



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Final

Deer Management Advisory Committee

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*Monique Balaban, Deborah Barno, Jeremy Brown, Allen Decker,
Sean Donovan, Scott Hunter and James Nachtman
Council Members: Susan Bowyer Ph.D., Dale A. Hetrick
Youth Representative: Zoe Pizzuti*

Thursday, March 2, 2017

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Barno called the Deer Management Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL

Present 5 - Monique Balaban, Deborah Barno, Sean Donovan, Scott Hunter and James Nachtman

Absent 2 - Jeremy Brown and Allen Decker

Others Present:

Council Members:

*Susan Bowyer, Ph.D.
Dale Hetrick*

Staff:

Ken Elwert, Director of Parks and Forestry

RHGYC Member:

Zoe Pizzuti

Chairperson Barno noted that Mr. Decker had informed her by email that he would be unable to attend this evening. She mentioned that Lance DeVoe, Park Ranger II, was also unable to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Barno noted that an email was received from Dennis Berg, resident of Hawthorn Subdivision, who expressed concern over landscape damage from deer and requested that the City take some action.

Mr. Elwert stated that he responded to Mr. Berg, and he noted that Mr. Berg

requested that his email be presented to the Committee.

Jeff Ouimet, resident of Shadow Woods Subdivision bordering Nowicki Park, noted that he has many of the same issues that were presented in the email from Mr. Berg including landscape damage. He commented that he is not saying that the City should get rid of all of the deer; however, he believes that something more needs to be done. He stated that he read the minutes of the previous meeting and stated that it seems to be the focus of the Committee to prevent car-deer accidents. He stated that he does not believe that this is enough, and the City should do something more. He mentioned that Ann Arbor is using control measures. He commented that while he does not know what the solution is, there are too many deer. He pointed out that even though there is a City Ordinance against feeding deer, he knows that he has neighbors that feed them. He stated that deer are doing much damage to more than just vehicles. He noted that while coyotes help, they don't do enough.

Mr. Elwert responded that the Committee's primary focus is on reducing car-vehicle accidents to the best of its ability. He noted there is a citizen volunteer on the Committee that is very knowledgeable on the landscape damage issue and is willing to go out and meet with residents who have specific concerns and offer them different options to try that have often proven to be successful.

Mr. Ouimet stated that while he uses products to deter vegetation damage, there are certain plants such as tulips that cannot be planted. He stated that he believes the population is getting out of hand and has seen as many as 25 deer in a small space.

Dr. Bowyer commented that feeding deer will bring many into a certain location. She suggested that the subdivision president send out information discouraging the feeding of wildlife.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2017-0083](#) Regular Meeting - July 27, 2016

Attachments: [072716 DMAC Draft Minutes.pdf](#)
[Resolution 2017-0083 approval of 7-27-16 minutes.pdf](#)

Mr. Nachtman noted a few places where his name was misspelled. It was indicated that the spelling would be corrected.

A motion was made by Hunter, seconded by Donovan, that this matter be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 5 - Balaban, Barno, Donovan, Hunter and Nachtman

Absent 2 - Brown and Decker

Resolved that the Deer Management Advisory Committee hereby approves the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 27, 2017 as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Barno introduced **Mark Mueller**, and noted that he would be speaking to the Committee regarding a product he is developing relative to deer management.

Mr. Elwert noted that Mr. Mueller requested that no specific details be released to the public regarding the product as it is currently under development and a patent will be sought.

Mr. Mueller addressed the Committee.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

[2017-0084](#)

DMAC - Review of 2016 recommendations

Attachments: [DMAC - Review of 2016 recommendations.pdf](#)
[All Deer Signs Loc Map.pdf](#)
[TIA TCLS Repts 2016-2015.pdf](#)

Chairperson Barno reviewed the recommendations the Deer Management Advisory Committee made to Council last year, including reflective tape and increased temporary signage. She noted that a map distributed indicated the City-owned deer signs where prismatic tape was added, and she commented that in her travels past these signs they lit up right away when headlights hit them.

Mr. Elwert noted that the data is not in to compare results to previous years.

Chairperson Barno stated that once the SEMCOG data is in, comparisons can be made to the year before to determine whether there is a reduction in accidents in areas where the tape has been added. If the results are positive and accidents have been reduced, then there is a basis to approach Oakland County and determine whether the use of the tape can be expanded.

She noted that \$6,000 had been budgeted for movable deer signs to increase the number of signs as well as the length of time that the signs are in place.

Mr. Elwert explained that he believed that six signs were in place, and he would get the exact information from Lance DeVoe upon his return. He stated that the signs were not in place until mid-December as was originally hoped, as extensive highway construction projects increased the rental costs. He mentioned that as highway construction was expected to remain at an increased level this year, sign costs could again go higher.

Chairperson Barno stated that should the Committee wish to recommend another increase in funds for signage, the recommendation should be made prior to Council's consideration of the budget.

Mr. Elwert explained that work begins on the budget process in May. He

commented that the deer-vehicle crash data should be in hopefully by early May. He explained that while the Traffic Improvement Association (TIA) and SEMCOG receive the same crash data, SEMCOG analyzes the data by location making it much easier to determine the effect of signage on crash areas.

Chairperson Barno *commented that the Committee should prepare an enhanced presentation for Council this year as it is important that Council see the accidents and comparisons. She noted that the TIA's raw crash numbers show that total deer-vehicle collisions increased slightly from 150 in 2015 to 159 in 2016. She stated that the SEMCOG data will provide specific detail regarding locations.*

She pointed out that \$3,000 was committed for an aerial survey; however, the weather is not cooperating and the survey has not been able to be completed. With the likelihood that the survey will not be able to be done at this point, the Committee will be considering the metric of deer crashes in planning its recommendations.

Mr. Elwert *stated that the increase of only nine accidents over 2015 is less than 10 percent of the total. He added that last year's crashes had dropped significantly from the previous year.*

Mr. Hetrick *pointed out that the criteria for recommending action is deer-vehicle crashes above 200.*

Chairperson Barno *noted that the focus of the Committee has always been car-deer safety. She mentioned that although the City has received some complaints of vegetation damage, the Committee does have a resident expert that has gone out to speak to citizens and subdivision groups about how to mitigate the damage. She commented that it is not realistically possible to eliminate deer eating vegetation in the city.*

Ms. Balaban *stated that the residents she speaks with are very happy to hear that the City is providing a service to help recommend ways to mitigate damage. She mentioned that a system is available that uses ultrasound and can cover up to 5,000 square feet outside of any home which deters deer, all kinds of small mammals, and nuisance wildlife. She stated that Home Depot has a similar type of system on a smaller scale that could be used in the interior as well. She noted that these systems are very effective.*

She distributed a copy of the binder to the incoming Committee members that she has prepared to give residents who have called to express concern regarding deer damaging their landscape.

Mr. Elwert *stated that Ms. Balaban has requested that the City consider paying for the materials to assemble the information she gives to residents. He commented that it would be appropriate for the Committee to consider it; and he noted that if the information is handed out as a part of an official City function, staff would need to review the contents and print the documents. He noted that*

whatever is distributed must reflect the City's official view and be very specific on things that are recommended by the City as a whole.

Ms. Balaban suggested that the information also be distributed on the website. She stated that she adds items to the binder as residents ask certain questions which she researches to find solutions.

Mr. Elwert commented that information is rotated to the front page of the website seasonally.

Chairperson Barno suggested that information be included on the website regarding fawning season and what to do if a resident encounters a fawn. She noted that white tailed deer typically do not become aggressive unless they are protecting their fawns. She added that the information should be included in spring utility bills.

Mr. Elwert responded that Mr. DeVoe will be checking on the utility bill schedule.

Discussed.

STAFF OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Elwert reviewed staff activities, noting the following:

- The aerial survey will most likely not be undertaken as there has not been an adequate amount of snow cover during this winter.*
- The spring utility bills have not gone out yet.*
- SEMCOG's analysis of the traffic data for the exact location of deer crashes is not in yet. It is hoped that once it is received, the effectiveness of the prismatic tape on the signs can be measured.*
- While some communities have used overpasses or underpasses to allow for safe highway crossings, the costs are in the millions. Of last year's accidents, approximately a dozen were on M-59. Other creative options are being sought to bring to the Committee.*

Ms. Balaban noted that some communities incorporate fencing to draw deer to one certain area.

Mr. Elwert responded that the challenge of incorporating a specific crossing is that there needs to be a clear place on both sides to move the deer. He stated that there is not much green space along that area.

Chairperson Barno stated that she would like to take more creative and innovative ideas to Council this year and encouraged the Committee to submit novel ideas.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Balaban reviewed two studies that she has found that would help provide a multi-layer approach for reducing deer-vehicle crashes. She highlighted details

of a program in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, which was submitted for an award. Ottawa had the highest number of deer-vehicle crashes and implemented a multi-prong approach including billboard advertising, public relations and marketing, and extensive education. Patrol officers would distribute informational cards during traffic stops about deer movement in the area which used the catch phrase "Speeding Costs You Deerly". Officers enforced a reduced speed limit during certain high crash times, and a variable message board along with flashing signs helped reduce their deer-vehicle crash numbers by 20 percent in one year. Speeds were reduced during these times.

***Mr. Elwert** noted that a study undertaken showed the effectiveness of motion sensors that would detect if wildlife was crossing the roadway and cause a sign to flash, and he noted that it also reduced crashes by a significant amount.*

***Mr. Hunter** noted that he is on the Advisory Traffic and Safety Board, and explained that reducing the speed limit would take a number of steps.*

***Mr. Elwert** commented that he would be more inclined to recommend the flashing signs, noting that they catch attention.*

***Ms. Balaban** suggested that the flashing light be used and speed enforced during mating season and when the deer are more active from October to December.*

She reviewed a study on mule deer which also showed that flashing lights and reducing night speeds is effective.

***Mr. Hetrick** commented that it will be interesting to receive the SEMCOG data to determine whether the additional signage and tape provided a benefit.*

***Ms. Balaban** suggested recommending the addition of one sign per year to eventually be able to cover all 12 of the highest accident areas.*

***Dr. Bowyer** questioned whether the City might consider purchasing signs.*

***Mr. Elwert** responded that the movable signs were in the range of \$15,000 each, and noted that purchasing them would also require the City to store, maintain and repair them. He commented that the approximate \$1,200 per sign for rental rates was actually more cost-effective.*

*RHGYC Representative to the Committee **Zoe Pizzuti** questioned whether anything was being done to try to push deer to cross in other areas.*

***Mr. Elwert** responded that deer patterns change and it is difficult to consider influencing their paths.*

NEXT MEETING DATE

***Chairperson Barno** stated that a meeting would be scheduled sometime in May, in the hopes that the SEMCOG data will be available.*

Mr. Elwert noted that this would allow the Committee to prepare their recommendations prior to the budget process.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Barno adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Mary Jo Pachla.

Minutes were approved as presented at the August 7, 2017 Deer Management Advisory Committee Meeting.

Deborah Barno, Chairperson