



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Deer Management Advisory Committee

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*Monique Balaban, Deborah Barno, Jeremy Brown, Allen Decker,
James Nachtman, Thomas McDonald and Tom Stephens
Council Members: Susan Bowyer Ph.D., Dale A. Hetrick
Youth Representative: Joshua Morgan*

Wednesday, July 27, 2016

7:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Deborah Barno called the Deer Management Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Monique Balaban, Jeremy Brown, Deborah Barno, Allen Decker, Thomas McDonald and James Knachtman

Absent 1 - Tom Stephens

Others Present:

*Dr. Susan Bowyer, City Council Representative
Dale Hetrick, City Council Representative*

*Ken Elwert, Director of Parks and Forestry
Lance DeVoe, Park Ranger II*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2016-0287 Approval of Minutes - Deer Management Advisory Committee Meeting - January 21, 2016

Attachments: [012116 Draft DMAC Minutes.pdf](#)
[Resolution.pdf](#)

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

Aye 6 - Balaban, Brown, Barno, Decker, McDonald and Knachtman

Absent 1 - Stephens

Resolved, that the Deer Management Advisory Committee hereby approves the Minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2016 as presented/amended.

NEW BUSINESS

2016-0288 Review of 2015 Deer Crash Data and Aerial Survey Results

Attachments: [Aerial Deer Survey Results 2008-2016.pdf](#)
[Deer Count Survey Areas.pdf](#)
[Rochester Hills Crash Report.pdf](#)

Chairperson Deborah Barno stated that the Committee discussed in January whether to continue to spend money for the aerial survey as Oakland County opted not to participate this year. She noted that the City undertook the survey on its own, and Lance DeVoe was in attendance to review the deer count and deer vehicle crashes.

Mr. DeVoe reviewed the aerial survey results, noting that the deer count was back up over 300 this year, largely due to the two areas encompassing Oakland University property and Bloomer Park. He pointed out that without considering those two areas, the remaining area counts were exactly the same or one less than last year. He commented that he did not believe that the increase in the count was a cause for alarm.

He stated that the increase in population was not reflected in an increase in deer vehicle collisions, noting that they remained essentially the same at 144.

Member Monique Balaban questioned whether the mild winter had an influence over the count.

Mr. DeVoe responded that the last three aerial counts reflected the highest population to date; however, there was no corresponding increase in deer vehicle collisions. He commented that the results could be viewed subjectively, noting that the education campaign might have made a difference. He mentioned that the aerial survey was flown on one of only a few days that it would have been possible, and many animals were observed. He noted that deer are free ranging and move around considerably.

Member Tom McDonald noted that the number of deer vehicle collisions fell below the Committee's threshold for action; therefore, no lethal methods would be considered. He commented that the collision numbers were more of a consistent measure.

Mr. DeVoe concurred, noting that both a 20 percent increase in population and a deer vehicle collision number of 200 would trigger a consideration of lethal methods. He pointed out that discussions in the past were driven by deer vehicle collisions. He commented that while other problems were noted such as vegetation and garden damage, Council focused on the collision numbers as a deciding factor. He suggested that the Committee consider flying the entire city on a grid to obtain a total deer population. He stated that the cost is determined by flight time hours,

not by area size. He noted that the survey cost was approximately \$300 more than the previous year.

Discussion ensued regarding a rough estimate of the cost for an aerial survey of the entire city. It was mentioned that it could be \$6,000.00.

Mr. Elwert commented that the value of the survey is in the review of long term trends.

Chairperson Barno stated that as the deer vehicle collision numbers are not increasing, a survey of the entire city might not be a good value for the money at this time. She suggested that if collisions increase, the Committee could consider a full survey.

Member Balaban commented that the Committee's budget has been essentially the same for the past seven years. She suggested that the budget be increased, and any additional monies be used for signage to alert residents to slow down.

Dr. Bowyer stated that during Council's discussion of the speed limit on Hamlin Road, she reviewed deer vehicle collision numbers and noted they were highest on roads with speed limits of 45 miles per hour.

Mr. DeVoe commented that decreased speeds due to construction activities may have contributed to lower crash numbers.

Member Allen Decker stated that as the Committee is more interested in deer vehicle collision numbers, a total deer population number at this point for the entire city is not needed. He pointed out that while it would be useful for the City to know the total deer count, a count of the ten areas should be continued during a transition period for statistical accuracy.

Mr. DeVoe commented that there would be value in the deer count as it would yield the population numbers over time. He added that broadening the sample size would yield more accuracy.

After additional discussion, **Chairperson Barno** noted that her impression was that the Committee was more inclined to maintain the current approach to evaluating the deer count and deer crashes as it would be more consistent over time. She commented that Council Member Kubicina received a complaint from a resident of his district that deer were aggressive. She noted that aggressive deer can be observed in spring and fall. She stressed that residents should be educated to not touch stray fawns. She suggested a spring educational campaign be initiated as well as for the fall.

Mr. DeVoe responded that this is an excellent idea, and commented that residents should be made aware of this in the spring. He stated that while it is unlikely that a white tailed deer would be aggressive toward people, it does happen.

Member Balaban stated that she is more than willing to go visit concerned residents and takes a binder with her with all sorts of great information and samples. She pointed out that she reviews new products with residents and this year has information on an electronic pest ultrasonic animal repellent. She suggested this information be added to the educational information on the City's website.

Mr. DeVoe responded that he would look over the information.

Discussed.

2016-0324 Adoption of a Resolution to recommend staff investigate the addition of prismatic reflective tape on deer signs

Chairperson Deborah Barno stated that it is her opinion that the fall education program is working by keeping motorists alert. She noted that at the January meeting, the Committee discussed adding signs.

Member Balaban stated that she did not realize that the message boards were only in place from October 15 to November 15, and only four message boards moved once to cover eight areas.

Mr. DeVoe noted that he does not place the message boards in the same locations every year. He explained that he reviews crash data and selects various locations based on high occurrences.

Member Balaban distributed information on flashing signage that operates on solar energy and encouraged the Committee to give this type of permanent signage consideration.

Mr. DeVoe responded that Oakland County has full control of the signage used on roads under its jurisdiction.

Member Balaban stated that perhaps State Representative Michael Webber could be encouraged to introduce legislation allowing cities to reduce speed limits in high deer vehicle collision areas during certain times of the day.

Mr. Hetrick responded that any legislation introduced would be at the State level, and he commented that it would be difficult for Representative Webber to sponsor legislation that would apply state-wide.

Chairperson Barno mentioned reflective tape that Council Member Kubicina had observed on signs up north.

Mr. DeVoe noted that Oakland County must approve the use of the tape on its signs. He pointed out that the County approves the location of the message boards each year. He stated that the County has stressed that flashing lights are reserved for certain situations such as school zones and railroad crossings.

Mr. Elwert suggested that the Committee could consider adopting a recommendation regarding adding reflective tape. He noted that as the Deer Management Advisory Committee is an advisory board, he could take a

recommendation to the Mayor's office, and subsequently to Council and the County for consideration. He questioned how many deer signs were in the City.

Mr. DeVoe responded that there were approximately 35 to 40 signs.

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

Aye 6 - Balaban, Brown, Barno, Decker, McDonald and Knachtman

Absent 1 - Stephens

Resolved, that in an attempt to further reduce deer vehicle accidents, the Deer Management Advisory Committee, hereby recommends that City Staff investigate and pursue, if consistent with the Mayor's position, the addition of prismatic reflective tape on deer signs within the City of Rochester Hills.

2016-0289 Determine Message Board Use

Member Allen Decker suggested that churches and businesses in the community that have electronic signs could be approached to ask if they could incorporate a message regarding deer vehicle collisions during October and November.

Member Monique Balaban suggested adding additional message boards and increasing the time that the boards are in use to at least December 1 or December 15. She stated that the Committee should request additional funding.

Mr. DeVoe stated that last year's cost was approximately \$3,000 for four signs for one month. He cautioned that too many signs may cause them to lose their effectiveness as they could be ignored. He noted that extending the time for their use and moving to six signs could double their cost.

Discussion ensued regarding the dates for display and the number of signs to recommend. The Committee determined that the recommendation should be to utilize the signs from October 1 through December 1, increasing from four to six signs if possible, at a cost not-to-exceed \$6,000.00.

After the vote on the motion regarding the signage recommendation, discussion turned to whether to change the information on the signs. It was noted that the signs say "Hi Deer Crash Area" and "Don't Veer for Deer". He commented that "Don't Veer for Deer" is a slogan that is recognized.

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

Aye 6 - Balaban, Brown, Barno, Decker, McDonald and Knachtman

Absent 1 - Stephens

Resolved, that the Deer Management Advisory Committee hereby recommends that signage be increased from four (4) changeable message boards to six (6) changeable message boards, and amending the days of usage from October 1 through December 1, not to exceed a cost of \$6,000.00.

2016-0290 Discuss the continuation of the annual aerial survey

Ken Elwert stated that as discussed earlier in the meeting, the general consensus of the Committee is to continue the aerial survey as it has been done previously.

Lance DeVoe commented that this will provide a historical significance to the survey numbers.

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

Aye 6 - Balaban, Brown, Barno, Decker, McDonald and Knachtman

Absent 1 - Stephens

Resolved, that the Deer Management Advisory Committee, recommends that the City continue the Aerial Deer Survey as it has for the past several years.

2016-0291 Develop 2016 recommendations to City Council

Chairperson Deborah Barno noted that two new or revised recommendations were already discussed and adopted by the Committee for incorporation into the Committee's list: To recommend that Staff explore the potential for utilizing prismatic tape on deer signs with Oakland County; and to make a recommendation on the increase in the use of message boards. She suggested a recommendation that the educational campaign be increased to include spring as well as fall to provide information about deer fawning.

Lance DeVoe suggested that the City's water bills might be used as well to further distribute the educational messages in the spring and fall.

Mr. Hetrick noted that the recommendations should be incorporated into a presentation for Council.

Discussion ensued as to when the presentation should be made to Council.

Chairperson Barno noted that last year's presentation was made in September. She suggested that the information be presented earlier as the Budget is being discussed this month. She commented that she would hope that the Committee could go before Council in the next month.

Mr. Elwert Mr. Elwert stated that he would work with Finance on potential budget changes immediately and with Clerk's Office on potential presentation dates. He also offered to assist the Chairperson on development of the presentation if desired.

Discussed.

2016-0325 Adoption of a Resolution to add a recommendation that the Administration contact the local school districts to request that they assist in the signage campaign in the fall

Mr. Elwert commented that while the signs should not oversaturate the area, it might be beneficial to ask a few owners of electronic signs to help spread the message in key areas.

Mr. Hetrick commented that the City has a good relationship with the schools.

Chairperson Barno suggested that the City contact the local school districts and request that they assist in the signage campaign in the fall, and incorporate the request into the Committee's list of recommendations.

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

Aye 6 - Balaban, Brown, Barno, Decker, McDonald and Knachtman

Absent 1 - Stephens

Resolved, that the Deer Management Advisory Committee hereby add a recommendation that the Administration contact the local school districts to request that they assist in the signage campaign in the fall.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Member Monique Balaban noted that she incorporated information into the binder about immunocontraceptives including PZP and Gonacon. She noted that the Environmental Protection Agency has approved Gonacon, and a number of states have already registered its use. She added that she also has learned there are new varieties of arborvitae and yew that are resistant to deer, and suggested that this information be included on the City's website.

Member Allen Decker commented that he was reading online that Ann Arbor is proposing to look into some form of deer birth control in 2017.

It was determined that Mr. Elwert would contact Council's administrative staff to determine which meeting date would be available for the Committee's presentation to City Council.

NEXT MEETING DATE

To Be Determined.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Barno adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Mary Jo Pachla.

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

Deborah Barno, Chairperson