

Regional Deer Management Strategy Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 9 – 6:15 pm

Room 107, CRD Building, 625 Fisgard St, Victoria

Meeting Notes

Present:

Robin Bassett
Richard Christiansen
Wendy Fox
Terry Mitchell
Robert Moody
Patrick O'Rourke
Jocelyn Skrlac
Kerri Ward
Sol Kinnis

Regrets:

Lisa Kadonaga
Philip Tom

Staff:

Jeff Weightman (Deer Management Project Manager, CRD Regional Planning)
Marg Misek-Evans (Senior Manager, CRD Regional Planning)
Corey Burger (Recording Secretary, CRD Regional Planning)
The meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm.

- 1. Arrival and Dinner**
- 2. Introductions**

M. Misek-Evans introduced herself and her staff to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAG) and thanked members for agreeing to serve on the CAG. The members of the CAG introduced themselves and spoke to their interests in the topic of deer management.

- 3. Logistics**

J. Weightman proposed a meeting schedule to the CAG and requested their input on preferred days/times for weekly meetings.

ACTION: CAG members to provide meeting schedule preferences to J. Weightman in the next few days.

J. Weightman gave an overview of the Terms of Reference for the CAG.

J. Weightman called for nominations for chair.

K. Ward nominated R. Bassett

R. Bassett declined

R. Bassett nominated P. O'Rourke

P. O'Rourke declined

K. Ward nominated J. Skrlac

Nomination was seconded by Richard Christiansen

J. Skrlac accepted

J. Weightman called for nominations a second and third time and hearing none declared the nominations closed.

As there was only one candidate, J. Weightman declared J. Skrlac as the new Chair of the CAG.

A question was asked about the need for Vice-Chair. J. Weightman noted that the CAG Terms of Reference did not include provision for a Vice-Chair; M. Misek-Evans indicated that the CAG could nominate someone to chair meetings in the absence of the Chair but not take on any other duties. J. Weightman asked if there were nominations for Vice-Chair.

R. Moody volunteered to serve as Vice Chair. Chair Skrlac agreed and no other CAG members wished to serve as Vice Chair or were opposed to R. Moody assuming the role.

J. Weightman declared R. Moody as Vice-Chair of the CAG, to assume the Chair only in Chair Skrlac's absence, but not to act as CAG spokesperson.

J. Skrlac assumed the role of the Chair.

4. Overview of RDMS process

J. Weightman gave an overview of the history of the process to date and the Terms of Reference. He also described the Expert Resource Working Group (ERWG), including the first meeting held recently. The CAG asked about the timeline of the ERWG and J. Weightman indicated that the ERWG's role is to support the CAG, so the timeline is the same.

J. Weightman noted that a communications strategy was in the final stages of development. He will provide an overview of the strategy at the next meeting.

The CAG asked about staff attendance and J. Weightman indicated that staff would be in attendance at each meeting. A question was asked if the CAG could meet the ERWG. J. Weightman said that representatives from the ERWG would be made available as required. The CAG discussed the possibility of attendance via teleconference and J. Weightman said that it could be arranged.

Continuing the RDMS discussion, the CAG asked about the prioritization of agriculture and whether that included areas beyond the Saanich Peninsula. M. Misek-Evans replied that it included agriculture in the entire CRD. The CAG asked if there were any economic studies of deer impacts and J. Weightman mentioned that Peninsula Agricultural Commission had provided a letter. A follow-up question with regards to damage to agriculture crops was asked and the CAG noted that several farmers sent crop damage information to the CRD Board at their March 14, 2012 meeting. Discussion ensued regarding feeding and hunting bylaw issues associated with various management options.

ACTION: J. Weightman to forward the agricultural information submitted to the March 14, 2012 CRD Board meeting regarding deer damage to farms on the Saanich Peninsula.

J. Weightman then spoke about the ERWG and its membership. CAG members commented on similar initiatives at the University of Victoria regarding rabbits and the CRD Goose Management Strategy. Discussion ensued on these other initiatives.

The CAG asked about the cause or triggering factor that prompted the creation of other deer management strategies and J. Weightman indicated that the Ministry of Environment Urban Ungulate Conflict Report by Gayle Hesse (Hesse report) was a good source for this information.

ACTION: J. Weightman to collect information regarding rabbit management at the University of Victoria and report back to the CAG

ACTION: J. Weightman to ask the ERWG specifically about information regarding the economic impact of deer on agriculture.

5. Review and Discussion of Materials

J. Weightman introduced the binder that CRD staff had produced for the CAG and presented specific parts of it. The CAG discussed the current count information and its limitations, including information from Ministry of the Environment, ICBC, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and others. J. Weightman noted that the CRD is currently waiting on data from the municipalities about deer fatalities on local roads.

ACTION: J. Weightman to forward municipal data regarding deer fatalities on local roads to the CAG when received.

Discussion by the CAG turned to loss of habitat due to human population growth and development as well as the effects of deer habituation due to contact with humans.

ACTION: CRD Staff to create a development activity map showing increase in developed area within the CRD over the past decade.

The CAG then discussed the health information and its limitations. J. Weightman noted that the CRD is waiting on updated deer and human health information from the ERWG.

J. Weightman then introduced the analysis of the community feedback received.

The CAG discussed the broad categories of the feedback as well as a discussion of non-lethal management options and their history in BC. The CAG noted that fencing costs for farmers with larger acreages are prohibitive, even under the now-defunct Environmental Farm Plan's Agriculture Environment & Wildlife Fund.

ACTION: CRD staff to provide additional data from the deer management submissions regarding suggested management options.

J. Weightman introduced the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Wildlife Accident Reporting System (WARS) data.

The CAG discussed the wildlife data and the availability of more focused numbers for the CRD. Discussion then turned back to the community feedback and then to safety of the consumption of deer meat as well as the related laws and bylaws.

6. For Next Meeting

The CAG was asked to read the binder contents and identify information gaps or additional management options that are not addressed in the Hesse report or other reports.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm