

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
DEER MANAGEMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Deer Management Ad Hoc Committee was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Co-Chairperson Patty Henek, Co-Chairperson Tom Cargie, Laurie Gillard, Katharine Christmas, Annette Madden, John Roeger, Cathleen Hughes, Dan Hollenbach, Joel Lueking (participated telephonically)

Absent: Ingrid Liu, John Flynn, Dawn Mizgala, Ronald Lemar

Also Present: Management Analyst Sara Phyfer, Julie Armstrong, Askold Kozbur

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. MEMBER WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

The members introduced themselves.

4. REVIEW

a. Committee Purpose (Resolution)

Co-Chairperson Cargie summarized the resolution that established the Committee and stated the Committee needs to identify the problem, come up with a plan, complete a community survey, and hold at least one community forum. He stated he hoped the members anticipated that homework is involved, which is necessary to do a good job. He expressed trust in the Committee that while this can be a heated issue, the members can disagree without being disagreeable.

b. Expectations

Co-Chairperson Henek discussed the expectations of the Committee. She explained that the reason for the Committee is to help identify the problems residents are seeing and other issues related to deer. She stated the solution is not black and white – cull or not cull. She noted a holistic approach and better education are needed. She clarified that if the Village pursues culling, the Forest Preserves would have to submit the application to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, meaning their application would have to be based on damage to the Forest Preserves' property. Co-Chairperson Henek explained that establishing

benchmarks will be important to evaluate what success looks like. She acknowledged there are questions like what happens if residents are not experiencing the same number of issues after a few years, and how tax dollars will be utilized. She stressed the importance of designing a good survey and encouraging participation. Regarding research, Co-Chairperson Henek suggested the members break down into sub-groups to more easily manage the level of work. Finally, she asked the Committee to reflect on how deer management can be solved as a community and what makes the most sense economically and emotionally.

c. Open Meetings Act

Co-Chairperson Cargie explained the implications of being subject to the Illinois Open Meetings Act and stated they will be voting on everything as a Committee. In response to questions from the other members about the OMA, he stated four members or fewer can meet without violating the Act and a quorum is required for the Committee to take actions. He explained the rules about participating telephonically.

Ms. Armstrong made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roeger to allow Joel Lueking to participate telephonically. All ayes. Motion passes.

Roll call:

Ayes: Co-Chairperson Patty Henek, Co-Chairperson Tom Cargie, Laurie Gillard, Katharine Christmas, Annette Madden, John Roeger, Cathleen Hughes, Dan Hollenbach,
Absent: Ingrid Liu, John Flynn, Dawn Mizgala, Ronald Lemar
Nays: None
Motion Passes.

Mr. Lueking introduced himself.

5. RESOURCE MATERIALS

Co-Chairperson Henek discussed resources the Committee could use for research, including the Community Deer Advisor site through Cornell University and the Nature Conservancy, and the Humane Society, which identifies alternative solutions to culling. She stated they would ask the members when researching options to consider cost and whether they are in fact effective.

In response to a question from Ms. Gillard about needing data, Co-Chairperson Cargie stated the Resolution charges the Committee with gathering data such as whether there is a documented increase in the number of deer.

Co-Chairperson Henek stated focusing on the number of deer is not recommended. She explained that the survey will show what issues people are experiencing and the tolerance level of deer.

The Committee members briefly discussed data collection, potential options such as increased signage and lighting along Thatcher, and taking a proactive vs. reactive approach related to car accidents. The Committee also discussed the need for a basis for decision making and baseline data.

Co-Chairperson Cargie explained that the Forest Preserves has data related to habitat concerns that they will use to justify seeking permits, whereas the Village's concerns are related to car accidents and property damage. The Committee members discussed what kind of data the Forest Preserves has. The Co-Chairs confirmed that there is no documented case of chronic wasting disease for deer in Cook County and that the number and types of ticks are monitored. There was some discussion that Lyme disease would be part of the Committee's research and education efforts. Co-Chairperson Cargie stated that Tim Preuss from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources can be available for meetings.

In response to a question from Ms. Madden about responsibility of deer, Co-Chairperson Cargie explained that the State owns the deer, the Forest Preserves owns the land, and Village residents live next to the land. He stated the Forest Preserves would therefore have to ask permission from the State. Though the Forest Preserves does have its own culling programs, Co-Chairperson Cargie clarified that the Village would have to pay for one here because this is not an area designated for that type of program.

The Committee members discussed the process, and Co-Chairperson Henek stated it would depend on what they do. She stated that there are more immediate options such as signage but that education will be key if the Village chooses to cull. Co-Chairperson Cargie further explained that the Village has little control over the culling, including how many deer could be culled. He noted that the Village does control things like signage.

In response to a question about deer complaints, the Co-Chairs explained that Staff is being more rigorous about compiling this information, including the number of instances where Public Works have picked up dead deer. They emphasized that residents should call to report every deer incident, even if there was no car accident.

The Committee discussed the timeline of their work, and Co-Chairperson Cargie stated the goal is to have the survey out at the beginning of the summer. He noted that the report to the Village Board is due September 30, and that the Committee can make recommendations but ultimately the Village Board would take final action.

Co-Chairperson Henek encouraged the members to read through the information before the next meeting and emphasized the importance of the survey. She reiterated that the Committee's recommendations, especially if they involve spending money, will have to go to the Village Board.

6. COMMUNITY SURVEY

Co-Chairperson Henek encouraged the members to review the links provided and start thinking about the survey. The Committee discussed the challenges of getting survey

responses and the possibility of including survey information in various mailings. They also discussed breaking up into subcommittees.

7. NEXT MEETING

The Committee came to a consensus to hold the next meeting on April 1, 2020.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hollenbach made a motion, seconded by Mr. Askold to adjourn the Deer Management Ad Hoc Committee meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Roll call:

Ayes: Co-Chairperson Patty Henek, Co-Chairperson Tom Cargie, Laurie Gillard, Katharine Christmas, Annette Madden, John Roeger, Cathleen Hughes, Dan Hollenbach, Joel Lueking

Absent: Ingrid Liu, John Flynn, Dawn Mizgala, Ronald Lemar

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Sara Phyfer, Secretary