

TOWN OF HARVARD DEER MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

***ZOOM MEETING 7:00pm – 8:30 pm
Monday July 17, 2023***

Bob Douglas, Joe Pulido, Tom Cotton, Ben Urquhart

Bob gave the introduction.

Bob recommended Warilla (town), Stow Gravel Pit (town), Tripp, Old Mill, Tufts-Scroggie-Clap and Abbot-Reed-Powell as parcels to add to the program.

Tom asked about feedback. Bob spoke with two members and asked to be put on the Land Stewardship Agenda.

On the subject of the sharing of sensitive Hunter personal data Bob detailed meeting with the Chairman on two occasions and at his request. Bob remarked that he was disappointed that this information had apparently not been shared with the Conservation Commission members.

Bob shared that DMS had been requested by the Conservation Agent to comment on a different document that had been produced by a Commission member. Tom shared the document "Policies and Procedures for Deer Management Subcommittee" on the screen.

1 Meetings.

Bob expressed that there were many members with difficult tasks it was often difficult to meet weekly. Tom expressed that we don't need meetings every month, but maybe a fixed day of the month would be good to work around.

Joe suggested a fixed timeframe maybe once a quarter - and have ad-hoc meetings as needed. Weekly is too much.

Ben - fine with draft. Flexibility. I don't think we should change how we are meeting right now – it's regular when it needs to be and irregular when it's not."

Bob asked for suggestions.

Joe. Depends on the time of the year.

Bob suggested Mondays. Joe agreed. Tom and Ben said Monday and Tuesdays are best. Possible Monday – first of the month 7pm.

Bob asked if Paul [Willard] had been contacted, Tom had called and left a message.

2 Communications

a) Bob said all communications with ConCom are communicated with Agent.

b) Bob asked to skip b. Concerned it may not be consistent with code of conduct signed by all boards. Bob will follow up.

c) Tom currently sends information consistent with reports. Bob asked how it was stored on Conservation end and said he would follow up the Commission. Ben, information is public. Joe, are reports on DMS webpage? When does it go public? Tom, data is sent to their agent. Joe, is it posted to the public? Bob will ask the Commission how it is stored. Bob noted our Draft document what information would be available however it's not in the Commission's draft.

3 Record keeping.

Bob mentioned that reducing the information had been previously mentioned as a time saver. DMS had reduced information down to what was needed by HPD and EPO. Joe asked why DOB is needed. Bob will report back if that info was asked by HPD or EPO. Joe - should be the minimum required by police to vet hunters.

Ben - comfortable with language.

EPO - does not need stamps. They already have the info. HPD does not need it.

Joe - we just need to know they have it. Could be a checklist - not copies of documents. We can validate.

Bob - I hope this is a give and take with the Commission.

Ben - we do need copies of the permits. Bookkeeping assignments

Tom - onus on person collection data. How does it get collected? Who has the responsibility to make it simple.

Bob - every time something new is added on, it makes it harder, longer and more tedious. We have more regulations and requirements than any other town or land trust in the commonwealth. There is a point where it's a bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake.

Tom - the less we have to manage gathering and storing, the easier it is to collect the data.

Joe - what is the purpose we collect this data? It's a vetting process for the hunters.

Bob - we did say we would collect the number of the license number for the EPOs.

Ben - this is a minor assignment bookkeeping - data collected as a soccer coach.

Bob - fair to give the hunters an idea how info is kept secure.

Bob - we thought we had it solved with our document - grateful for the time DMS has spent reviewing this new document.

4 Equipment.

Not sure what they mean other than the cameras.

5 Hunter Quals.

Bob it was never a requirement it be done at a club. We have a lucky situation now, with Joe on board. Bob recommends just having a member present. Joe recommended two DMS on hand.

Ben - like having two. We can't guarantee club use.

Poundage check was never required in the original DMS checks. Joe stated it is a device he can bring with him. Tom - short exercise, ok to leave in. Like having two members DMS or range master. Ben - minimum 40-pound bow pull strength.

Bob - not at a range have two DMS members present, if at a range then range master can count as a DMS member.

Qualification does not have to take place at a range.

Ok with six-inch target at 75 feet.

Checklist

Bob asked to separate checklist for a future time. We reserve the right to request revisions.

Other things have proved to take more time including site selection. This had been a checklist that Wendy and I put together. It was a great idea, but more of a guideline than set in stone. Expressed interest at last meeting that it needs to be revisited. The Committee voted to revisit this section with possible revisions.

Bob described changes made by ConCom related to things that have already taken place and removed from mission statement.

a) ok

b) Ben mentioned we have a 20-page report done on this.

c) Bob will revisit goals to assure they are up to date. Bob will check with Deer biologist. Bob each region has different goals - Zones 9 and 10 may differ.

Joe made a motion to change from "pursuing" to "assisting". Seconded by Tom. No objections.

Bob thanked DMS members for the time put in here on this review.

Moved back to agenda.

Joe gave a summary of activities. Invited hunters back, 15 of 19 accepted. This may open slots. Qualifiers are Sunday 23rd July and July 29 at Harvard Sportsman outdoor range. Bob asked that thanks please be sent to the club.

Bob is evaluating Town Lands.

Question from agent on Qualifiers - how often?

Qualifiers are only "one and done" in all towns and Audubon, Trustees of Reservations. Joe - hunters practice year-round. They are dedicated. They shoot ethically, and annual qualifiers don't make sense. More qualifiers don't increase safety. Not required by the State, not by other programs. It can just be more work.

Tom: people do lose strength – 5-year interval is reasonable. Maybe if they skip a year - must requalify. Maybe we draw straws and bring back random people.

Ben: Comfortable with actively managed process. Once every two years.

Bob called for a motion.

Tom suggested we gather more information. Bob asked to table for more opinions. DMS is ok for Bob to ask our advisory team.

Meet again on the first Monday in August or last Monday in July, the 31st.

(1:17) Eve Wittenburg, can we help you. "No, I was just listening".

Jo Ward, can we help you with anything? "No, just listening thank you."

Tom motion to adjourn. Seconded by Joe.

Unanimous vote.