

Shelter Island Deer & Tick Committee

Meeting Minutes 02/17/10

Attendance:

Members Present: Chairman Rae Lapides, Janalyn Travis-Messer, Abigail Field, Pat Shillingburg, Mike Scheibel and Jennifer Zacha

Members Excused: Dr. William Zitek, Dr. Scott Campbell and Steve Lenox

Non-Committee Present: Dan Gilrein, Susan Walker, Councilman Ed Brown, Paul Shepherd and Ted Hills

Meeting called to order by Chairman Lapides at 10:08 am at the Town Hall Meeting Room.

- ❖ Mr. Shepherd asked the committee if there have been any permethrin tests performed on the town venison supply. Mr. Gilrein discussed the testing method used and how the sampling protocol was changed this year. Ms. Field asked whether freezing or cooking the venison has any effect on permethrin residues. Ms. Walker stated that this information should be available from the Department of Health. Mr. Gilrein added that permethrin is fat-soluble, so it should break down when cooked in oil. Later on in the meeting, Chairman Lapides received a call from Dr. Mat Pound, who informed the group that freezing would in fact preserve permethrin, not degrade it.

- ❖ Mr. Shepherd then asked if there have been any educational programs provided to local hunters regarding the dressing of deer (changing of gloves, etc.) Mr. Gilrein replied that hunters have been educated on the proper handling of deer and that these handling guidelines should be followed regardless of the 4-poster program. Mr. Scheibel added that this information is included in

the literature that is provided with a hunting license. Chairman Lapidés asked if Ms. Walker should speak with the town venison butcher, Ray Bouissey, to ensure he is using the proper handling protocol. Ms. Walker stated that she has spoken with him on numerous occasions and that he is well aware of the proper handling procedures and she is confident that he is utilizing same.

- ❖ Chairman Lapidés asked the group if there were any members in favor of performing a deer count flyover this year. She mentioned that Chief Read felt that flyovers should be discontinued. The group made a unanimous decision that no flyover would be done this year. Chairman Lapidés then asked the group if deer count data is still necessary and, if so, which method should be used. She added that a particular goal had not been set, but that the local deer count should be maintained at 25-deer per square mile. Mr. Scheibel added that there is no way of knowing what the current deer count is on the Island right now. Ms. Field asked for clarification on the 25-deer per square mile number. Chairman Lapidés responded by saying that this number was found to be successful based on Dr. Pound's northeast field study. Mr. Scheibel stated that before a deer count method is decided upon, the need for the data needs to be discussed. He added that deer are measured using both direct and indirect methods. He discussed the spotlight method, which has been used in Mashomack for the past ten years or so, adding that it is inexpensive and provides a reasonable estimate. He concluded by saying that Mashomack's main concern is the 1,500 acres of oak forest, which is experiencing significant regeneration issues due to deer browsing. Mr. Shepherd added that there are fewer hunters every year as well.
- ❖ Chairman Lapidés informed the group that immuno-contraception should be readily available in the next five years or less. Mr. Scheibel commented that this method of deer population control is inherently less effective than hunting and has not yet been demonstrated to be a practical solution in managing a wild population. Chairman Lapidés stated that this was probably due to the fact that the immuno-contraception was harder to deliver in the past but that with the new collaring device it would be easy and certainly more polite than hunting.

- ❖ Mr. Gilrein stated that more funds are needed for 2010 and the first quarter of 2011, when the project should be completed. He mentioned that \$160,000 is still needed for 2010 and another \$53,000 for 2011. He anticipates the final report to be ready by mid-May at the latest. He added that these figures represent the very minimum needed for the project and that an additional \$30,000 would be the maximum.
- ❖ Chairman Lapides then asked for an update on Fire Island. Mr. Gilrein stated that their Lone Star population has dropped even more significantly than Shelter Island's. Chairman Lapides added that the DEC plans to allow both the SI and FI projects to continue until they make their final decision sometime next year.
- ❖ Mr. Gilrein asked if the Deer and Tick Management Foundation would be fundraising this year. Chairman Lapides replied that the fundraising process has begun and Ms. Travis-Messer added that the target this year is \$200,000. Mr. Gilrein offered to speak with potential donors to help explain the project if necessary. He added that he and Ms. Walker had given a presentation earlier in the month to the Mattituck Gun Club and had an overwhelming response to the 4-Poster Program. He added that Ms. Walker would be attending the East Hampton meeting as well. Mr. Scheibel informed the group that Ms. Walker will also be speaking at one of Mashomack's "fireside chats" on March 6th.
- ❖ Mr. Gilrein then handed out the latest monthly report from Cornell. Ms. Walker stated that the next progress report would be available in April. Mr. Gilrein added that he plans to deploy the 4-poster units in mid-March and that a vegetation survey will begin in March as well.
- ❖ The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 17 at 10 am, location TBD.

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Lapides at 11:32 am.