



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Deer Management Advisory Committee

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*Bruce Austin, Monique Balaban, Allen Decker, Jim Kubicina,
Thomas McDonald, Joseph Podvin, Benjamin Denno*
Council Members: Adam Kochenderfer, Michael Webber
Youth Representative: Scott Difilippo

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jim Kubicina called the Deer Management Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL

Present 4 - Allen Decker, Monique Balaban, Jim Kubicina and Bruce Austin

Absent 3 - Thomas McDonald, Joseph Podvin and Benjamin Denno

Others Present:

City Council Representatives:

*Adam Kochenderfer (entered 7:10 p.m.)
Michael Webber*

Staff Members:

*Mike Hartner, Director of Parks and Forestry
Lance DeVoe, Naturalist*

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2013-0232 Approval of Meeting Minutes - Deer Management Advisory Committee - August 15, 2012

Attachments: [081512 DMAC Minutes.pdf](#)
[Resolution.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Decker, seconded by Balaban, that this matter be Approved as Presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 4 - Decker, Balaban, Kubicina and Austin

Absent 3 - McDonald, Podvin and Denno

Resolved, that the Minutes of the Deer Management Advisory Committee Meeting of August 15, 2012 are approved as presented.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2013-0233 Review of 2012 Deer Crash Data and Aerial Survey Results

Attachments: [Deer Charts 2013.pdf](#)
[Deer Complaints 2009 thru 06-12-13.pdf](#)
[Deer Count Summary Memo 06-12-13 \(1\).pdf](#)

Chairperson Jim Kubicina requested Mike Hartner and Lance DeVoe review this year's data.

Mike Hartner, Director of Parks and Forestry, reviewed the deer count, crash data, and complaints received in the past year. He noted that complaints are recorded as they are received, and are broken down internally and tracked whether they are regarding property damage, deer droppings or other deer-related issues. He reviewed the number of deer picked up by both City crews and Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) crews. He noted that City crews will pick up deer on roads it is responsible for, and Oakland County will do the same for its roads. He cautioned that the numbers do not always line up with the number of crashes, noting that some crashes are reported and others are not. Further data tracks calls recorded by the Oakland County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), including statistics on crashes that result in ambulance calls for injured drivers or passengers.

He highlighted information on the deer counts from the past year, noting that in the past four years ten areas were counted.

Lance DeVoe, Naturalist, reviewed how the areas were selected for the deer count, noting the change from five areas surveyed in 1999 to the ten areas surveyed now. He explained that the survey is done each year during the winter when there is a minimum of four inches of snow cover, by helicopter at tree-top level. Changes in the population surveyed were noted from year to year. It was pointed out that the count in 2008 decreased to a recent low of 134 subsequent to the Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) which hit the deer herd. The deer count observed this year was 170 in all ten areas, representing an expected recovery of the herd. He noted that herd moves as well, and may not be in the survey area at the time of the flyover. He mentioned that a more accurate count would be obtained if a larger area of the city were surveyed; however adding more locations becomes cost prohibitive. He commented that the survey should be viewed as one of the tools in the toolbox to gauge deer population.

He reviewed crash numbers for last year, noting that the statistics include the months and actual hours of the day and day of the week. Police reports are reviewed for road conditions, rate of driver speed, and whether the driver is

impaired or not at the time of the crash. He stated that the deer awareness signs are most effective when the crashes are the highest, in the months of October, November, December, January and February. The highest number of crashes also occur between 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., and then between 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. He commented that the goal is to minimize serious accidents and avoid loss of life. He observed that the numbers have not greatly changed over the past couple of years. Last year's number of crashes was 155.

Discussion ensued regarding complaints regarding deer on roadways.

Council Member Webber questioned whether the RCOC is proactive in looking for dead deer to pick up or if they only come out after a complaint is called in.

Mr. DeVoe responded that the RCOC typically waits until their crew can pick up more than one deer before coming out. They come out in response to calls from City Staff, the Mayor's Office, or OCSO reports after accidents.

Council Member Kochenderfer questioned whether anything can be done to get them off the road sooner, perhaps allowing City crews to pick up on County roads.

Mr. DeVoe responded that the City picks them up as fast as they can; however, they cannot store multiple carcasses at the DPS yard certain times of the year.

Mr. Hartner noted that deer removal is a part of regular road maintenance that the RCOC provides.

Mr. Kochenderfer questioned whether an agreement could be reached between the RCOC and the City to allow City crews to pick up the deer faster.

Mr. Hartner commented that this possibility could be discussed at the Council level and with the Mayor. He noted that the RCOC would most likely not object to the City taking more of a maintenance role on the roads within its jurisdiction; however, the cost would have to be considered.

Mr. Webber added that the City has contracts with the RCOC to salt certain roads; and deer removal could be considered a similar type of service.

Discussion ensued concerning how long dead deer remain on roadways. It was noted that it frequently can take three or four days before they are picked up.

Committee Member Monique Balaban, questioned whether deer complaints logged have decreased over the past couple of years.

Mr. Hartner responded that they have.

Ms. Balaban reported that she visited two residents who complained, and noted that they had both recently moved in to the community and were not aware that

there was a significant deer population. She noted that she provided information on products, fencing and plants available to minimize damage from deer, and commented that they were appreciative of the information.

Discussion ensued regarding how the informational signs are used.

Mr. DeVoe noted that the signs are moved after two weeks to different locations. He pointed out that signs were placed in different locations last year than in previous, and mentioned that Orion Road and Rochester Road north of Tienken were two locations where signs were not previously used.

Ms. Balaban suggested Crooks Road between M-59 and Avon also be considered for a sign. She added that she would like to see the signs all year long in the high crossing areas.

Mr. Hartner pointed out the lower numbers in April, May and June, and stated that while the deer are still there, they are not following each other, herding up and moving as much. He added that the cost to rent four signs for one month is \$4,000.

Ms. Balaban commented that the City does own several signs and suggested these be used year-round or that permanent signs be considered.

Mr. Hartner responded that the City's movable signs are used by DPS for other purposes and are not always available. He noted that permanent signs are \$13,000 apiece and would also add maintenance costs to the budget.

Mr. DeVoe mentioned that the reason that the signs are so effective is that they are only put out during the high crossing time of the year. He commented that signs left up all year would eventually be ignored by motorists.

Ms. Balaban stated that it is her belief that the signs along with other City educational efforts reduced crashes significantly.

Mr. Hartner responded that the reduction of the herd due to the EHD outbreak had a significant impact on crashes.

Discussion ensued as to whether Council would consider allocating funding for permanent signs.

Mr. Webber noted that it was not easy two years ago to allocate minimal funding in the budget for even a flyover.

Committee Member Bruce Austin questioned when educational programming runs on the City's cable channel.

Mr. Hartner responded that the programming runs during the prime months. He added that the Media department is down to one staff member.

Ms. Balaban commented that Oakland University did not clear brush as well as

it did before on its property in the past year. She stated that she thought clearing brush should be done in more locations.

Mr. Hartner pointed out that many crashes occur along Walton Boulevard, where there are great expanses of mowed grass. He commented that it is the speed of the cars along that stretch that contributes to more crashes. He stated that the City continues to do the same educational activities it did in past years and that the only thing that is different is that there are no contentious meetings drawing residents and the press out.

Mr. Austin stated that perhaps the City could approach Oakland University suggesting a cooperative effort to clear brush along Adams Road.

Committee Member Allen Decker suggested that perhaps churches and private enterprise having electronic signs could be approached to ask if they would consider devoting some of their sign's time to a "Don't Veer For Deer" message.

Those in attending thought this was a great idea. **Mr. Hartner** stated that he would approach Tara Presta in the Mayor's Office to inquire whether this could be a possibility.

Ms. Balaban commented that she was on SEMCOG's website and saw that they would provide a Road Safety Audit for a community. She questioned whether an audit could be done for Rochester Hills which might yield suggestions for low cost improvements such as lighting.

Mr. Hartner responded that he would approach the City's Traffic Engineering staff to inquire whether this is something that could be requested.

Discussed.

2013-0234 Discuss continuation of usage of four (4) changeable message boards at eight (8) locations in the fall of 2013 and the incorporation of message board expenses into the 2014 budget (approximately \$4,000.00)

Attachments: [Resolution.pdf](#)

Ms. Balaban suggested that the DPS signs be deployed year-round for deer awareness.

It was noted that the signs are used for other purposes and are not always available.

Mr. DeVoe commented that it is his opinion that the signs should not be placed during the summer months. He suggested that if they are not in use, he could take the City's own signs and move them additional times to other locations during the five month period when crashes are the highest

The Committee determined that they would request Council approve a continuation of usage of four (4) changeable message boards at eight (8)

locations, incorporating \$4,000 into the 2014 budget.

**A motion was made by Decker, seconded by Austin, that this matter be Approved.
The motion carried by the following vote:**

Aye 4 - Decker, Balaban, Kubicina and Austin

Absent 3 - McDonald, Podvin and Denno

Resolved, that the Deer Management Advisory Committee hereby recommends the submission of a request to City Council to approve the four (4) changeable message boards at eight (8) locations in the fall of 2013 and to add changeable message boards to the 2014 budget.

2013-0235 Discuss the continuation of using Oakland County for an annual aerial survey and the incorporation of annual survey expenses into 2014 budget (approximately \$2,000.00)

Attachments: [Resolution.pdf](#)

Mr. Hartner noted that last year's aerial survey costs were \$1,895; therefore, he would suggest incorporating \$2,000 into the budget to continue the survey for next year. He explained that the cost is dependent on the communities participating in the survey and the areas being covered.

Chairperson Kubicina noted that the aerial survey should be considered a snapshot in time.

Mr. Austin pointed out that the more years that are incorporated into the survey results, the better the trend can be viewed statistically.

Mr. DeVoe noted that the method for surveying changed over the years from a night flight with infrared to a daytime flight.

**A motion was made by Balaban, seconded by Austin, that this matter be Approved.
The motion carried by the following vote:**

Aye 4 - Decker, Balaban, Kubicina and Austin

Absent 3 - McDonald, Podvin and Denno

Resolved, that the Deer Management Advisory Committee hereby recommends the submission of a request to City Council to add an annual aerial survey to the 2014 budget.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Hartner noted that the map of crash locations was not prepared in time for this meeting by SEMCOG. He stated that it should be completed before the DMAC presents this year's results and recommendations to Council in October.

Mr. Kubicina suggested that anyone wishing to participate in the DMAC's presentation to Council was welcome to attend the Council meeting that it will be scheduled for. He stated that he would draft a presentation and send it to the

committee to review.

NEXT MEETING DATE

It was determined that the Committee would not schedule another meeting at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Kubicina adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Mary Jo Pachla

Minutes were approved as presented/amended at the _____ [year] Regular [Committee] Meeting.

Jim Kubicina, Chairperson