<u>Memorandum</u>
Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force
27 March 2012
Council Library (Suite #110), City Hall, 401 N. Morton St.

Members Present: Bob Foyut, Josh Griffin, Judy Granbois, Stefano Fiorini, Laurie Ringquist, Sarah Hayes, Thomas Moore and Susannah Smith-Burchell
Staff: Stacy Jane Rhoads; **Public**: Dave Parkhurst

I. Welcome

II. Approval of Minutes –21 March 2012.

- Fiorini asked that the minutes be changed to make clear that the person he spoke with from Cedar Rapids was a biologist, not a government official. Fiorini also said that he is unsure if the Cedar Rapids uses sound-suppression devices in their sharpshooting effort, so he asked that mention of that be removed from minutes.

-- Smith clarified that the criteria offered by tree stand manufacturers about the type of tree suitable for a tree stand recommends a straight, limbless tree at least 3' in circumference, not diameter. Smith also wanted to clarify that harnesses are not used with portable, free-standing, tree stands.

The group approved the minutes from the 21 March 2012 meeting with the above-mentioned changes.

III. Public Comment

Dave Parkhurst said he is impressed with the care and thought that has gone into the process so far. He thanked the Task Force. He disagreed with two things: resident experiencing problems with deer should not have to absorb the cost of management. He said he is willing to put in $100 if that would help, but his neighborhood is not well organized and he does not know if everyone would help. Also, he thinks that the five acre greenspace requirement for hunting is too onerous; hunting could occur on smaller tracts of land.

Kiesling said please know that the group is doing its best, she knows some people are unhappy with the group.

Rhoads clarified that when the Task Force asked for guidance on what area is safe, IDNR advised five acres based on experience of other communities.

IV. Reports From Task Force Members – None

V. Outstanding Issues

A. Tree stands

Rhoads mentioned that at the last meeting, Rollo asked Smith-Burchell to come up with a list of best practices for tree stand placement. Griffin said that placement of a tree stand could be a key component of the orientation.

Smith-Burchell said that the placement of a tree stand requires time and strategy. Smith offered the following:

- A tree should be selected in an area that allows you to travel to, and leave the stand, without ruining your chances of success. Do not cross deer trails entering or exiting your stand location. Ideally, your stand should be downwind of the deer activity or of where you expect to see the deer.

- Bowhunters should try to be between 15-25 yards away from the expected shot location (beds, trails, feeding area). Placing a stand too close to the shot location diminishes the size of the kill zone on the deer, allowing for great chance of a crippling, poorly placed shot or miss.

- Choose larger trees, at least three feet in circumference at the base. Small trees make are more difficult to place a stand securely as well as not being able to blend in with surrounding woods. Trees that are in groups provide better cover to your back and sides helping to break up the silhouette of your human form. It helps with your concealment of potentially reflective surfaces of the tree stand or bow to choose trees in shadows looking out into brighter lit areas.

- There is not a prescribed height for a tree stand, though many hunters prefer to be in the 15-25 foot range. The higher you go, the more difficult shooting angles, the greater the distance between you and the animal, the more possible obstructions to shoot through, and potentially greater risk of death from falling to the hunter. The best determinant is the height at which the cover behind the tree offers the most protection from being spotted.

Griffin said that some hunters will be self-limiting no matter how big some trees are. Unless hunters can use a tree stand they will not hunt the area.

Griffin clarified that you want to be 25 yards from the deer, not 25 yards up the tree.

Griffin said that some entity would have to be identified to conduct the hunter orientation - maybe the Bow Hunters Association might be able to lead an orientation. It might also be possible to get a Hunter Education Instructor if there is one in Monroe County.

Ringquist mentioned that orientation might be something that a IDNR conservation officer could help out with.
Moore asked what exactly the conservation officers would do to help with the tree

stands.

Griffin said that they deal regularly with safety and hunter education, could help develop guidelines and with orientation.

Rhoads said that if the group wants to recommend that the city sign off on the location of tree stands someone in the City will have to have guidance and that is what the conservation officer could provide.

Moore said that he thinks someone should approve each tree stand location.

Hayes said if IDNR would approve each tree stand location, that would be ideal.

Griffin said that Conservation Officers would probably not be positioned to do this, but could help provide guidance at hunter orientation. Guidance could also be provided through the permitting process.

Ringquist said that the first year of identifying a tree stand location would be the hardest. If a Conservation Officer could provide guidance to the City person administering the permit in the first year of the program, then in years subsequent, the administrator would get a feel for approving tree stand locations.

Rinquist also added that all the provisions attached to hunting in greenspace will require ordinance change. The ordinance will also provide for penalties. This would help control for situating tree stands on appropriate sites. In addition to permit revocations, fines could be levied for violations.

Griffin said that at some point, someone will have to write a City permit, someone will have to sign off on. The person issuing the permit will have to sign off on what is or is not an appropriate site. Griffin reminded the group that between the orientation and the permit the hunters are going to have to be trained to identify a good spot or a bad spot.

B. **IDNR Policy Re: Trap and Euthanasia**

Rhoads inquired asked if the clover trap management strategy would fall under IDNR's sharpshooting policy. Griffin replied that IDNR is still in discussion about this as Dr. Caudell's proposal is different than trap and euthanasia using chemical agents. It will likely be subject to IDNR sharpshooting policy, although that has yet to be decided.

C. Timing

Griffin replied that both sharpshooting and trap-and-euthanasia would occur in the winter, when it is cold and deer could be effectively baited. Both would have to occur after hunting season.

Griffin further explained that at Griffy, hunting would be a maintenance provision to follow the reduction effort of sharphooting. The efficacy of sharp shooting depends on deer not being afraid of human beings, so you're trying to draw them into a large area and dispatch them as quickly as possible.

In the green space areas, where hunting would be allowed, hunting would occur first.

D. Measuring Success

Fiorini asked if IDNR keeps hunting records. Griffin replied that is does on a County level, but not on a municipality-specific level. Griffin suggested that the City could require that hunters report back to the City the number of days hunted, hours spent hunting, number of deer harvested and if they used the meat for household consumption or if they donated it. He mentioned that Stewart might be interested in any data the City collects on this.

Fiorini asked about measuring success. In addition to using citizen complaints as a measure, should use some measure of hunter success rate?

Griffin said that a successful archery rate is roughly .08 or .10. Based on whether 1 in 10 hunters get a deer, City can determine whether it should hold a hunt in subsequent years. If at, or above that figure, the City could build in other indices to determine whether a hunt should be held in subsequent years. For example, in Brown County State Park, they hunter effort is .2 -- if 2 in 10 hunters get a deer, the Park does not have a hunt the following year. On the other hand, if more than 2 in 10 hunters get deer, then damage to plant resources is anticipated and the Park will host a hunt the following year.

Ringquist pointed out that, at some point, if the City determines that the deer herd is being successfully managed, then it could decide to suspend hunting.

Foyut said whole reason for recommending managed hunting on greenspace is that to address social carrying capacity concerns. This is a different metric. We have no metric for social capacity. What if many deer are harvested, but a lot of people are still complaining?

Griffin said that as Fiorini pointed out previously, in Cedar Rapids, the perception of taking action is often sufficient to manage social concerns.

Griffin said that the community will have to collect indices over time to determine if hunting should occur or not. For the first few years, you will just have to see how it is working. The first year at Hidden Valley they harvested four deer. The next year they harvested 77, and this last year was 300.

Griffin pointed out that sharpshooting policies require that the permit be written for

a certain number of deer. While the number is somewhat arbitrary, it is a measure. If a permit is written for 25 deer, and 25 are taken quickly, then that is something of a useful measure.

VI. Outline

The group reviewed a possible report outline and made the following comments.

"Measurement and Monitoring" should enjoy its own chapter, but each recommendation should also be accompanied by a measure by which the efficacy of the recommendation can be judged.

Kiesling said that it is important to make clear that the public was invited to comment at each meeting and that the Task Force is a diverse group.

Hayes said she will provide material for the Education/Outreach portion of the report. Hayes pointed out that a good outreach plan is one wherein audiences are specifically identified. Here, there are many audiences – the general public, property owners, special interest group, public safety entities, etc.

Griffin said it is important to distinguish between culling for social carrying capacity reasons and culling for reasons of ecological balance. The public may not understand why a more costly effort is needed at Griffy. Explaining it clearly might help the public understand why hunting is not a good option at the beginning of the restoration effort.

Moore pointed out that it is important to highlight the need for a Deer Management Team to monitor the local situations and to help facilitate recommedations that local officials wish to adopt.

Ringquist replied that who will sit on the Management Team really depends on what the City decides to implement. For that reason, it is hard to spell out precisely who should be on the team.

Smith said she still thinks a match program would be useful wherein owners of 5+ acres of greenspace who want to have their property hunted, could find a hunter. Griffin responded that IDNR runs a similar program. It makes sense that the City could take the database and search by county and then create a Monroe-County specific document to help property owners find hunters.
Griffin said that property owners can choose hunters based on things like experience or scheduling convenience.

VII. Other

Rhoads said that Rollo ask her to tell the group that he will soon be having conversations with BPD, Parks and others in the Administration.

Moore asked if the County could implement its own Earn-a-Buck requirement absent UDZ designation by the State?

Griffin replied that he does not think so. The County is largely rural and is not discussing implementing any managed hunt. In the absence of UDZ designation, he thinks such a County rule would be pre-empted by State regulations. However, he will inquire. But each individual landowner could require that and not be in conflict with State law.

Fiorini asked if such a requirement might chase some hunters away from Monroe County. Smith-Burchell said it would not discourage meat hunters, but might discourage trophy hunters.

Griffin said that he felt this would steer people away until the urban deer zone was enacted. If a UDZ was enacted, then they could harvest two bucks if they harvest a doe. Otherwise, in the Indiana Administrative Code it says that you can only kill one buck a year. In urban deer zones where the deer are a problem, we have amended the rule so that you can harvest two bucks.

Moore asked how this rule was enforced.

Griffin explained that hunters have to check their deer in online and all the conservation officers can see it and once it is entered it has to be brought in to an IDNR check station within 72 hours to have the deer tagged and see if it is a buck or doe. The closest checkpoint in the city is Lake Monroe. People cannot get the meat processed without that metal tag from the IDNR.

Rhoads asked if there was a way to open up more checkpoints.

Griffin said there are a few counties in the state that do not have any at all. Right now they are in the process of creating a telecheck where it would be online for a fee. It would save gas and there would be an application for smart phones.

Kiesling asked if any members wanted to help write any component of the report, specifically, the education, monitoring, urban agriculture and tips for residents sections.

Hayes said she will provide a draft for the education section.

Rhoads said that she will be very busy with a number of other Council initiatives for next 2-3months and will have little time to devote to drafting a document for Task

Force consideration. Granbois replied that Rhoads should get as much done as she can for Task Force review.

Rhoads said that this is the Task Force's report and asked for guidance on "voice."

Hayes said in writing the report, it is important to remain aware of both sides. No one wants to just harm animals, but deer were repopulated back into the state, and now someone has to deal with that. This is not an issue just because people's plants are getting eaten.

Group suggested a graph demonstrating population growth would be helpful.

Hayes said that Rhoads should put together a rough, speculative, draft for Task Force review. Once Task Force members have an opportunity to review and offer feedback, then the draft can be readjusted and the Task Force members can meet to discuss. Group will also have to get together before any presentation to the City Council.

Kiesling suggested that the group meet only after a polished draft is available for review.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.