

MEETING NOTES

DEER COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, April 20, 2016

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 – A motion to approve the agenda was made by Kirk and seconded by Mary. The motion carried.
3. Approve meeting notes from March meeting – A motion to approve the March 16th meeting notes correcting Jerry Westemeier’s address to read “103 North Hickory” was made by Carmen and seconded by Mary. The motion carried.
4. Discussion on how we proceed regarding deer population in that it appears we will not have a helicopter count this winter – Beth described the protocol that she and Bill Grosshans have developed for driving around town and counting the deer. She explained that she and Bill alone conduct the counts, but she would be happy to take others out on “unofficial” counts if they want to see what its like. If there is any question that deer may have moved and could be double-counted, they are not included in the total. Beth shared the defined route being used each time the count is conducted – the number of deer spotted is placed on the map in the location seen and circled. The route takes about an hour and twenty-to-thirty minutes. The count is conducted when both Beth and Bill are available, but they are generally aiming for weekly counts on Monday mornings and Monday evenings. The morning counts are begun 5-10 minutes after sunrise civil twilight and the evening counts are started one hour and thirty-to-thirty-five minutes before sunset civil twilight (referencing times at sunrisesunset.com). The date, time of start and finish, deer count, and any comments are recorded on the map/form and both Bill and Beth sign the form.

It has taken some time to develop the protocol, so April 14th is the first time that the complete protocol was used. However, Beth and her husband, Jim counted 38 deer in town on the evening of Feb. 18th, and Beth and Bill counted deer in town when developing the protocol as follow: Feb. 24 p.m. – 16, Mar. 14 a.m. – 13, Mar. 14 p.m. – 27, Mar. 22 a.m. 22, Mar. 22 p.m. – 12, Apr. 4 am/pm?-24, Apr. 11 am/pm – 26. The April 18 a.m. count using the defined protocol was 14.

Beth proposed that this regular count could help frame the general number of deer in town, could help us understand seasonal changes, and also help identify locations that may have more deer than others. It will be interesting to see how closely the driving counts done as winter approaches compare with an aerial count should that be accomplished in the coming winter.

By consensus, the committee agreed that the driving count could be a helpful reference and that the forms should be submitted to John and placed on the website.

5. Committee comments and discussion on the issue of providing an interim report to the City Council including topics to be included in draft for committee consideration – John agreed to begin drafting an interim committee report for the City Council. These topics were suggested for inclusion in the committee report:

- Exploration of deer crossing signage options
- The importance of an education program
- Possible formation of a City committee to advise on natural resource issues
- Working with developers to maintain deer habitat
- Chronic Wasting Disease and our responsibilities
- The cost of damage by deer to property owners
- Promotion of deer resistant plantings (Beth to contact U of I Extension for recommended speaker)
- Increased police radar on streets where deer are crossing to enforce speed limits
- Incidence of Lyme disease (Beth to check with Health Dept.)

6. Comments from Citizens

Bill Grossahns (418 Harrison St.) – Wants to see the referendum vote in the committee report. Believes there should be an ordinance to prohibit feeding of the deer. Notes that other animals (rabbits, groundhogs, etc.) also eat plants and that it may not always be the deer. Feels that the deer are not solely responsible for the tick presence and that individuals need to protect themselves appropriately when spending time outdoors. The cost of culling should be included in the report. Reports that Chief Huntington will be including 2009-2016 deer incident information on the site. Asks “What is the number of deer we can live with?”

Ryan Getz (1102 Franklin) – Notes that deer are an “edge-species” habituating forest borders and that because Jo Daviess County is about 50% forest and 50% pasture it is a perfect habitat for them. Feels that what is happening around town affects what’s happening in town and recommends reaching out to neighboring farmers (e.g. Marlow Schultz, Donny Wiene, the Wills) to ask about deer damage to their fields. He noted the high number of deer deaths in Galena, points out that Elizabeth doesn’t have that problem, and suggests asking Jeff Horn (Illinois Department of Natural Resources) why that might be. Also suggests asking Jeff Horn about the area’s carrying capacity for deer.

7. Discussion of possible topics to be considered in upcoming meetings and presenters to help us deal with those topics – Jeff Horn is scheduled for the May meeting, and a presentation on deer resistant plantings by a Master Gardener is proposed for the June meeting.

8. Discussion by Committee Members of the Proposed Agenda for May Meeting – Jeff Horn, IDNR has been scheduled.
9. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.