

# **MEETING MINUTES**

## **DEER COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015**

**6:30 P.M. – GALENA CITY HALL, 101 GREEN STREET**

---

1. Call meeting to order - The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance: John Cox (Chairperson), Beth Baranski, Carmen Ferguson, Kirk Foecking, and Mary Hartman.
2. Approve agenda action – A motion to approve the agenda was made by Carmen and seconded by Mary. The motion carried.
3. Presentation of and discussion by committee with members of THE APPLE CANYON LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION regarding how decisions in other communities were reached related to deer problems in their communities – Jim Patel and John Schereson provided copies of the Apple Canyon Lake Property Owners' Association "Rules and Regulations" regarding deer archery hunting in specified resort common areas. They began the problem in response to complaints about property damage and vehicular accidents (they don't have deer crossing signs). A deer management committee evolved out of the conservation committee. All of the current members of the committee are hunters, but they have chosen not to hunt in the resort. They started off very slowly, taking little action the first year. They worked with Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) then Wildlife Biologist Doug Dufford, and did an aerial count. They found that given the 20-30 deer per sq. mile carrying capacity and the 3.4 square-mile resort area, they should have had 80-100 deer, but had four times that amount. They decided to initiate a deer management program.

The deer committee members are aware of ongoing opposition to culling by some, and have developed an approach that addresses safety and expense issues. The idea of trapping and relocating was discarded, because the deer trapped tend to die anyway. They chose archery over rifle because they felt the proximity to houses was an issue. They recruit archers, have them demonstrate they can get at least 4 of 5 arrows in a circle at 20 yards to qualify their skills, and charge them \$125 to be able to hunt at the resort in designated areas. The fee covers the resort's cost for hunter identification tags, additional insurance (\$7-800), and equipment for a youth archery program they run for 50-60 kids each year. They collect \$2-3,000 per year and the program costs are about \$1,200 per year.

The second year they took an aerial count from a plane (they only had to pay for the gas), and now they do a roadway count when there is snow on the ground, in the evening when the deer are out people drive around in 4 quadrants during a 1-1/2

hour period. Because of the hunting, the deer have become smarter, hide better, and are therefore harder to count. They have also noted that if there is a full moon, they came out later than usual because they could see better. The count is a relative thing and the value is comparing numbers from year to year. You never count them all.

They now harvest 60 deer per year using 20-25 archers (cross bow, long bow or complex bow). The archers must shoot two does before they can shoot a buck. Up until this year, in Illinois hunters bought a \$26 tag for 1 buck and 1 doe and they could then buy additional tags. This year it was changed and additional tags can only be bought for does. This was done because the herds are generally low. Jo Daviess County has one of the top herds, so hunters like to come here.

The does establish the territory and the bucks are transient. In winter, the deer congregate where the food is. The resort had been a sanctuary, but now that they are allowing hunting, the deer have dispersed somewhat to outlying farms, where they can be hunted. They find that the deer in the resort are more fearful of humans and they attribute this to the hunting.

The hunter's stands must be elevated so that the arrows go down to the ground. Hunters are required to cover the carcasses when they transport them through the resort. Deer shot by a rifle or a bow will run, but if they are shot properly, they should run no more than 50 yards. Illinois law prohibits hunting within 100 yards of an occupied dwelling. If a deer dies on private property, the hunter has to get the owner's permission to remove the deer. They tend to hunt in the early morning and early evenings on weekdays when the resort population is down (no weekends), and they are rarely seen. The hunters are required to post signage on their stands, their automobiles, and carry resort hunter identification on their person. The rules for the hunters are strictly enforced with warnings for some violations, and immediate revocation of access for others. They have not had much trouble in this regard.

State bow hunting season is October 1 through January 13. They maintain a local list of those who want deer that have been shot, and people pick them up at the security office. They have had no trouble getting rid of the deer carcasses. All the deer are tested, and there have been no cases of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to date. Basically they use the state hunting program and regulations with additional regulations and fees for resort access. The deer committee reserves the right to stop the program if the numbers are reduced, but feel it needs to be an ongoing program to be effective. They have run this program for 5 years and the deer counts are down, but they still have twice the number they should have according to IDNR recommendations. They don't survey residents, but based on comments at their

meetings and in the Apple Core paper, the program seems to be generally well-received.

#### 4. Comments from citizens

Bill Grossahns (418 Harrison St.) – Illinois has a large number of local governments (2,700). The DNR has to approve the culling of deer in urban areas. Bill did a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and found that less than 10 communities in the state do culling.

Anna Hem (226 S. High St.) – Anna wishes the audience could ask the speakers questions. She feels the committee is biased towards culling as this is what the questions all seem to relate to. She wonders if anyone has researched the possibility of sterilization. She notes that only 1/3 of the residents at Apple Canyon Lake are permanent residents which is a significantly different situation than the City of Galena.

Tim Wedeward (535 S. High St.) – Tim thinks the letter from Laura Simon is very science based. He is a hunter himself. He notes that the deer move around, and believes efforts should focus on hunting in areas of concern outside the city limits.

Ryan Getz (1102 Franklin) – Ryan thinks the focus of the investigation should be on ecological damage and recommends that the committee confer with Jeff Horn (IDNR District Wildlife Biologist) and Doug Dufford (IDNR Wildlife and Invasive Species Program Manager). Jeff does the actual IDNR culling south of Stockton. Duane Ambrose (IDNR) works every day on the DNR properties. The deer population is too high in Jo Daviess County. When the deer population rises, other invasive species move in and dominate, e.g. Bush Honeysuckle. Ryan can provide peer-reviewed reports on this to the committee.

Kathy Leonard (102 N. Bench) – Kathy stated that she has seen a difference in the deer population, and feels they are moving into the center of the city. She has seen 7 deer in front of the church on Bench St., has seen them jump the fence into the road, and is concerned for the safety of people in cars. She wonders if there is any open space in the City where the deer can be culled and if not, if there is any point in discussing culling.

5. Committee comments and discussion on the issue of whether or not we have a problem of too many deer in the city limits of Galena and possible action on recommending a deer count in Galena – John provided a memorandum to the Deer Committee members describing information he gathered by meeting with Austin Clark of ABC Helicopter. The estimated cost for Austin to an aerial count for Galena at the time he does the count for the Galena Territory is \$1,500. A motion was made

by Mary and seconded by Kirk to ask the City to pursue an aerial helicopter count using ABC Helicopter and piggybacking the count on that done by the Galena Territory Association. The motion carried.

6. Discussion by committee members of the proposed agenda for the January meeting related to Deer Lyme Disease issues – The Jo Daviess County Health Department will have a representative at the January 20<sup>th</sup> Deer Committee meeting.
7. Brief discussion of City Council action on previous recommendation by the committee to place an advisory referendum question on the Spring ballot –
8. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.