



City of Bloomington Common Council

Legislative Packet

The Council will meet twice next week

- Monday, 26 November 2012, 6:00 pm – Special Session
- Wednesday, 28 November 2012, 7:30 pm – Committee of the Whole Discussion

Office of the Common Council
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Packet Related Material

Memo

Agenda

Calendar

Notices and Agendas:

None

Legislation for Second Reading at Special Session on Monday, November 26th at 6:00 p.m.:

- **Ord 12-25** To Vacate a Public Parcel - Re: Alley Right-of-Way Running East/West Between South Gentry Street and the B-Line Trail, South of Kirkwood Avenue and North of West 4th Street (REI Investments, Petitioner)
Contact: Lynne Darland at 34-3529 or darlandl@bloomington.in.gov

Please see the weekly [Council Legislative Packet](#) issued for the 31 October 2012 Regular Session for the legislation, summary and related material

Legislation and Background Material for Items Ready for Discussion at the Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, November 28th at 7:30 p.m.

- **App Ord 12-04** To Specially Appropriate from the General Fund, Parks General Fund, Fire Capital Fund, Risk Management Fund, and Rental Inspection Program Fund Expenditures Not Otherwise Appropriated (Appropriating Various Transfers of Funds within the General Fund, Parks General Fund, and Risk Management Fund; and, Appropriating Additional Funds from the Fire Capital Fund, Risk Management Fund and Rental Inspection Program Fund)

Contact:

Mike Trexler at 349-3412 or trexlerm@bloomington.in.gov

Please see the weekly [Council Legislative Packet](#) issued for the 14 November 2012 Regular Session for the legislation, summary and related material

- **Res 12-13** To Accept the Report Entitled “Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship – Recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force” as an Advisory Document
 - Memo from Councilmember Rollo, Sponsor; Letters in Support of Resolution from City Entities and Local Organizations
 - *Contact: Dave Rollo at 339-7916 or rollod@bloomington.in.gov*

Memo

Reminders:

Monday, November 26th

**Special Session
Redistricting Committee**

Chambers at 6:00 p.m.
Council Library after the Special
Session but no sooner than 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 28th

Committee of the Whole

Chambers at 7:30 p.m.

Special Session on Monday, November 26th (at 6:00 p.m.) and Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, November 28th (at 7:30 p.m.)

As noted above there are a number of meetings next week: two on Monday and one on Wednesday. The Special Session on Monday will provide the legally advertised public hearing and second reading for **Ord 12-25** (Vacation of right-of-way just south of West Kirkwood between the B-Line Trail and Gentry Street to make way for a Hyatt Hotel). That material can be found online as indicated above. The Redistricting Committee will meet after the Special Session, but no sooner than 8:00 p.m., to consider redistricting proposals. Lastly, there is a Committee of the Whole on Wednesday to discuss **App Ord 12-04** (End-of-the-year appropriations) and **Res 12-13** (Deer Task Force Report). Materials and summary for the former can be found online as indicated above and for the latter can be found herein.

Res 12-13

Res 12-13 accepts the report of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force as an advisory document. The report is titled [*Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship*](#) (linked). Res 12-13 makes it clear that the report is advisory in nature and does not obligate or bind the Common Council or Mayor to any particular course of action. It will be up to the Council and the Executive to decide how, and if, to move forward with these or other deer management recommendations. The resolution thanks the Task Force for their work and resolves that acceptance of the report does not eclipse the possibility of other management approaches that may come forward that are consistent with IDNR policy and prove to satisfy the criteria of cost, efficacy, humanness, safety and community acceptance.

The Task Force was created by County and City resolutions in 2010. The group was formed in response to concerns expressed by members of the Bloomington Environmental Resources Advisory Council about deer damage at Griffy Woods and in response to a petition signed by over 500 residents calling upon the City and County to establish a task force to address concerns about deer in neighborhoods. Council Res 10-03: *Establishing a Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force* charged this citizen group with exploring ways to address human-deer conflicts, to solicit public opinion, to engage in public education. The group was also charged with submitting advisory recommendations for review by local government.

About the Task Force

The Task Force is composed of 11 members: one appointed by the Mayor, three by the City Council, three by the County Commissioners, one City Councilmember, one County Councilmember, a representative from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Director of Animal Care and Control. Members were appointed based on their interest in the issue, their expertise and their ability to work with people of differing perspectives. Task Force members include animal welfare experts, a wildlife rehabilitator, an ecologist, an avid gardener, a hunter, an anthropologist who studied deer-human conflicts in Scotland and a biologist who studied bear-human conflicts in Japan.

The Task Force members:

Councilmember Dave Rollo (Chair)
County Commissioner Iris Kiesling
Keith Clay, IU Professor of Biology
Stefano Fiorini, Environmental Anthropologist

Bob Foyut, Wildlife Rehabilitator, WildCare
Judith Granbois, gardener and retired editor
Sarah Hayes, CEO, Monroe County Humane Association
Thomas Moore, PhD student, Biology
Laurie Ringquist, Director of Animal Care and Control
Susannah Smith, hunter and competitive archer

Josh Griffin, IDNR (non-voting)

Process

Since September 2010, the Task Force has met almost monthly to consult with experts, review management options, develop a communication plan, solicit and analyze public feedback and work through possible approaches. Throughout this process, the Task Force worked closely with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to learn about deer and to examine various management options. In addition, the Task Force has sought advice from ecologists, anthropologists and biologists from IU, Purdue and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The Task Force has also worked to learn more about the public's concern with deer. All meetings of the Task Force have been open to the public to attend, observe and comment. The group hosted a series of five community outreach meetings in 2011, set up booths at the Farmers' Market and issued a public opinion survey to which over 700 community members responded. The group established a website (www.bloomington.in.gov/deertaskforce) and an e-mail address (deertaskforce@bloomington.in.gov) and developed an extensive set of "[Frequently-Asked Questions](#)." The Task Force has also issued tips for living with deer and developed a [custom list of largely native deer-resistant plants](#).

The Task Force has also reached out to the public through media. The group issued media pieces to educate residents about deer behavior, offer tips for driving during the rut, urge residents not to feed deer, explain the effects of deer herbivory on the Griffy ecosystem, and offer periodic updates on the work of the group. Members of the Task Force were featured on WFIU's *Noon Edition* and have been interviewed by the *Herald-Times*.

Jurisdiction

According to the Indiana Code, wild animals belong to the people of Indiana, and IDNR is charged with protecting and managing Indiana wildlife on behalf of Indiana residents (I.C. §14-22-1-1). IDNR has exclusive jurisdiction over deer and other wildlife. By law, the IDNR is required to consider the welfare of wild animals, the relationship of wild animals to other animals and the welfare of people

(I.C. §14-22-2-6). Any proposal to care for, manage or otherwise regulate deer on public or private property must first be approved by the IDNR. IDNR sets the boundaries within which deer management options can be selected, but leaves it up to communities to decide specifically how and if management should occur. (IDNR, *Human Conflict with White-tailed Deer*, 2012).

Recommendations

The Task Force recommendations pivot around two very different, but related concerns with deer: the effect of deer on the Griffy ecosystem and the concerns expressed by residents about deer in neighborhoods and urban areas. When it comes to deer at Griffy Woods, the report points to research by IU ecologists demonstrating ecosystem damage by deer – native tree seedlings are not regenerating; herbaceous plant species are severely compromised and possibly becoming locally extinct; invasive species are taking over some areas; the forest understory is unnaturally open; and understory-reliant birds and other animals are losing habitat.

When it comes to deer in neighborhoods, the Task Force makes clear that analysis is not as straight forward. State biologists advise that Bloomington’s urban deer are not starving and are not close to reaching biological carrying capacity – the number of deer the suburban environment could support. Instead, biologists direct that deer abundance in neighborhoods is best indicated by “social carrying capacity,” defined as the level of deer-related interferences in human activities that residents find acceptable. The feedback received by the Task Force via e-mails, surveys and community outreach meetings, points out that many – but certainly not all – residents have reached their carrying capacity for deer. Much of the resident concern with deer abundance is localized to the southeastern quadrant of the City.

IDNR advises that neighborhoods should not be sanitized of deer simply because deer are an inconvenience to humans, nor should residents endure unreasonable property damage. Instead, there must be a careful balance among and between the needs of people, deer, other organisms and our shared environment. According to the Task Force’s Executive Summary, it’s recommendations are intended to foster a better balance. The Task Force filtered its recommendations through the lenses of humaneness, safety, cost and efficacy. As recounted in the *Executive Summary*, the Task Force’s recommendations are as follows:

1. Griffy Woods

The work of scientists at the IU Research and Teaching Preserve indicates that the deer population at the Griffy Woods is far higher than comparable forests in the region – as much as 13 times greater. Griffy’s deer density appears to be detrimental to forest biodiversity and may be restructuring the overall forest

community. Deer browsing at Griffy is compromising the survival of many herbaceous species and severely hampering the regeneration of many native tree seedlings. Tree seedlings represent the next generation of forest canopy trees. Browsing also encourages the establishment of invasive species. Excessive deer browsing poses the possibility of producing an "alternate stable state" - a condition in which a forest would never return to its natural state, even if browsing pressure were diminished by a permanent reduction of deer densities. Because of the clear evidence of environmental damage, we recommend the following:

- **Sharpshooting for immediate, substantial and humane reduction.**

After consulting with ecologists, researchers and biologists from both the State and federal government, the Task Force recommends that deer should be managed through a local government-financed sharpshooting effort. To restore the ecological integrity of Griffy, a substantial number of deer need to be culled soon to avoid irreversible ecological damage. Sharpshooting is the most efficient way to cull the greatest number of deer in the most humane way possible. All deer culled in this effort should be donated to the local food bank. This effort is both an environmental and social service good.

Should sharpshooting not be feasible due to cost or other considerations, the Task Force recommends that a managed hunt is the second-best way to reduce the deer herd at Griffy. Whether reduced via sharpshooting or managed hunting, any deer effort at Griffy will require maintenance. It will be up to local government to decide whether to maintain the herd through sharpshooting, managed hunting or other means.

2. Neighborhood Deer

Neighborhood deer are different. Unlike their rural counterparts, urban and suburban deer have small home ranges, high survival rates and significant reproductive potential. Absent limiting factors, a suburban deer herd can double every three to four years within a relatively small geographic area. A typical suburban deer lives an average of 8-12 years. Long before an urban deer herd reaches biological carrying capacity, residents often reach their social carrying capacity for deer. The feedback received by the Task Force indicates that many residents have reached this point.

Instead of waiting for the deer herd to grow to a level at which virtually all residents perceive deer to be problematic and to a level at which deer begin to suffer from disease, starvation and more vehicle collisions, we should take preventive measures. The Task Force recommends that responsible measures be implemented now to limit herd growth and to limit the need to apply more wide-spread and costly deer management measures in the future.

For deer in urban and suburban environments, the Task Force recommends the following:

- **Prohibit the Feeding of Deer**

Many residents feed deer with the best intentions; however, feeding is not in the best interest of deer nor in the interest of neighborly relations. Improper diets provided during feeding can create health problems for deer and can increase the rate and spread of disease. While a city-wide feeding ban is necessary, alone it is not sufficient. Deer commonly browse on plants not intended as “deer food” and any ban on intentional feeding does little to deter deer from many neighborhoods.

- **Raise Fence Height Limits**

At present, city residents are allowed to construct fences up to eight feet in height in backyards and up to four feet in front yards and on corner lots. Biologists advise that an eight foot fence will exclude most deer, but a ten foot fence will exclude just about all deer. As most, but not all urban gardens are located in backyards, the Task Force recommends that fence height limits be raised to ten feet in backyards and be restored to the pre-2007 allowance of eight feet in front yards.

- **Deer and Development**

We might also mitigate deer damage through land use practices. For example, when a developer proposes to build a new project, the project is subject to layers of review to ensure the project’s environmental soundness. While features such as karst, stormwater, tree cover and erosion are part of the analysis, wildlife is not. It should be. Much development fragments wildlife habitat and proliferates “edge” environments. Deer thrive on the edge. By filtering a development proposal through the added lenses of wildlife displacement and habitat fragmentation, we have the opportunity to try to prevent deer-human conflicts before they occur. Similarly, we should consider the ways in which corridors might be used to better direct movement of deer around or through a community rather than dispersing deer throughout.

- **Urban Deer Zone -- City of Bloomington and Monroe County land immediately surrounding the City**

The State of Indiana created Urban Deer Zones (UDZs) in response to growing concerns of Indiana residents living in urban and suburban areas. The intent of a UDZ is to reduce the size of urban deer herds to better mirror the social carrying capacity of the community by extending the hunting season, increasing the bag limit and requiring that hunters take an antlerless deer before taking an antlered deer. By focusing primarily on female deer, this “Earn-a-Buck” requirement is an

effective management tool to control and reduce deer numbers. UDZ status does not permit hunting where hunting is otherwise prohibited.

IDNR has advised that the area appropriate for a local UDZ may include the City of Bloomington plus Monroe County land immediately surrounding Bloomington. IDNR will not approve UDZ designation for the county only, absent inclusion of the city. The Task Force recommends that local officials seek UDZ designation for the city and applicable areas of the county, but that any hunting within city limits be strictly regulated and limited to five contiguous acres of greenspace. The boundaries of the UDZ would be defined by roads, geographic indicators and other easily-identified markers. The following describes how a UDZ would work in the county and how it would work in the city.

Monroe County

Both bow-and-arrow and firearm hunting are allowed in Monroe County, outside the City of Bloomington's corporate boundaries. Most county land is decidedly more rural than land within the city and hunting has been practiced for many years. To strengthen bow hunting efforts in the county, the Task Force recommends that local officials seek UDZ status for appropriate areas of Monroe County. IDNR has advised that the whole of Monroe County is not suitable for UDZ designation as much of the county is state-owned land or otherwise rural; however, if paired with UDZ designation for the city, IDNR may approve a request for UDZ status for the concentric area of Monroe County land surrounding the corporate boundaries of Bloomington. Such designation of county land could lower deer densities and potentially prevent immigration of deer into more urban areas.

City of Bloomington

At present, it is illegal to discharge a firearm within city limits, but there is no prohibition on the discharge of a bow and arrow on private property. Therefore, city residents may currently bow hunt on private property without further city regulation, provided these residents obtain a hunting license and follow all State requirements. Some residents are already hunting, or allowing hunting, on their properties. We anticipate that even more may do so as they become frustrated with deer.

The absence of rules governing bow and arrow discharge is most likely a historical artifact, rather than an intentional silence. While a number of communities successfully implement urban deer hunts in areas of human habitation, in some areas of Bloomington, it's just not suitable. First, many of the neighborhoods experiencing the greatest concern with deer abundance are densely settled and keeping hunting at an adequate distance from occupied structures, from roadways, sidewalks, trails and other public ways, makes hunting in neighborhoods problematic. Secondly, in dense, core neighborhoods, lots are small and yards back up to yards. Hunting in this sort of environment would almost guarantee that the practice would be very visible and that a deer shot in one yard may expire in another, causing tension among neighbors. Hunting in these urban situations raises more problems than it solves, and, as some have observed, is just not in the spirit of Bloomington's community character.

However, hunting is an age-old, cost-effective way to reduce and maintain deer herds at sustainable levels. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the option of hunting in densely-settled neighborhoods should be taken off the table, and the practice limited to five or more contiguous acres of greenspace where rigorous hunter proficiency and safety guidelines would be required. In this context, greenspace is operationalized using the City of Bloomington Environmental Commission's definition: a permeable surface (forested, shrub/grass covered areas, parks, golf courses, cemeteries and agricultural land) more than ten feet from any human-made development such as roads, parking lots and buildings.

- **Localized Management for Pocket Deer**

Allow for Trap and Kill Management Using Automatic Notification and Stress Level Monitoring

Deer tucked away in many neighborhoods have ample food, water and cover, and little reason to migrate out of residential areas. Any hunting allowance on five or

more acres of greenspace will not address most of the pocket deer living in Bloomington neighborhoods. On the advice of State and federal biologists, neither hunting nor sharpshooting is suitable for neighborhoods experiencing the greatest deer pressure. Instead, the safest form of lethal management is a trap and kill effort.

The Task Force specifically recommends a form of trap and kill that employs an automatic notification system whereby biologists are notified as soon as a deer is trapped. Automatic notification is intended to minimize the amount of time a deer is trapped, thereby reducing stress to the deer. Deer are able to endure short-term stress and urban deer are acclimated to the presence of the fences and less likely to perceive the trap as anomalous. Deer would be baited for a few weeks leading up to the implementation of the project. Acclimated to both the cage and the food source, deer are less likely to perceive the closing of the trap as an “event” and less likely to be stressed by closure. Death would be administered via gunshot. To ensure that deer stress and suffering are minimized, biologists conducting the project would be measuring cortisol (stress) levels of deer throughout the process. If biologists determine that cortisol levels are rising as the project is conducted, the project would stop. This technique requires an adequate earthen backstop, and not all properties will be suitable for the effort

Deer do not recognize human-created boundaries, such as property lines. Meaningful and effective deer management must occur on a larger scale. Therefore, IDNR will not approve this technique as an effort by, and on behalf of, an individual property owner with a small parcel. Instead, request for this management technique must derive from a larger management unit, such as a large landowner, a homeowners’ association, a neighborhood association, a business park or government. Because not everyone experiences deer to be problematic, the cost of this effort should be borne by residents perceiving deer to be a problem. Neighbors could pool funds.

- **Sharpshooting in appropriate greenspaces**

Another way to realize a quick reduction in the deer herd proximate to neighborhoods is to conduct a sharpshooting effort on greenspaces near neighborhoods to prevent immigration into neighborhoods. Sites are to be determined by the entity requesting the permit in association with the agency performing the sharpshooting. Sharpshooting requires a permit from the IDNR. The Task Force recommends that authorization for sharpshooting should also require permission from the City. Again, the IDNR will not approve this technique as an effort by, and on behalf of, an individual property owner with a small parcel. Instead, request for this management technique must derive from a larger

management unit, such as a large landowner, a homeowners' association, a neighborhood association, a business park or government. Cost is to be borne by residents perceiving deer to be a problem.

3. Measurement and Monitoring

There is still much the community has to learn about deer. By resolution, the Task Force will sunset once it submits its recommendations to State and local government. However, deer are here to stay, and the "deer issue" is not going away anytime soon. We offer a number of suggestions for monitoring the deer herd and for administering any deer management strategies local government wishes to adopt. Recommendations for monitoring include, but are not limited to: establishment of a Deer Management Team, tracking deer-vehicle collisions regularly and in a way that accounts for traffic volume; establishing a deer complaint system; engaging citizen scientists to help participate in regular "e-deer" counts similar to the way bird watchers register their sightings; conducting pellet counts and monitoring urban vegetation.

4. Education

While the Task Force has reached out to the community to inform them of issues of deer feeding, fawns, driving tips, deer behavior and other topics, the public should continually be informed about these issues. Additionally, any deer management plans implemented by local government will require clear communication with and to the public. For these reasons, the Task Force provides a proposed outreach and communication plan.

The Task Force makes clear that it is just not up to government to solve issues of local deer concern -- citizens have a part to play too. The Task Force calls upon members of the to take measures to mitigate deer damage and neighbor conflict, by planting deer-resistant plants, using effective fencing, stopping the intentional feeding of deer, being cautious about driving during the rut and educating themselves about deer behavior.

Moving the Conversation Forward

This report represents one juncture in a continuing conversation about how to best co-exist with deer. The Task Force makes clear that it appreciates the controversial and emotional nature of this topic. Pointing out that Bloomington is a compassionate community that cares about animals, nature and each other, the Task Force calls upon the community to approach this topic with the hallmark traits that make our community great: kindness and respect.

**AGENDA
BLOOMINGTON COMMON COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION
6:00 P.M., MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SHOWERS BUILDING, 401 N. MORTON ST.**

I. ROLL CALL

II. AGENDA SUMMATION

III. LEGISLATION FOR SECOND READING AND RESOLUTIONS

1. Ordinance 12-25 To Vacate a Public Parcel -- Re: Alley Right-of-Way Running East/West Between South Gentry Street and the B-Line Trail, South of Kirkwood Avenue and North of West 4th Street (REI Investments, Petitioner)

Actions taken on November 7, 2012:

Special Session	Motion to Schedule for Second Reading at Special Session on November 26, 2012	7 - 1
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Committee of the Whole (after Public Hearing)	Do Pass	4 - 0 - 4
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IV. COUNCIL SCHEDULE

V. ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE AND AGENDA
BLOOMINGTON COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
7:30 P.M., WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SHOWERS BUILDING, 401 N. MORTON ST.

Chair: Dorothy Granger

1. Appropriation Ordinance 12-04 To Specially Appropriate From the General Fund, Parks General Fund, Fire Capital Fund, Risk Management Fund, and Rental Inspection Program Fund Expenditures Not Otherwise Appropriated (Appropriating Various Transfers of Funds within the General Fund, Parks General Fund, and Risk Management Fund; and, Appropriating Additional Funds from the Fire Capital Fund, Risk Management Fund and Rental Inspection Program Fund)

Asked to Attend: Mike Trexler, Controller

2. Resolution 12-13 To Accept the Report Entitled “Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship – Recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force” as an Advisory Document

Asked to Attend: Sponsor: Councilmember Dave Rollo
Representatives of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe
County Deer Task Force



City of Bloomington
Office of the Common Council

To Council Members
From Council Office
Re Weekly Calendar – 26-30 November 2012

Monday, 26 November

4:00 pm Council for Community Accessibility, McCloskey
5:00 pm Bloomington Human Rights Commission, McCloskey
6:00 pm Common Council – Special Session, Council Chambers
8:00 pm Common Council Redistricting Committee, Council Library

Tuesday, 27 November

4:00 pm Board of Park Commissioners, Council Chambers
5:30 pm Bloomington Public Transportation Corporation Board of Directors, Public Transportation Center, 130 W. Grimes Lane

Wednesday, 28 November

10:00 am Metropolitan Planning Organization-Technical Advisory Committee, McCloskey
2:00 pm Hearing Officer, Kelly
4:00 pm Board of Housing Quality Appeals, McCloskey
4:30 pm Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Commission, Hooker Room
6:30 pm Metropolitan Planning Organization - Citizens' Advisory Committee, McCloskey
7:30 pm Common Council – Committee of the Whole, Council Chambers

Thursday, 29 November

11:00 am Monroe County Suicide Prevention Coalition – Awareness Committee, Kelly
11:00 am Monroe County Suicide Prevention Coalition – Training Committee, Dunlap
12:00 pm Monroe County Suicide Prevention Coalition, Hooker Room
5:15 pm Monroe County Solid Waste Management District – Citizens' Advisory Committee, McCloskey

Friday, 30 November

There are no meetings scheduled for this day.

Posted and Distributed: Wednesday, 21 November 2012

RESOLUTION 12-13

TO ACCEPT THE REPORT ENTITLED “COMMON GROUND: TOWARD BALANCE AND STEWARDSHIP – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT CITY OF BLOOMINGTON-MONROE COUNTY DEER TASK FORCE” AS AN ADVISORY DOCUMENT

- WHEREAS, The Common Council passed Resolution 10-03: Establishing a Joint City of Bloomington – Monroe County Deer Task Force, creating a citizen group to explore ways to address human-deer conflicts, to solicit public opinion, to engage in public education and to submit advisory recommendations for review by local government and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources;
- WHEREAS, The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has exclusive jurisdiction over deer and other wildlife per I.C. §14-22-1-1, but allows communities to develop deer management strategies that suit the unique needs of each community, provided the strategies are congruent with State law and policy;
- WHEREAS, The Task Force members were selected based on their expertise, their ability to keep an open mind and their ability to work with others of differing opinions;
- WHEREAS, The Task Force is composed of 11 members with backgrounds in animal welfare, wildlife rehabilitation, biology, social science, gardening, hunting and local government;
- WHEREAS, Since September 2010, the Task Force has met to explore deer management approaches, educate and reach out to the community, assess community sentiment, review the science and consult with experts;
- WHEREAS, The Task Force has held over 25 meetings wherein the public was invited to attend, observe and record what happened and wherein public comment was provided at each meeting;
- WHEREAS, In addition, the Task Force held five community outreach meetings, issued a public opinion survey and established an e-mail address to solicit public input;
- WHEREAS, The Task Force has issued several media pieces to advise residents on how to co-exist with deer, has appeared on local radio and has established a website and an extensive set of “Frequently Asked Questions” to educate the public about community deer;
- WHEREAS, In accordance with its enabling legislation, the Task Force submits its recommendations in the form of a report entitled *Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship – Recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force (Report)*;
- WHEREAS, The Report is an advisory document and, as such, does not obligate or bind the Common Council or Mayor to any particular course of action;
- WHEREAS, Given the advisory nature of the document, it will be up to the legislative and executive branches to decide how, and if, to move forward with these or other deer management recommendations based on conformity with Indiana Department of Natural Resources policy and on matters of cost, efficacy, humaneness, safety and community feedback;
- WHEREAS, As outlined in Resolution 10-03, the Task Force shall sunset once it submits its recommendations;
- WHEREAS, The report of the Task Force is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit A;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

SECTION 1. The Council and Mayor thank the members of Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force for the difficult work they have performed and find that the Task Force has fulfilled its charge.

SECTION 2. The Task Force Report entitled *Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship – Recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force* is hereby accepted as an advisory document.

SECTION 3. Acceptance of this Report as an advisory document does not eclipse the possibility of other management approaches that may come forward that are consistent with Indiana Department of Natural Resources policy and prove to satisfy criteria of cost, efficacy, humaneness, safety and community acceptance.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this _____ day of _____, 2012.

TIMOTHY MAYER, President
Bloomington Common Council

ATTEST:

REGINA MOORE, Clerk
City of Bloomington

PRESENTED by me to the Mayor of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this _____ day of _____, 2012

REGINA MOORE, Clerk
City of Bloomington

SIGNED and APPROVED by me upon this _____ day of _____, 2012.

MARK KRUZAN, Mayor
City of Bloomington

SYNOPSIS

This resolution thanks the members of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force for the difficult work they have performed and finds that the Task Force has fulfilled its charge. It also accepts the Report as an advisory document. Given the advisory nature of the recommendations, it will be up to elected officials to decide how, and if, to move forward with any of the recommendations. Acceptance of this document as advisory does not eclipse the possibility of other management strategies that may come forward that prove to satisfy criteria of cost, efficacy, humaneness, safety and community acceptance and that are congruent with Indiana Department of Natural Resources policy. In accordance with its enabling legislation, the Task Force ends its charge and expires with the submission of its Report.

Link to Report

Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship: Recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force



**City of Bloomington
Office of the Common Council**

To: Council Members

**From: Dave Rollo, Council Member, District IV &
Chair of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force**

Re: Res 12-13: To Accept the Report Entitled “Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship – Recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Deer Task Force” as an Advisory Document

Date: 21 November 2012

In 2010 the Bloomington City Council and the Monroe County Commissioners created the Joint City of Bloomington-Monroe County Joint Deer Task Force. The city resolution directed the group to explore and investigate the deer situation in our community, engage in public outreach and to draft advisory recommendations for review by the City, County and IDNR. The work of the Task Force is complete and the report - *Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship* - is offered as an advisory document.

The issue of deer overabundance is a human-created problem. Humans have eliminated non-human predators such as wolves and mountain lions while simultaneously creating a crazy-quilt of fragmented habitat – the “edge” environments that deer need to thrive. As a result, deer are thriving and are expected to continue to do so.

Biologists advise that deer in Bloomington and Monroe County are not at biological carrying capacity. Indeed, the biological carrying capacity of urban environments and the Midwest is almost limitless. Some urban environments can support 100-200 deer per square mile. Because of the substantial forage present in urban environments, the local deer population will likely grow. In an optimal habitat, a deer population may double every 3-4 years. Growing populations lead to increased deer-human conflict that may manifest in grazing of gardens, hazards to people and pets, and increased probability of deer vehicle collisions. Deer are also proven to have severely degraded a local natural treasure, the Griffy Nature Preserve. In the report, we offer evidence that deer are damaging, perhaps permanently, the ecological diversity of Griffy Preserve. We also offer, by means of a survey, evidence that some residents may be at, or near, social carrying capacity in some areas of the city.

The Task Force Report presents a variety of non-lethal and lethal recommendations. Each recommendation was filtered through the lenses of efficacy, cost, safety and humaneness. With the help of the three animal welfare experts on the Task Force, the group developed a *Humane Deer Management Position Statement*.

The group’s non-lethal recommendations mostly address deer damage to property. These strategies are useful – and necessary – for residents to mitigate grazing in their yards, but these,

alone, cannot address deer overabundance and the likelihood of population growth. The group explored non-lethal approaches to population control. Trapping and relocating deer is expensive, highly stressful to the deer, many deer do not survive transport and there are insufficient release sites. We also explored sterilization and contraception. At this time, the IDNR does not endorse the use of these methods in a free-ranging environment. Because contraception is costly, requires that the deer population be closed and the bioaccumulative effects are not known, the Task Force determined that contracepting deer is not a viable option. The recommendations for lethal action were not made lightly.

This is not an easy issue. It is complex and there is no one-size-fits all approach that will address the different issues of deer damage at Griffy and resident concerns with deer in neighborhoods. These are *advisory* recommendations issued by volunteers who have done their best to review the science, consult with the experts, listen to the community and develop recommendations that are in the best interest of deer, people, other organisms and our shared environment. This issue is not going away anytime soon and the Task Force makes it clear that any management effort requires both maintenance and monitoring.

It is important that we all learn to coexist with deer. Co-existence requires responsible stewardship and a respect for animals and each other. The Task Force advisory recommendations are offered in this spirit.

Letters of Support

19 October 2012

Dear Bloomington City Council:

I write on behalf of the Bloomington Parks and Recreation's Environmental Resources Advisory Council (ERAC). ERAC's mission is to provide technical advice to the Bloomington Parks Department on environmental issues. ERAC has been concerned about the ecological diversity and integrity of the Griffy Woods ecosystem as a result of high deer densities since June 2009. The Griffy Lake Master Plan (2008) stated that high deer densities were a problem that would likely need to be addressed by the City. In 2009, ERAC wrote a letter, co-signed by the Environmental Commission, requesting the City form a Task Force to examine the effects of deer in Bloomington and specifically in Griffy Woods. Since that time, ERAC has closely followed the discussions of the Task Force and several of our members have attended sessions of the Deer Task Force.

The Deer Task Force has now finished its study and has released a lengthy and detailed report outlining their recommendations for the management of deer both in Griffy Woods and in residential areas of the City of Bloomington. Deer in the Griffy Woods area are dramatically altering the ecological community. Griffy Lake Nature Preserve is the largest City park and has great biodiversity, including at least 565 plant species, almost 100 mammal species, 160 bird species, and 50 reptile and amphibian species (Griffy Lake Management Plan 2008). However, this biodiversity is being threatened by an unnatural abundance of a single species, white-tailed deer.

A study of deer on the IU Research and Teaching Preserve portion of the Griffy Woods area showed deer densities 13 times greater than other nearby forest preserves. In addition, deer enclosure experiments at Griffy Woods have shown that abundance, size, and flowering of spring wildflowers is significantly reduced in the presence of deer and many of these plant species may be declining to local extinction. In addition, there are very few native hardwood tree seedlings growing outside of deer enclosures in Griffy Woods. Without management of the deer population, the diversity and ecological integrity of the forest ecosystem will be reduced, possibly irreversibly so.

The members of ERAC voted unanimously at our October 2012 meeting to support the recommendations of the Bloomington Deer Task Force. We strongly encourage the City Council to accept the Deer Task Force's report as written and to support and implement their conclusions and recommendations. Failure to do so will almost certainly harm the biodiversity at Griffy Woods, harming both many species of plants and animals and the future diversity of this forest.

Sincerely,

Angie Shelton
Chair, Environmental Resources Advisory Council

ERAC Members:

Angie Shelton, Chair

Melissa Clark, Vice Chair

Mike Litwin

William Jones

Barbara Restle

Cathy Meyer

Jeff Ehman

Cem Basman

Dave Rollo (City Council representative)



Monroe County's
Identify and Reduce Invasive Species

8358 N. Mt. Tabor Rd.
Ellettsville, IN 47429

November 15, 2012

Dear Members of the City Council:

I am writing on behalf of Monroe County – Identify and Reduce Invasive Species, a local group dedicated to decreasing the impact of invasive species in Monroe County, to support the recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington – Monroe County Deer Task Force (Deer Task Force) for deer reduction.

The environmental damage being caused by deer in Bloomington natural areas like Griffy Woods is clear and compelling. Our particular concern is the increase in invasive plant species caused by deer over browsing. The overpopulation of deer is resulting in heavy browse to native plants, in some cases such that bare ground is left. This bare ground is readily colonized by invasive plants like Japanese stiltgrass and garlic mustard. The deer exclosures established at Griffy Woods and the data collected by Dr. Angie Shelton clearly show the dramatic damage being caused to the forest. As Dr. Shelton accurately put it, "Right now, we are sacrificing the entire ecosystem for one species. We are holding deer above everything."

Landowners in the Bloomington area are spending increasing time and money controlling invasive plants in an effort to reestablish native plants on their land. However, until deer numbers are reduced, native establishment will be hindered by deer browse. Action must be taken to reduce deer numbers.

The Deer Task Force has recommended sharpshooting or a managed hunt to reduce deer populations in Griffy Woods, and we support these recommendations as a common sense solution to the problem. It is time to move forward with these recommendations and decrease the forest damage that is occurring now.

Sincerely,

Ellen M. Jacquart
Chair, MC-IRIS



**City of Bloomington
Environmental Commission**

November 19, 2012

To the Members of the Common Council:

The City of Bloomington Environmental Commission is writing to you in support of the recommendations of the Joint City of Bloomington – Monroe County Deer Task Force (Deer Task Force) for deer management.

The Bloomington Environmental Commission is a citizen's advisory board that is tasked with promoting environmentally responsible behavior by the City and its residents. We believe, therefore, that the issue of deer management is one that falls within our area of interest and concern.

For the past several years, one of the ways that the Environmental Commission has sought to increase its community outreach and involvement has been by encouraging local residents to practice natural landscaping. In order to mitigate the damage that deer inflict upon residents' vegetable and flower gardens, we suggest that residents use deer-resistant plants, fences, and other deterrents. While we continue to support such types of individual responsibility, we also recognize the need for a more concentrated effort in addressing the deer overpopulation in Bloomington.

At the October 25 meeting of the Environmental Commission, a representative of the Deer Task Force gave us a detailed presentation of their report. It is evident to us that the Deer Task Force conducted a thorough investigation regarding the current state of deer in Bloomington, as well as feasible solutions. Based on our discussion, we understand the responsibility our community has regarding this issue, and it is our opinion that the suggestions presented in this report are not only exhaustive, but ultimately the best recommendations available.

Sincerely,

The City of Bloomington Indiana, Environmental Commission



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

401 N Morton St Suite 130
PO Box 100
Bloomington IN 47402

p 812.349.3418
f 812.349.3520

November 19, 2012

Dear City Council:

I am contacting you on behalf of the City of Bloomington's Commission on Sustainability to endorse the recent Deer Task Force Report "Common Ground: Toward Balance and Stewardship." We support the implementation of its recommendations to address conflicts between our community and a rapidly increasing deer population.

We feel the task force has done a great job researching available options and soliciting input from the community on what has proved to be a controversial topic, as it was when the question was raised several years ago about whether or not to allow deer hunting in Brown County State Park. The report nicely summarizes pros and cons of various lethal and non-lethal methods of controlling the deer population, making it clear that lethal options do need to be considered.

While the deer do not appear to be at ecological carrying capacity for this area, it is clear that they are impacting other species and vegetation, especially in specific locations like Griffy. Steps must be taken to preserve the ecological diversity of our greenspaces. The Commission on Sustainability is also particularly concerned about protecting vegetable gardens, as we believe urban agriculture is key to ensuring that Bloomington and its surrounding community will have adequate and healthful food for many years to come.

With these goals in mind, we support the recommendations of the task force to allow increased fence heights, prohibit the feeding of deer, create an Urban Deer Zone (UDZ), and allow sharpshooting in certain areas. Thank you for your consideration of the Deer Task Force Report and its recommendations. We look forward to seeing your support of the proposed control plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie Sullivan
Chair, Bloomington Commission on Sustainability