem is short-sighted. Deer reproduce at a great rate and soon it will affect everyone. He suggested that the Task Force look at huge land masses where deer have a haven, such as deer park. That area is a breeding ground and the landowner should take responsibility to manage the reproduction of the herd there.

Ron Evans said he wants to commend local lawmakers for creating this Task Force. He moved here in 1969 and never saw a deer. He is now living in his third Bloomington residence and experiences many deer. It only takes a few deer to wreck havoc. The community will never eliminate the problem completely. He hopes the City Council will

recognize that this is a growing problem and take steps to mitigate the problem.

IV. DISCUSSION OF GENERAL STRATEGY FOR NEIGHBORHOODS

The Task Force asked Rhoads to compile the ideas of the group composed of Ringquist, Fiorini and Rollo to date for circulation to Task Force members and IDNR. The document was sent via e-mail last week.

Rollo review the suggestions so far:

NON-LETHAL

- ***FEEDING BAN***
- ***RAISE FENCE HEIGHT LIMITS***
- ***WILDLIFE DISPLACEMENT as a DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATION***

LETHAL

- ***URBAN DEER ZONE****. Seek designation for the City and applicable parts of the County. UDZ status would not open up hunting to anyone in the City; instead, those wishing to hunt within the City would be required to follow Nuisance & Reduction Zone requirements per below.*
- ***DEER NUISANCE ZONE****. Apply more strict regulations for lethal action within the City limits by designating certain areas of the City "Deer Nuisance Zones." Within a Deer Nuisance Zone, a menu of lethal options would be available. City would exact control and oversight over any lethal approach.*

  A. ***HUNTING – DEER REDUCTION ZONE****. Within a Deer Nuisance Zone, properties of at least five contiguous acres could apply to be a "Deer Reduction Zone" wherein hunting is permitted. Prospective hunters would be required to apply to the City, pass a proficiency test, adhere to setback and other procedural requirements. Requirements still in development.*

  B. ***SHARPSHOOTING IN APPROPRIATE SPACES (acreage &/or backstop)***
  Cost assumed by residents in the affected area.

  C. ***TRAP AND KILL – CLOVER TRAP AUTOMATIC NOTIFICATION****.*
  Use of captive bolt in interest of this approach excluded from consideration.
  Cost assumed by residents in the affected area

Rollo asked for feedback.

<u>Feeding ban</u>

- Stewart suggested that the group solicit feedback from the Sassafras Audubon Society and other stakeholders to help identify any holes in language and unintended consequences.
- Rhoads asked how the feeding ban worked with other possible recommendations. Stewart said that if the group decides upon lethal recommendations and baiting is a component of that program, opponents will bait deer away from the management site; therefore a feeding ban should occur first.
-Ringquist said that if an area is identified for sharpshooting, ACC officers could patrol the identified area.

- Hayes said she knows of people who feed deer daily and who may resist a feeding ban.

►Via voice vote recommend a feeding ban. All ayes. No opposed. Rollo said the vote was unanimous.

RAISE FENCE HEIGHT LIMITS
- Rollo discussed certain fencing material that might meet resistance by planners.
- Ringquist asked if the Task Force needs to provide that kind of detail, or if that should be left up to City planners. Granbois said the materials and configuration of the fences should be left up to the experts in the Planning department. That detail is beyond the purview of this group.
- Stewart asked if electric fences are off the table, stating that electric fences are much less expensive than that installation of taller fences.
- Rollo asked the group for feedback.
- Foyut said that he has been shocked by an AC fence and it is not that bad.
- Rollo asked "Can we establish that there is no hazard if a child touches an AC electric fence?"
- Foyut said it would depend on the fence.
- Rollo said that the City would have to inspect it.
- Foyut said can be one or multiple strands; also multiple strengths.
- Hayes suggested that perhaps notice could be given to neighbors.
- Rollo said that the group still has a lot on tonight's agenda. Perhaps it would be better to make a general recommendation to raise fence height limits
- Moore said that he is against recommending electric fences. He feels like he does not have enough information. When he was a kid, he touched an electric fence and it was more than just a little jolt. Moore said he is not categorically opposed to the idea, just thinks it warrants further research before he is willing to vote for electric fences within City limits.
- Rollo said that perhaps the group could recommend that this issue be explore further. Group indicated assent

►Via voice vote recommend a change in City code to allow fences to extend up to ten feet in backyards and up to eight feet in front yards and on corner lots and for the City to explore the option of electric fences within City limits. All ayes. No opposed.

WILDLIFE DISPLACEMENT AS A DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATION
- Rollo reviewed that when a development project is proposed, it is examined for its effect on environmental concerns such as stormwater and tree cover, but not deer or other wildlife.
- Rollo understands that when Deer Park was set up, people knew there were deer and the owner was feeding the deer. When the Park was developed, no one considered that deer would be exiting the Park into nearby neighborhoods.
- Rollo also said that Renwick was 80 acres of greenspace that displaced deer.
- Granbois asked if Rollo is certain that deer were displaced.
- Griffin said that the issue is not just about displacing deer, which may or may not be going on, but many of these developments actually *create* ideal deer habitat by fragmenting the landscape.

- Foyut said no matter if it is displacement or fragmentation, there will be consequences of development and more deer-human conflicts may result.
- Fiorini said that developers should be required to develop a plan for how they are going to deal with deer in their proposed development site to address: 1) what to do with the deer before the area is developed and 2) how will manage deer after the site is developed. Granbois said that is too great a burden on developers.
- Ringquist said that if a developer did have a large area of land and many deer, then they could take action before the area is built out.
- Moore said that perhaps notice could be given to new residents that they are moving into deer area.
- Rollo said that he would personally like to see wildlife corridors throughout the City to channel them.
- Rollo said that he is looking for a general recommendation to consider wildlife displacement and habitat fragmentation as a development consideration. He thinks this is worthy of discussion among planners. Planning staff should work to engage planners in thinking about this.

►Via voice vote recommend that wildlife displacement and habitat fragmentation be a component of the development review process. All ayes. No opposed.

URBAN DEER ZONE STATUS FOR CITY AND RING AROUND THE CITY
- Rollo asked IDNR to explain what an Urban Deer Zone (UDZ) does.
- Stewart replied that a UDZ extends the hunting season, allows archers to take four more deer than what is currently allowed and requires that hunters take a does before they take a buck.
- Granbois reviewed that IDNR has some reservations about the setback requirements offered in an early proposal regarding hunting in the City. The proposal was intended to make hunting in the City more tightly regulated than the requirements of a UDZ. She asked IDNR to explain their concerns with the Task Force ideas about hunting within the City limits.
- Griffin replied that the proposal for setbacks -- 70 yards from property line and 50 yards from house, 100 yards from road. Most deer are harvested less than 20 yards and the proposed setbacks make many of the areas experiencing social carrying capacity unhuntable.
- Stewart said that with all the setbacks offered by the group, there are no places left to hunt, especially in the southeast part of the City. Also, many of these neighborhoods are not areas where you would want to hunt anyway; there is no place to put a tree stand. Stewart added that IDNR would not go through the rulemaking process to designate the City and ring around the City a UDZ, it hunting would not actually take place within the City. He further explained that IDNR has extended UDZs to whole counties, but that is where the deer population is out of control. Trend data from Monroe County show that the population is relatively stable.
- Rhoads said that most of setback requirements are intended to be protective of human safety. In the absence of setbacks, how can safety of urban hunting otherwise be guaranteed? Is there another way to address deer tucked away in neighborhoods?

- Griffin said that if there is City oversight and additional City permitting, then the City could deny permission hunting in areas of dense human habitation.
- Stewart said that it is important to remember that deer should not be totally eliminated from neighborhoods. In some of the dense neighborhoods in the southeast quadrant of the City where social carrying capacity has been reached, the safest management option is a non-traditional option, such as the clover trap idea the group has been discussing.
- Rinquist asked: if the Task Force removes setbacks, would hunting be effective in neighborhoods?
- Griffin said in certain areas, hunting would just not be effective. In the dense areas of the southeastern part of the City, he would question the safety of it and doubts you would get any competent hunter to hunt the area. For those areas, will have to look at some other intensive management technique, such as the clover trap.
- Stewart said that the City does have substantial greenspace. It would be useful to think about hunting on those areas.
- Parkhurst said that in his neighborhood, there a cul-de-sacs – why couldn't hunting happen there? He has 8/10 of an acre.
- Fiorini said that the group has discussed aggregating properties to meet an acreage requirement to allow for hunting in neighborhoods. Griffin said if at 8/10 of an acre, would still need to get agreement of about 6 property owners.
- Griffin – another approach is just to seek UDZ status and not place any further restrictions. Fiorini asked if IDNR could help the group come up with minimum rules for hunting. Griffin said that there are already State laws in place that foster safety. He said that he and Stewart would be willing to work on some general recommendations, such as proficiency test, hunter orientation, etc.
- Stewart added that a conservation officer can talk to the group and/or the City about what can be safely and legally.
- Foyut asked if the UDZ would include Griffy. Griffin responded that just because an area is a UDZ, does not mean it has to be hunted. A UDZ does not allow hunting where hunting is otherwise prohibited.
- Ringquist suggested that since the details of hunting within the City limits are still being worked out, for voting purposes, it makes sense to separate out the UDZ vote from the specifics of what hunting would look like within the City limits. The specifics of hunting within the City should be worked out at the next meeting.

► Granbois moved that the Task Force recommend UDZ status for the City and the County ring (and/or other applicable areas) around the City. Rinquist seconded. Via voice vote, all indicated "aye." None opposed.

SHARPSHOOTING AND CLOVER TRAPS
- Rollo asked about the viability of sharpshooting and clover trap strategies in neighborhoods.
- Griffin said that in densely-populated areas like Renwick, the clover trap proposal discussed by the USDA is really the best option. As Dr. Caudell reviewed, he did not see any neighborhoods in the southeast quadrant of the City that are suitable for sharpshooting.
- Stewart said that with the clover trap management, will more than likely get one deer per night. With sharpshooting on appropriate spaces such as the Goat Farm, can cull for or

more deer at a time. IDNR says that it views sharpshooting and clover trap management as complementary.
- Moore said that when it comes to recommending sharpshooting and clover trap management for neighborhoods experiencing social carrying capacity, it is important to him that residents assume the cost. He does not think that scare City dollars should fund the effort.
- Rollo said he would like to take a vote on the general recommendations for trap and euthanasia in neighborhoods and sharpshooting in appropriate greenspaces.

► Rollo asked for a motion to recommend sharpshooting in appropriate greenspaces where cost is assumed by residents in the affected area. Via voice vote, majority indicated "aye." None opposed. Foyut did not vote.

► Rollo asked for a motion to recommend trap and euthanasia using clover traps and automatic notification where euthanasia is via firearm and where cost is assumed by residents in the affected area. Via voice vote, majority indicated "aye." None opposed. Foyut did not vote.

V. ADJOURN
7:40 pm