



Town of Carlisle

Deer Control Committee

66 Westford Street
Carlisle, MA 01741

Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2020

Zoom Meeting 7:00 PM

Committee members present: Jonathan DeKock (Chair), Todd Thorsen, John Keating, Barney Arnold, Alex Parra; None absent.

Community members: Stephen Keele, Jeannie Geneczko, George Michalik
Chair Jonathan DeKock opened the meeting at 7:04 PM.

Agenda Item 1: **Approval of May 12 Joint Board of Selectmen (BOS)/Deer Control Committee meeting minutes**

Minutes of the May 12, 2020 meeting were approved (4-0-1); Todd Thorsen did not attend and is the abstention.

Agenda Item 2: **Approval of June 4 Deer Control Committee meeting minutes**

Minutes of the June 4, 2020 meeting were approved (4-0-1); Alex Parra did not attend and is the abstention.

Agenda Item 3: **Vote on recommendation for new Deer Control Committee member to be sent to the BOS**

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Stephen Keele has sent the Deer Control Committee background information about his qualifications and has asked to be considered as a member of the Deer Control Committee.

Motion to recommend Stephen Keele to the BOS as a new Deer Control Committee member passed 5-0-0.

Jonathan DeKock to send recommendation to Tim Goddard, BOS, along with Stephen's background information that he provided to the Deer Control Committee.

Agenda Item 4: **Vote on recommendation for new Deer Agent to be sent to the BOS**

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Our current charter requires that the Deer Agent be a member of the Deer Control Committee and a hunter. That limits the Committee to two choices, John Keating and Stephen Keele. John Keating is not interesting in serving as Deer Agent, as his main interest on the Committee is promote deer control in the Town of Carlisle. Stephen Keating is interested in the position and has stated that he is up for the job and working toward putting together a good plan for the 2020 hunt.

(Barney Arnold)

- Question for Stephen: How do you see building bridges with the community-at-large?

(Stephen Keele)

- Education is a priority. For example, promoting the general safety of bow hunting and the trail setbacks will be key to make trail walkers feel safe during the hunt season.

Motion to recommend Stephen Keele to the BOS as a new Deer Agent passed 5-0-0.
Jonathan DeKock to send recommendation to Tim Goddard, BOS.

Agenda Item 5: Discuss advertising for open slot on the Deer Control Committee

(Jonathan DeKock)

- After the BOS public hearing on June 9, Dejan Bojanic resigned from the Deer Control Committee. Moreover, the Carlisle Police Department does not feel that it is necessary to have a police liaison to the Committee.
- Should we advertise the open position?
- We need a letter from the Chief of Police stating his position as well on behalf of the police department.

(Barney Arnold)

- We could have the BOS do the reappointing at the same time we drop the police liaison from the Deer Control Committee.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- We need to make adjustments to the charter to reflect the dropping of the police liaison. Barney Arnold to take up this task.
- We could have a special committee meeting to approve revisions to the charter.
- Barney Arnold to circulate revised charter to the committee to see if any additional changes are warranted.

(Alex Parra)

- New committee member could be any citizen from Carlisle, not just a hunter.

Motion to change charter to replace police liaison with a citizen-at large from Carlisle that does not have to be a hunter passed 5-0-0.

(Alex Parra)

- It is customary in the Town to advertise open positions on boards and committees.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- We could put an advertising for the open Deer Control Committee position in the Mosquito.
- We could also send the advertising to an e-mail group like cityinthewoods, as well as hunters in the program and the Town at large.

(Barney Arnold)

- Will follow up with Kate Reid, Chair, BOS, to see if they want to post a general Mosquito advertising for all open committee positions. If not, we could end the advertising directly to the Mosquito, using the Deer Control Committee e-mail alias for all correspondence.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- George Michalik has expressed interest in the open committee position.
- After advertising for a week in the Mosquito, the committee will interview interested candidates.

Agenda Item 6: Discuss location of proficiency testing and interviews

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Previously done at Concord Rod and Gun Club (CRGC).
- With the departure of Dejan Bojanic, Dan recommends that we draft an official letter to CRGC that Dejan can take to their Board of Directors if we are interested in holding proficiency exams and interviews there.

(Stephen Keele)

- Volunteered the use of his property in Carlisle for the exams and interviews.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- What would be the setback if we were to use Stephen's property?

(John Keating)

- There is no setback requirement, as anyone can practice shooting a bow on their private property without restrictions.

(Stephen Keele)

- As a member of the Westford Sportsman club, we could potentially hold the exam there. Would be happy to look into availability.

(Barney Arnold)

- Would recommend using one of the two clubs vs private property.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Let's try the Westford club first before sending a letter to CRGC. This will be an action item for Stephen. If that doesn't work out, Alex Parra will be happy to draft a letter to CRGC that is first reviewed by Town Council.

Agenda Item 7: **Discuss revised plan based on BOS feedback**

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Per the June 9 BOS Open Hearing, the following recommendations were sent back to the Deer Control Committee.

- 1) To not have a net increase in the number of parcels hunted
- 2) To not have a net increase in the number of days that are hunted
- 3) To not have a net increase in the number of simultaneous hunters
- 4) To require hunters to have an antlerless deer permit (ADP)
- 5) To add clarity on the proposal for hunting within the 500' dwelling setbacks
- 6) To address the concern raised regarding individuals not feeling safe on trails
- 7) To request that MassWildlife conduct updated density and browse studies

(Barney Arnold)

- At the public hearing, we had a lot of community input, mostly by citizens against the hunt and expansion.
- We also had letters of support from the Conservation, Trails and Land Stewardship committees.
- The BOS were not able to take a vote for or against the hunt at that meeting.
- At this point, it is unlikely that we will get a majority vote from the BOS in favor of an expanded bow hunt on Town land in the Fall.
- The BOS would consider a new proposal from the Deer Control Committee as to the structure of the hunt .
- Factors like enhanced trail use due to COVID-19 have elevated hunt safety concerns.
- We have a better chance of getting BOS approval if we don't push for an expanded number of hunters, hunt days, or parcels.
- To get BOS approval, we need to address public concerns in balance with the vision of the bow hunt being an important tool to maintain the health of the forests.

(John Keating)

- If we want a successful hunt given these criteria, we need to focus on efficiency. Perhaps swapping Greenough for Hart Farm would be a good choice, as the bow hunt hasn't taken many deer in Greenough and lot of deer have been seen in the Hart Farm parcels.

(Stephen Keele)

- Recommend restricting the hunt to Town of Carlisle residents and employees.
- In his opinion, what the program has been lacking is quality hunters. Reducing the program to, say, 10 resident hunters would potentially increase deer harvest efficiency using more motivated skilled hunters.
- By emphasizing safety with a smaller group, the programs reputation could be built up.
- As far as residents vs non-residents, if we keep the program the same size, Stephen made a recommendation that the number of non-residents not exceed the number of residents in the program. While not expanding the number of hunters this year in the program may not significantly increase overall deer harvested, the key points of the small program would be to emphasize its safety and efficacy in terms of deer harvested per hunter.

(Alex Parra)

- We need to keep the bow hunt simple. We should address the BOS recommendations. Perhaps shifting the start date of the Town bow hunt would be better than doing things like breaking the hunt up (i.e. hunting certain days of the week) to stretch the season out over a longer period (but still within the dates allowed under Massachusetts law).

(Stephen Keele)

- The role of the Deer Control Committee, per the BOS, is to control the deer population in town. Why it is being done, i.e. forest understory/health, is not the focus of the committee.

(John Keating)

- If the BOS doesn't want an expanded hunt this year, we should shift the season to start a few weeks later in October. This will enable the hunters to see where the deer move in the late season (early December).

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Concerned that much public concern is centered around trails use.
- The Chair of the Trails Committee has advocated promoting education of the safety and logistics of the bow hunt. We need to get that message to the public.
- The program should be streamlined and simple. Towns around Carlisle with bow hunts have simple one page statements of hunt guidelines.
- Ok with shifting start date if hunt, but making any change to the program is a lot of work.
- Recognizing Stephen's point about the role of the Deer Control Committee, our mission is to create regulations and administer the hunt, not justify it.
- If we come up with a plan for a revised hunt, is there a reasonable chance of it getting approved by BOS?

(Barney Arnold)

- Currently BOS is split 2-2 on approval. If we come up with a revised plan addressing BOS recommendations, our chances are better. The fifth BOS member will be present at the next meeting.
- For the 2021 Spring Town meeting, the BOS should introduce a warrant item for going forward with a more robust bow hunt on Town land.

(Alex Parra)

- We could go back to the BOS proposing to run a bow hunt much like last year's and also propose the warrant item. Suggesting minor changes for the Fall 2020 hunt like shifting the season and engaging more with MassWildlife to get more data would be a good approach.

(Jonathan DeKock)

- Regarding restricting the hunt to Carlisle residents , there is a concern that many residents currently split their hunt time between public and private parcels and may not increase the deer harvest from the public parcels.
- With respect to the BOS recommendations:
 - We will not pursue expanding the hunt in terms of hunters, duration or parcels (Items 1-3)
 - We will require hunters to apply for antlerless deer permits (ADP) (Item 4). We need to set up a process/timeline for the hunters so all have an ADP.
 - We will not pursue hunting within the 500' property setbacks (Item 5).
 - We will increase education and signage to promote trail safety (Item 6).
 - We will reach out to MassWildlife and engage with them on density and browse studies (Item 7).
- Outstanding issue to consider based on discussions tonight:
 - Do we want to a parcel swap? If so, are the hunters willing to draw up new maps and setbacks for the DPW and/or Hart Farm parcels?
 - By removing Greenough, can we add both Hart Farm parcels as well as DPW, as it will not add net acreage to the hunt?
 - Do we want to shift the season? There is support within the committee to shift it to October 19.
 - Do we want the same 18 hunters, which consist of 8 residents and 10 non-residents?
 - We will have another meeting on June 25 to finalize these issues ahead of meeting with the BOS.

Agenda Items 8-11 Tabled

Agenda Item 12: Public input (Jeannie Geneczko)

- When the Deer Control Committee went to the Conservation, Trails and Land Stewardship committees, they went with the proposal for an expanded hunt for 2020. The letters of support from these committees were based on the expanded hunt. As the 2020 hunt is being scaled back, the Deer Control Committee should go back to these committees for input and new support letters.

Next meeting: June 25, 2020

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted: Todd Thorsen