

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 20, 2020

Place: Held virtually (via Zoom)

Board Members:

Present: Peter Kushner, President; Chris Shook, Vice President; Christopher Bovid, Secretary; Kathy Shook, Treasurer; Eric Boersma, Paul Scott, Diana Morton-Thompson
In Attendance: Approximately 50 people (includes Board members)



I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, 7:00 pm

- Welcome
- Zoom meeting procedures overview
- Overview of ODWNA website (winchellneighborhood.org)
- Information also posted on “Winchell Neighborhood Neighbors Only” Facebook page (not run by ODWNA)
- Typical meeting schedule and location at Winchell Elementary (presently on Zoom while Kalamazoo Public Schools still closed due to COVID-19)
- ODWNA e-mail newsletter sign-up
- February 17, 2021 meeting guest speaker: Linda Whitlock, retired horticulturalist from Michigan State University Extension; “Smart Gardening with Native Plants”
- Special Meeting (via Zoom) on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. with new State Representative, Julie Rogers, regarding update on State activity pertaining to COVID-19
- Items being worked on by Board of Directors:
 - Safe Routes To School grant (adding sidewalks, traffic calming measures); City’s target date for applying for grant funds is June 2021
 - Quick Win Project: Urban Nature Route (urban route that follows city streets to connect the Kleinstuck Preserve and Asylum Lake Preserve, through all five of our neighborhood’s mini parks); potential for side route that goes to Woods Lake Park
 - Review of proposed bike trail in Glen Park South and continued discussions with City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (“PRAB”) and the Director of Parks and Recreation Department, Sean Fletcher
 - City’s website about the Natural Features Protection (“NFP”) zoning overlay (Phase 2) has been updated; the City Planner intends to bring proposed NFP Phase II changes back to Planning Commission at the February 23, 2021 Meeting
- Overview of reasons for asking our guest speaker tonight
 - Urban deer population is becoming a major issue in the City of Kalamazoo
 - P. Kushner has been asked to help build and support a coalition of neighborhood leaders and interest groups with different points of view to review the deer issue
 - Idea is to create an ad hoc committee with City staff support to gather information and feedback in order to establish short, medium, and long range goals to address the deer population within the city
 - ODWNA, ONA, and NAPH Neighborhood Plans all include actions to “control deer population”
 - Our guest speaker tonight is here to discuss and educate regarding the concept of urban wildlife management, rather than specifics on deer in the Winchell Neighborhood
- Introduction of guest speaker, Donald Poppe, Wildlife Biologist at Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division

II. **Treasurer’s Report**

- None

III. **Neighborhood Business (Old and New):**

- None

Notes from our Guest Speaker:

- **Donald Poppe, Wildlife Biologist at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources**
- Urban Deer Management in Michigan: First Steps and Options for Communities
- Has received photographs from the Winchell Neighborhood over the last several years; obvious that plenty of deer in the area. Not uncommon to have the in urban environments.
- Why Engage in Deer Management?
 - Damage to landscaping
 - Deer at bird feeders as nuisance
 - Deer-vehicle accidents
 - Presence of deer bothering humans
 - Aesthetics of covering plants with fencing/netting

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes



- Potential for disease due to higher densities of animal populations
- Characteristics of Urban Deer
 - Reproduction
 - Increased in Urban Areas
 - Reported as high as 1.8 fawn/adult doe
 - Survival
 - Higher rates
 - Reported as high as 87%
 - Home Range Size (deer not leaving the area)
 - Typically smaller
 -
- Carrying Capacity
 - Biological (capacity at which deer have food, water, everything needed to survive; tied to habitat)
 - Social (capacity of acceptance by society over time)
- Measures of Capacity for Wildlife Populations
 - When biological carrying exceeds a certain point, deer population drops due to natural causes
 - When social capacity is exceeded, deer population is reduced by non-natural causes
- Items to Begin Monitoring
 - Deer-Vehicle Collisions
 - Forest Regeneration
 - Landscape Damage
 - Complaints
 - Residents Opinions
 - Deer Numbers
 - Different surveying methods that can be used
 - I. Winter aerial survey is a worthwhile tactic (from plane can fly low and spot track sets)
 - II. Spotlight surveys are difficult to accomplish in residential areas
 -
- Management Options
 - Let Nature Take Its Course
 - Pros
 - I. Seems like a compromise
 - II. Inexpensive
 - Cons
 - I. No solutions
 - II. Continued degradation of habitat and conflicts
 - Hunting
 - Pros
 - I. Inexpensive to communities
 - II. Provides economic stimulus
 - III. Largely favored by many people
 - Cons
 - I. Some types of hunting (i.e., trophy) not appealing to many
 - II. Controversial
 - III. Access (i.e., do you have a place where people can hunt?); It is helpful to have larger areas away from houses
 - Sharpshooting
 - Pros
 - I. Reduces deer population quickly
 - Cons
 - I. Often expensive
 - II. Controversial
 - III. Access
 - Trap and Remove
 - Pros
 - I. No projectile
 - II. Removes deer from difficult areas
 - Cons
 - I. High stress to deer
 - II. Expensive (requires many hours of work)
 - III. Transfer will not be allowed by State of Michigan due to potential for spread of disease
 - Contraception

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes



- Pros
 - I. Doesn't fire lethal projectile
 - II. Prevents fawns from being born for several years
- Cons
 - I. Expensive
 - II. Doesn't remove deer
 - III. Difficult to achieve long-term success (because even though urban deer do have a small home range, still possibility for other deer to move in from other areas)
- Sterilization
 - Pros
 - I. Doesn't fire a lethal projectile
 - II. Prevents fawns from being born permanently
 - Cons
 - I. Expensive (does require tranquilizers and surgery)
 - II. Doesn't remove deer
 - III. Difficult to achieve long-term success
 - This was done in Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Reintroduce Predators (cougars, black bears, wolves)
 - Pros
 - I. Opportunity to return historical species
 - Cons
 - I. Socially unacceptable
 - II. Expensive
 - III. Complicated interactions requires study
- Fencing and Repellants (best for addressing problems in individual yards)
 - Pros
 - I. Exclusion
 - II. Relatively inexpensive
 - Cons
 - I. Requires maintenance
 - II. Unsightly?
 - III. Does not solve community wide problem
 - Many farmers do this to prevent crop damage
- Considerations for Starting a Deer Management Program
 - Authority (City permission needed; land owner needed for activities on privately-owned real estate; ordinances prohibiting discharge of firearms in City limits)
 - Background
 - Objectives
 - Recommendations
 - Alternatives
 - Logistics
 - Communicate
 - Evaluate
- First Steps to Consider
 - Consult local DNR biologists
 - Identify problem areas in the community
 - Recommend fencing/repellents/hunting
 - Review local ordinances
 - Feeding deer (feeding/baiting of deer is currently illegal in lower Michigan as of January 2020 due to chronic wasting diseases ("CWD") and tuberculosis)
 - Projectile ordinances
 - Public meetings
- Urban Deer Management Conclusions
 - Consensus on deer management is impossible
 - Incorporate both biological and social input
 - Management strategies should align with the objectives of the deer program
 - **Management actions need to be maintained over time**
- Urban Deer Management Resources
 - <https://deeradvisor.dnr.cornell.edu/>
 - <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/community-services/Pages/Non-lethal-Deer-Mangaement-Options-.aspx>
 - https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/hwi_monographs/3/

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes



- Looking at Kalamazoo County, clear that this is a city but there are green spaces (around Asylum Lake and the Kleinstuck Preserve) and wooded areas between and around houses throughout the neighborhood, which make it a great area for deer with corridors between those green spaces. Not much agriculture around the City but the Southern, Eastern, and Western part of the county show a lot of agriculture.
- Kalamazoo 2018 Deer Vehicle Collisions: 1017
 - Top 15 of 83 Counties
- 2020 Crop Damage
 - Of Allegan, Van Buren, and Kalamazoo
 - Kalamazoo had fewest requests for permits but most deer killed pursuant to permits
 - Demonstrates that Kalamazoo County has an abundant deer population
- Q&A:
 - D. Heaton:
 - What did Ann Arbor do and was it successful in reducing the deer nuisance?
 - A: Got a permit for sharpshooting from the State and did that in their parks. They also did some sterilization. D. Poppe is not familiar with the results of their monitoring. That information is likely available on the City of Ann Arbor's website.
 - John Lacko:
 - Has there been any studies about exactly how many deer we have?
 - Do we have any record of incidents (i.e., car-deer accidents)?
 - What is the range for deer (i.e., how far do they travel in distances)?
 - A: D. Poppe is aware that Kalamazoo Christian High School students did some informal surveys but he is not aware of any formal studies having been done.
 - I. P. Kushner is also aware of some students at Kalamazoo College that were doing another type of survey, which has not been publicly released yet. Unofficially, the study shows that the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood is a deer breeding epicenter in the City.
 - A: For deer-vehicle collisions, can look up the data for the County. Reported through law enforcement so not sure if can get finer scale data to get City of Kalamazoo-specific.
 - A: Has not looked at any urban deer studies but the general studies support ideas of a smaller home range. For family groups of deer in the *wild*, they typically range 1-2 square miles. D. Poppe would suspect that in our neighborhood, the does and fawns just stay in our neighborhood and that the bucks' range will be dictated by the breeding season. Exceptions for deer might be in the winter (concentrations might even be higher in the neighborhood in the winter in order to eat the shrubs).
 - Rosemary Gardiner
 - It seems the neighborhood knows a lot about the deer patterns here. Who would pay if we do culls?
 - A: P. Kushner indicates that ultimately the City would have to authorize, approve, and pay for any solution. That solution-seeking process is what is now getting underway. D. Poppe indicates that if there were some management actions, it would be more effective on a larger scale (i.e., city-wide effort) rather than on a smaller, neighborhood-only scale.
 - Jacque Eatmon:
 - As related to paying for it, inquires whether it could be funded from the City because it is part of our neighborhood plan.
 - A: P. Kushner thinks that is a legitimate concern and legitimate goal to work with the City to work on short, medium, and long-term solutions to the problem, including not only having a solution but also a path with funding.
 - Notices there are other neighborhoods that have it as part of their plans and wants to know who they are with respect to the range of the deer. Thinks the more neighborhoods that have that consideration, the City would be more inclined to help, particularly financially.
 - Is there a requirement by the State that cities turn in a deer management plan periodically?
 - A: P. Kushner indicates that other neighborhoods with city-approved neighborhood plans that have those issues identified are Oakwood and Parkview Hills, which are adjacent to us. Other neighborhoods have identified those issues but perhaps not as much as us. P. Kushner has reached out to them all and has already heard back from Oakwood. P. Kushner agrees that we need to show it is not just a "Winchell" issue but a regional issue. D. Poppe adds that with respect to populations, they are very complex. An individual deer's home range might be small but there is also dispersal. Young deer disperse into new areas. The key to remember is that these populations are open. They can move into favorable habitats and move seasonally. There might be areas with less deer densities but it is always good to think holistically.
 - There is no requirement for deer management plans from cities. The state manages wildlife populations in the public trust (i.e., for the benefit of the people of the State of Michigan).

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes



- Steve Mackey:
 - Lives on Bobolink Lane off Rambling Road. In last 3 months, have had two deer die, not from vehicle collisions. Did not appear to have external injuries. Is the DNR interested when this happens, should they be, and/or is Don Poppe interested when this happens?
 - A: Possibly. It comes with caveats. If a deer dies from CWD, that happens over a long period of time – by the time they die, they are emaciated with skeleton showing through skin with body condition greatly declined. If you see a deer with good body condition and especially in a neighborhood, there is still a possibility that a deer would die from a vehicle collision but not show external damage (they often die from internal organ damage). The exception would be EHD, but that is rare this time of year. That being said, yes, the DNR is interested. D. Poppe would talk with the concerned caller and get details. If can't tell why it died, it likely did not die from disease. That being said, the DNR will test any deer (via necropsy) but the DNR might not be able to come pick it up - - the property owner might need to deliver it to the lab. P. Kushner suggests property owner takes a photo to send D. Poppe. D. Poppe also indicates it is noteworthy whether the deer was seen alive prior to dying. Need to put together a story. If a perfectly-healthy looking deer is dead, it's probably not a good candidate to test for disease.
- Joe Duisterhof:
 - Has witnessed a few people feeding deer in the neighborhood. Wonders if DNR does community outreach/education on feeding deer. Also, what is recommendation on what to do when see people feeding deer.
 - A: DNR is not specifically making community outreach efforts about feeding deer (although it is, in fact, illegal in lower Michigan). Typically law enforcement would respond to those types of issues if someone requests it. People have not specifically requested talks on feeding/baiting but that could be a component discussed more in an urban management presentation. If D. Poppe sees something illegal, he is required to report it to a Conservation Officer. Within a neighborhood, there are social considerations (might be a friend or neighbor). A lot of people don't know that feeding and baiting is illegal. D. Poppe would probably recommend using your presence in the neighborhood as a community member to inform/educate people who are feeding/baiting. Ultimately it is up to you to report people. It is a more complex issue in an urban setting than in a rural setting where a hunter is baiting.
 - P. Kushner adds that, 1) having heard neighbors on the issue, educational and outreach component is something that the ad hoc committee will have advocated; 2) City of Kalamazoo has a link on its website called "Report It" concerning everything from pot holes to lack of shoveling sidewalks to lack of lawn mowing, etc. Usually the City sends a notice to the property owner first. So there is a way to report everything from pot holes to ordinance violations.
 - D. Poppe also doesn't know what the City's response would be. It might need to be reported to the Report All Poaching hotline. Possible that a Conservation Officer would give a call back to the reporting party, too. Often there is the opportunity to work with the Conservation Officer over the phone.
- James Melliush:
 - Is it at all possible or practical for 6 or 7 or 8 property owners with adjacent properties to get permission from the State and City to go in with bow hunters, etc., to lower the population in the area and follow up in a year or two, etc.?
 - A: Yes, there are opportunities for that. They don't need permission from the State – the bow hunters would just need a license. Urban deer hunting and bow hunting is fairly popular in many areas. Would just need authorization from the City.
 - Are they limited in the same way with the number of tags they could have?
 - A: Yes, the only difference would be applicable City ordinances / permission from the City.
- Sherry Sims:
 - States that she did have a neighbor who noticed another person continually feeding deer and when they contacted the City, they were told to contact the DNR. They did that and the DNR went and spoke with the property owner (who didn't realize the law) and the matter was resolved.
 - D. Poppe also acknowledges that approaching neighbors to talk about issues like that can be very uncomfortable so reporting it to the DNR and having a Conservation Officer to address might be an appropriate method to address issues.
- Eric Boersma:
 - Do you have any recommendations on how to get deer to leave your yard when they are tame?
 - A: It can be very difficult. Some people have had success with vinegar in a squirt gun. The City of Ann Arbor website might also have some good recommendations. Usually a combination of harassment techniques (noise, squirting something stinky, making them uncomfortable rather than giving them what they like).

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

- Chris Chadderdon:
 - She was going to try buying a Super Soaker squirt gun to try to get rid of them that way.
 - D. Poppe recommends using your hose to squirt them, although some people have said they have done that and the deer don't really mind.
- Steve Mackey:
 - Has had success with adding coins in a soup can and shaking it to scare them away.



IV. **Additional Public Comments:**

Pete Kushner thanked Don Poppe for his presentation and thanked meeting participants for attending.

V. **Adjournment:** 8:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary