

MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: DEER COMMITTEE
RE: PUBLIC FORUM - DEER MANAGEMENT
DATE: 9/26/18

As requested in the March 6, 2018, City Council work session and suggested by the Iowa Natural Resource Commission (NRC), a committee was formed to discuss possible approaches for Iowa City's deer population management.

This committee was made up of the following five City staff members and five community members:

City Staff

Bill Campbell – Police
Derek Frank – Police
Sue Dulek – City Attorney's Office
Juli Seydell Johnson – Parks and Recreation
Liz Ford – Animal Control

Community Members

Brian Mildenstein
Jan Ashman
Ana Arnold
Laura Goddard
Erin Irish

The initial committee meeting was held on July 30, 2018, and included an in-depth discussion about past culling efforts in Iowa City, differing opinions on possible methods, and organizing a public forum to gauge community opinions on the need to reduce the deer population as well as methods to accomplish this, including sharpshooting and bow hunting.

Following that meeting, a page was created on the City website with information that included the Council work session transcript, the letter to the NRC from City Manager Geoff Fruin asking for special permission for a special harvest, and exhibits with historical and updated information about the deer count in Iowa City. The page also included details about the public forum that was to be held on August 14, 2018. For those not able to attend the forum, an email address was made available to allow for opinions to be submitted to the committee. Information about the forum was also distributed via various social media outlets.

Approximately 60 people attended the public forum, which included Tony DeNicola of White Buffalo, Inc., who presented data on the city's current deer count. He also offered information about his experience sharpshooting deer in Iowa City, and answered questions from several attendees, committee members, and residents.

A wide range of opinions were expressed at the public forum and via email submissions. Suggestions included, but are not limited to; not influencing the deer population at all, exploring and adopting non-violent methods of control, allowing bow-hunting, and hiring a professional service to reduce the numbers through a sharpshooting approach. There were many points brought up but not thoroughly considered due to time limitations. These include the amount of land developed in the Iowa City area since the last period of annual culling and how that affects deer distribution as well as control strategies,

the effects of deer overpopulation on home gardens/local food production and on the natural areas surrounding Iowa City, the costs of sharpshooting compared to bow hunting as well as practical considerations of how long and where in the city each could be deployed.

This forum is available to view online on the City's website and YouTube.

The committee met again on August 28, 2018, and discussed the forum. While exact numbers were not collected the night of the forum, it is the committee's conclusion that most of the comments and opinions expressed favored acting soon to control the deer population. Dr. DeNicola made a strong case for a sharpshooting approach: the majority of those who favored control found his presentation persuasive.

In addition, the Committee received emails (including from some who also spoke at the forum) that largely urged non-lethal action to address deer management.

The committee members understand that deer population management is a complex subject with multiple aspects to consider. We suggest as the Council moves forward with this consideration, that they routinely revisit Iowa City's need for deer population management and continue to explore all available options to keep the numbers at an acceptable and sustainable level for Iowa City residents.