

MEMORANDUM

JOINT CITY OF BLOOMINGTON-MONROE COUNTY DEER TASK FORCE

Wednesday, 19 September 2012, 5:30 pm

McCloskey Room (#135), City Hall, 401 N. Morton St.

PRESENT: Task Force Members: Stefano Fiorini, Bob Foyut, Josh Griffin, Sarah Hayes, Iris Kiesling (arrived late), Thomas Moore, Laurie Ringquist, Dave Rollo and Susannah Smith Burchell **Staff:** Stacy Jane Rhoads and Dan Sherman.

I. **WELCOME.** Those present introduced themselves.

II. **BRIEF REVIEW OF TELECONFERENCE WITH HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES**

Rollo relayed that last Monday, five members of the Task Force met for a teleconference with Stephanie Boyles Griffin, Senior Director for Wildlife Response, Innovations and Services for the Humane Society of the United States. He said it was a productive meeting that lasted about an hour. Rollo said that the HSUS spoke about its use of immunocontraception in island environments. Rollo communicated that the Task Force excluded immunocontraception from consideration because IDNR does not endorse this method in a free-ranging environment. Rollo said IDNR recently denied an Ogden Dunes request for use of GonaCon in a free ranging environment.

HSUS does recognize that lethal means may be acceptable, but only if human health and safety are threatened. Rollo said that asked about deer affecting ecosystem integrity and that remains to be addressed by HSUS.

III. **DRAFT REVIEW**

Rollo relayed that the point of the meeting is to review and approve the report. The group will review the report chapter by chapter. It is likely that the group will not make its way through the whole document, so it will meet on the 26th to finish the review and vote on the document as a whole.

Task Force authorized staff to make copy and organizational edits.

Vote: 7-0-0

Task Force reviewed, changed and voted to accept the following chapters:

NEIGHBORHOOD DEER

Review of recommendations

Feeding Ban - No changes

Vote: 7-0-0

Fences - No changes

Vote: 6-1 (Moore)-0

Deer and Development - No changes

Vote: 7-0-0

Request to Establish and Urban Deer Zone in Bloomington and Monroe County Land Immediately Surrounding the City

Greenspace Hunting District

Griffin said that, at present, there are few rules limiting hunting in the City. While he understands that the rules the Task Force is proposing are intended to foster greater safety and lower visibility, he thinks the rules might be perceived as cumbersome to a hunter.

The Task Force agreed to make following changes to Rules for Hunters participating in a Greenspace Hunting District:

1. Clarify the language about shooting in the direction of the approved Greenspace district to make clear that the shot shall not leave the perimeter of the District.
2. Clarify that the concealment requirement applies to transportation in and from the greenspace;
3. Clarify use of four-wheelers to make explicit that permission by landowner must be obtained.
4. Add a requirement that the hunter should remain in area until deer has expired.

Vote: 7-0-0

Trap and Kill Management for Pocket Deer -- No changes

Vote: 6-0-1 (Foyut)

After the vote, Griffin brought up his concern with the language “trap and kill.” He said he understands the need to avoid confusion with euthanasia, but that any IDNR permit would be written for “trap and euthanasia.”

Rollo responded that the group decided to use “trap and kill” instead of “trap and euthanize,” because it wishes to avoid euphemisms.

Rhoads said she discussed with this language change with IDNR. If someone asked for a permit for “trap and kill,” they would understand the practical meaning of that as trap and euthanasia. The use of “kill” instead of “euthanasia” reflects the Task Force’s perspective; however, the methodology is the same. Hayes mentioned that the precise language may matter in the ordinance drafting phase, if the City wishes to pursue this. She agrees that the Task Force should not use euphemisms to try to sugar coat this management strategy.

(Kiesling arrived)

Sharpshooting by the USDA in suitable open greenspaces

Foyut asked if the language in this section should make clearer that the issue is not just social and localized, but is also subjective.

Fiorini said he understood Foyut’s point, but subjectivity is part of a range of perception and changes over time.

Foyut said he is comfortable with the language as is, without the addition of “subjective.”

Vote: 7-0-1 (Foyut)

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Do Nothing – No changes

Vote: 8-0-0

Fencing – No changes

Vote: 8-0-0

Feeding Ban

Foyut recommended adding to the Task Force's position that a ban's greatest value is its educational value.

Vote: 8-0-0 (with changes noted above)

Scare Devices, Repellents and Landscape Alteration—No changes

Vote: 8-0-0

Trap and Translocate

Griffin suggested that the group might want to add to the Task Force position, the low availability of release sites – there is no place to take the deer.

Vote: 8-0-0 (with changes noted above)

Contraception

Rinquist said that that the Task Force position should specifically state that not endorsed by the INDR in free-ranging environments.

Griffin added that Gonacon not approved by the State Chemist's Office.

Vote: 8-0-0 (with changes noted above)

Sterilization

Moore suggested that the group should add to Task Force position that position is shaped by the fact that IDNR does not approve this method in a free-ranging environment.

Vote: 8-0-0 (with changes noted above)

Sharpshooting

Griffin suggested adding that sharpshooting must be done in tandem with feeding ban.

Vote: 8-0-0 (with changes noted above)

Trap and Kill

Fiorini suggested adding to the Task Force position that the fact that the deer are acclimated to a site for a sustained period of pre-baiting increases the humanness.

Griffin suggested adding that trap and kill must be done in tandem with feeding ban.

Fiorini said that it should be added to the Task Force position that measuring stress levels is key; if cortisol levels are too high, the program will be aborted.

Vote: 8-0-0 (with changes noted above)

Hunting

Foyut said that the cost should mention that costs include the cost for equipment;

Griffin added that the IDNR offers several license bundles, should change specific cost with "cost for license"

Vote: 8-0-0 (with changes noted above)

Predator Reintroduction – No changes

Vote: 8-0-0

GRIFFY WOODS

- Cut the superfluous couple of paragraphs on page 88.
- Make clearer under “initial reduction” is that the group’s strong preference is for sharpshooting as first preference due to its humaneness and effectiveness.; however, a managed hunt at Griffy is the group’s second choice. This reflects the group’s vote of November 2011.

Vote: 7-1 (Foyut)-0

Vote: 8-0-0, chapter as amended per above

MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING

- List suggestions re: who might serve on a Deer Management Team – e.g., law enforcement, wildlife experts, biologists, etc.
- Under discussion of “Monitoring Vegetation, Fiorini suggested to use titles rather than particular names.

Vote: 8-0-0

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH – no changes

Vote: 8-0-0

(Ringquist had to leave)

PUBLIC OPINION

Fiorini requested moving the “Geography of Concern” narrative and three maps currently to end of Public Opinion section

Vote: 7-0-0, with changes above.

IV. NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, 26 September 2012, 5:30p, Council Chambers. The group will review the rest of the chapters and will vote on the document, as amended. The Task Force should approve the minutes scheduled for approval today, next week.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

David Parkhurst – Live in the southeast part of the city and there are too many deer. He is a gardener and deer reduce the amount of vegetables he can give to Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard. He has not heard anything about deer being donated to the food bank. Rollo said that donation of deer meat is part of the recommendations.

Jay Paul Santa said he loves deer. When he killed one with his car, it broke his heart so he understands that the community has a huge problem with overpopulation. He believes the key is sterilization of male deer. At present, the USDA has not approved sterilization drugs for consumption. All City, State and federal funding should be devoted to a safe-for-consumption sterilization of deer.

Kirby Waldrip suggests using the word “harvest” rather than “kill.” Over 20 years, he has processed 18,000 deer and has talked to twice that many hunters. If a hunt at Griffy were just opened to the public, too many people would want to participate, so maybe the managed hunt is the way to go. If the community goes with sharpshooters, how would the sharpshooters get all the deer out of the woods? Sharpshooters would have to drag all those deer through the forest and that would be a lot of work. He asked: how many would you want sharpshooters to take? They would have to pile the deer under the trees. The sharpshooters would have to gut the deer within 30 minutes if it was warmer than 50 degrees Fahrenheit. How will the sharpshooters transfer 200 deer? As a processor, he is worried about that aspect of hiring sharpshooters. He added that concerns with deer have been noted since 2009; it is ridiculous that it has taken the Task Force this long. He said the Task Force is talking in circles. After a reduction effort at Griffy, you would need to bring hunters in. He said that hunters are not animals; they kill deer because they like to eat them. He said the Task Force should learn about white tails before deciding if white tails have to live or die. They should live, but some should die.

Joe Duell is from Greene County and has a lot of acreage in timber crop. He has some acreage in Southern Indiana and is experiencing a feral hog problem. Any deer reduction requires maintenance. There are predators in Greene County who will be moving this way soon. He hopes the group comes to some conclusion for the sake of the trees.

Angela Goldman is an IDNR Conservation Officer who recently obtained a copy of the Task Force’s draft. She commented that many of the proposed rules for hunters would be City ordinances over which she would not have jurisdiction to enforce. She brought up concerns with hunting age, hunting days and times, mandatory orientation, ATV use, trespass, check in stations -- all of which are governed by State law. Rollo asked Goldman to reduce her concerns to writing.

Rollo said that the Task Force was established in 2010. Group has met since September 2010. The group has tried to come up with recommendations that address many concerns. The group is made up of volunteers and has operated on a shoestring budget.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: 7:35 pm