

MEETING NOTES
DEER COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, March 16, 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 Beth and seconded by Kirk. The motion carried.
3. Approve meeting notes from February meeting – A motion to approve the February 17th meeting notes changing “agenda” to “Meeting notes” in item 3 was made by Kirk and seconded by Carmen. The motion carried.
4. Discussion of photos offered to committee by citizens and how to publish them on the website of the city of Galena – John went back through photos on the site and added the address of the individual providing the photo. Those submitting photos will be asked to include the date and location of the photo in the future.
5. Presentation of and discussion by committee members on results of ballot referendum on deer issue – There was some question about the referendum results. These are the results as confirmed with the County Clerk’s office:

CITY OF GALENA		
ADVISORY QUESTION REGARDING DEER POPULATION MANAGEMENT		
“SHOULD THE CITY OF GALENA SPEND PUBLIC FUNDS TO ANNUALLY COUNT THE NUMBER OF DEER IN THE CITY LIMITS, AND IF THOSE COUNTS DETERMINE THAT DEER ARE OVERPOPULATED BY ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STANDARDS, SHOULD THE CITY OF GALENA SPEND PUBLIC FUNDS TO ANNUALLY REDUCE THE DEER POPULATION BY LETHAL MEANS?”		
PRECINCT	YES	NO
East Galena	84	143
Rawlins	23	22
West Galena 1	152	253
West Galena 2	152	170
West Galena 3	229	209
TOTAL VOTES	640	797

Committee members commented on the results of the referendum and the importance of those results. Comments included: the referendum is one reference point among many, it is interesting that more people voted on the school referendum than the deer referendum, the citizens have spoken and the committee's work is done, it was good to have a secret ballot and it would be helpful to hear more about what people have to say about the issue, the referendum question was really three questions and its hard to interpret the results. The conclusion was that the committee should continue its work.

The value of a citizen survey was discussed. Beth read sample survey questions which will be sent to the committee members for consideration (questions attached at end of meeting notes).

6. Presentation by Galena Chief of Police, Lori Huntington, on issues the Galena Police Department deals with related to deer inside the city limits – Chief Huntington explained that the information she was presenting was not readily available and had required hand review of paper reports. They went back to 2010 files to gather the statistics in her presentation. The attached PowerPoint contains the information that was presented. The dots on the maps document deer “incidents” reported. There may be additional incidents that were not reported. Some incidents are not vehicle related. Those incidents mapped near the cemeteries are, in many cases, deer impaled on the fences as they attempt to jump over them. The total number of incidents more than doubled from 2010 to 2015. Chief Huntington will provide a comparison between the mid-March total in 2015 with the 2016 mid-March total.

The enforcement of the state law forbidding the feeding of deer was discussed. Under the IDNR code, it is considered a petty offence and the fine is \$120. When someone is found to be illegally feeding the deer, they are informed that it is illegal and given a warning the first time, and after that they are ticketed. Only one person has been issued a citation in Galena. A sort of loophole in the code is that bird and squirrel feeders are allowed, including platforms with food.

The question was raised about deer that may wander off to die in wooded areas of town after vehicular accidents. It was suggested that Jim Rigdon (Galena Public Works) be asked if his crew has received calls to pick up dead deer.

7. Comments from citizens
Bill Grossahns (418 Harrison St.) – Suggested that the ordinance be strengthened to give the police department more authority and that the penalties be increased. He asked about the possibility of reducing the speed limit on Hwy 20 where many deer/vehicle incidents are taking place. Chief Huntington noted that the speed limit currently goes from 40 down to 35 and then down to 30. Bill believes it's not possible to completely eliminate the deer as we live in a rural area with trees and vegetation. He is very concerned about the idea of shooting deer in town.

Jerry Westemeier (103 N. Hickory St.) – Says studies that have been done show that reducing speed limits doesn't help, and he doesn't think the state will reduce the speed limit on 20.

Ryan Getz (1102 Franklin) – Noted in response to a question about why the deer are going jumping the fence to get into the cemetery on Dodge Street (with concerns about the impaling incidents there), that there are mature burr oak trees in the cemetery and the acorns from these trees are high in protein and a good food source for the deer.

Deb Westemeir (900 Ridge) – Suggested that the committee look at the locations of vehicular accidents with deer relative to the way people in different precincts voted on the deer referendum question.

Tim Wedeward (535 S. High St.) – Tim asked how long deer that have been hit lie on the side of the road, and Chief Huntington said they are usually picked up by the end of the day. He asked if multiple calls reporting on a dead deer for pick-up could result in the double counting of deer, and Chief Huntington said no. Tim noted that the referendum result could be interpreted in many ways, but he feels the committee's work is more important now. As for the last meeting and the discussion about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), Tim feels that disease management relative to the deer is a state issue and when it becomes a problem in Galena, the state should deal with it.

Dick Auman (701 Young St.) – Asked that committee members speak into the microphones.

8. Discussion by committee members on the probability of no helicopter deer count due to lack of snow – It was agreed that there would not be an aerial count of the deer this winter because of the lack of sufficient snow cover. While there is a question as to whether or not the city will fund an aerial count next year, alternative funding could be sought. In the meantime, Beth and Bill Grosshans are in the process of designing a driving count protocol as a reference point. The committee agreed that this would be a helpful reference and supported continuing the effort.
9. Brief discussion by committee members on agendas for upcoming meetings – Ideas expressed for future meeting topics were someone from the Master Gardeners program to talk about deer-resistant plantings, and Jeff Horn from the IDNR. The point was made a couple of times during the meeting that development and the reduction of deer habitat may be playing a role in the deer coming into town. Mention was made of the possibility of a committee continuing to meet after the deer committee to address natural resource issues, reach out to developers, conduct public outreach and education, etc.

10. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Sample Deer Survey Questions for Discussion Purposes (Beth Baranski)

1. Should the City of Galena spend public funds to annually count the number of deer in the city limits, and if those counts determine that deer are overpopulated by Illinois Department of Natural Resource standards, should the City of Galena spend public funds to annually reduce the deer population by lethal means?
Yes No

2. Do the deer regularly cause damage to the landscaping and/or gardens on your property?
Yes No

3. Do you feel that the deer population within the city limits needs to be managed?
Yes No

4. Do you support the expenditure of City funds (about \$1,500) to count the deer each year?
Yes No

5. Do you support the expenditure of City funds (about \$___ per deer) to reduce the deer population within the city limits?
Yes No

6. Are you generally opposed to hunting?
Yes No

7. Which Galena Precinct do you vote in?
East Galena
Rawlins
West Galena I
West Galena II
West Galena III