



Making a difference...together

CRD Regional Deer Management Strategy Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 4, 2012 – 4:00pm

Activity Room, Burnside-Gorge Community Centre, Victoria

Meeting Notes

Present:

Jocelyn Skrlac (Chair)
Robin Bassett (arrived at 4:40pm)
Richard Christiansen
Wendy Fox
Lisa Kadonaga
Sol Kinnis (arrived at 4:40pm)
Terry Michell
Robert Moody
Patrick O'Rourke

Regrets:

Phil Tom
Kerri Ward

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)
Jan Pezarro (Facilitator)

1. Approval of Agenda

P. O'Rourke moved approval of the agenda. R. Christiansen seconded

CARRIED

2. Chair's Remarks

J. Skrlac asked J. Pezarro to discuss the updated method for receiving input with the CAG and schedule for the remaining meetings. J. Pezarro introduced a new method for providing input into the application of the evaluation criteria to the management options to the CAG. J. Pezarro also noted that the CAG were a diverse group from many stakeholders and their personal views were valid and encouraged and the CAG was not constituted to be a group of experts. J. Weightman encouraged the CAG to try to expedite the management option evaluation criteria to allow for sufficient discussion of the recommendations and bundling of options.

The CAG discussed as an example Deer-Vehicle Collision Mitigation Option and the challenges with evaluating it under the new proposed updated method due to the wide range of costs of the various management sub-options. J. Weightman concurred with the CAG and noted that areas in Ontario have selected this option, specifically signage around urban parks. J. Weightman noted the range of options that included wildlife over or underpasses, road barriers and signage. The CAG discussed how much detail to get into with this option and that possibly the discussion format for evaluating the option could be used. J. Pezarro suggested the CAG group consider the more expensive options such as over/underpasses together and evaluate those followed by the less expensive options such as signage in a separate evaluation

J. Skrlac noted that she will be away for the next three weeks, so in her absence Vice Chair R. Moody will be acting Chair in her place.

J. Skrlac noted that the biodiversity information she distributed was part of the Peter Arcese research regarding deer impact on native vegetation and songbird habitat and that the CAG had already received a shortened version as part of their original information package that the ERWG had vetted.

3. Review and Approval of Minutes of June 27, 2012

P. O'Rourke moved approval of the agenda. L. Kadonga seconded.

CARRIED

4. Project Manager's Remarks

J. Weightman noted that the Evaluation Criteria online feedback form had closed today and the charts from the quantitative questions were done and the open-ended responses were still being processed. J. Weightman also noted that the sorting for the Principles, Goals and Objectives online feedback form open-ended responses was almost done and would be sent to the CAG by email.

ACTION: CRD Staff to send the CAG the responses from the Principles, Objectives and Goals feedback form.

J. Weightman discussed the revised timeline noting that a report on the RDMS would not go to the July Planning, Transportation & Protective Services Committee, but rather the Chair of the Committee may provide a verbal status update on the process. This change came as CRD staff did not want to preempt the CAG's discussion.

J. Weightman then reiterated that the purpose of the online feedback form is to fulfill the obligations of the communications and consultation section of the Terms of Reference which emphasizes an open and transparent process that has early and ongoing

communications and consultation throughout the process. The CAG has full knowledge of how the form is being administered and the non-representative nature of the input/feedback. The feedback is another source of information for the CAG to use at their discretion. Another purpose of the online venue is to provide the public with an opportunity to follow CAG progress without having to attend the meetings. The online feedback form content is generated by the CAG and is updated weekly in accordance with the CAG's progress and in order to provide timely information out to the public and feedback to the CAG. The CAG requested an explanation as to what had prompted the statement of clarification and J. Weightman stated that there had been some confusion as to the role of the online public feedback tool information from the ERWG, and the public and that the CAG should be clear.

5. Correspondence

J. Weightman noted that there was one email this week which had already been circulated. J. Weightman also noted that K. Ward indicated an interest in the Mark Reed correspondence from the previous week. In her absence he asked if anyone present wished to discuss the submission. The CAG asked if issues relating to methodology of the online feedback form had been a topic of correspondence and J. Weightman indicated that it had. The CAG discussed the methodology of the online feedback forms and the source of the questions and content. J. Weightman noted that the content came from the CAG and the wording of the questions originated from similar questions from prior CRD feedback opportunities.

J. Weightman then noted that the next online feedback form would be the three management options validated today: Hazing & Frightening, Fencing and Landscaping Alternatives. The CAG noted that they had not yet broken out Effectiveness for Hazing & Frightening and that they would need to do so prior to that information being posted online.

The CAG requested an explanation regarding the wording of the Effectiveness sub Criteria: Root Cause, and decided it did not accurately reflect the CAG's intent for the evaluation, and therefore decided to change the wording the sub Criteria for Effectiveness to Broader Impact.

6. Facilitated Discussion

J. Pezarro then asked the CAG to separate Effectiveness into Broader Impact and Individual for the Hazing & Frightening management option. The CAG asked if the evaluation criteria number was an average and J. Pezarro replied that the mathematical average was the basis for the roundtable discussion on the score and that the final score was a value agreed upon through consensus by the CAG. The CAG discussed effectiveness in frightening deer, noting that it was an option that needed to be repeated

and was labor intensive, and that the Effectiveness: Broader Impact might address the timeframe issue.

J. Pezarro indicated to the CAG that they can work from the existing numbers and determine whether the two Effectiveness components score differently on the three point scale (low-medium-high). The CAG discussed their different scores for Effectiveness for the Individual and Effectiveness: Broader Impact. The CAG discussed the rating scale for the evaluation and the differences in opinion over the scoring. The CAG discussed the wording of the Cost/Economic criteria, suggesting different options. The CAG finally agreed to a score for Effectiveness for the Individual as 1 for agricultural and urban and 2 for rural and scored 1 for all geographies relative to broader impact.

The CAG discussed the validation of Fencing and one CAG member dissented with the evaluation of Effectiveness: Broader Impact and Feasibility/Capacity, stating that both should be ranked higher based on information the ERWG has provided to the CAG. The CAG asked about the wording of one of the bullet points regarding a question as to whether the CAG could recommend that the Ministry of Agriculture fencing subsidy program be restarted and the wording was clarified to “The CAG could recommend this program be restarted”. The CAG reversed the Cost score as per their discussion of scoring Cost to reflect a low score reflecting low cost rather than desirability. The CAG asked about the score of 1 for Community Impacts and noted that it referred to visual impacts. The CAG noted that they can recommend that municipal bylaws be changed to allow higher fences.

The CAG discussed the validation of Landscaping Alternatives, noting that the CAG had not evaluated the rural geography. The CAG discussed excluding the Agricultural geography and whether or not they could include the non-food ornamental plantings such as those around a house and one of the agricultural representatives noted that in their experience the neighbouring nurseries to their properties have low deer foraging pressure.

J. Pezarro asked the CAG to complete the scoring for Landscaping Alternatives in the rural geography. The CAG agreed to a score of 2 for Effectiveness for the Individual and 1 for Effectiveness: Broader Impacts. One CAG questioned the perceived arbitrary nature of the scoring and J. Pezarro reminded the CAG that their role was to provide their opinions based on their own experiences and views. The scoring range of one to three was equivalent to low, medium and high with mid points reflecting a blend ie. 1.5 = low-medium. The CAG agreed on a score of 1.5 for Feasibility/Capacity. The CAG discussed the effects of relatively larger properties in the rural geography versus urban. One CAG member abstained from voting due to concerns about the process. The CAG agreed on a score of 3 for Capability. The CAG discussed the number of plants required for larger properties and relative cost before deciding on a Cost score of 2. The CAG decided on a score of 2 for Time. The CAG decided on a score of 2 for Support & Enthusiasm, noting the same issues as with urban. The CAG discussed Community

Impacts and noting that neighbours are relatively further away in the rural geography before agreeing on a score of 2.5.

J. Pezarro then paused to ask the CAG if the current method of evaluating the management options was providing value for the members. The CAG discussed the timeline and stressed the need to discuss the management options broadly and the potential for not having enough time to fully explore their recommendations. M. Misek-Evans discussed the changes in the timeline and noted that following evaluation stage, discussion could include recommendations. M. Misek-Evans noted the timeline was structured to allow public input during the process through the website and that the CRD is committed to being transparent. A CAG member proposed that it would be better make the management recommendations as they discussed each management option and forego the evaluation stage. He further raised the concern with lack of region-specific data relative to such matters as agricultural loss estimates and fencing cost – benefit estimates indication that the CAG may recommend differently if such data were available.

M. Misek-Evans replied that this initial evaluation of management options was meant to be a process to allow the CAG a more fully informed discussion of each option using agreed on criteria for all geographies. The evaluations and notes taken on CAG scoring considerations would assist subsequent discussions around the management recommendations. The CAG discussed how the current process has allowed more nuanced decision making. The CAG discussed the number of remaining evaluations and expressed concerns with the challenge of timing.

In a roundtable format each CAG member provided their respective opinions, experiences and views, noting that the CRD Board has acknowledged deer human conflicts and how the experiences of the members are to be used to develop recommendations. The CAG discussed how their role was not be an expert group, rather to develop public policy and thus the discussions around the table including CAG member's individual views, experiences and opinions were valid in that context. The CAG noted how the evaluation of management options has resulted in information sharing and a better understanding and appreciation of different view as well as produced caveats and challenges with each option.

After each member had spoken, J. Pezarro then indicated a perceived majority of support around the table to continue with the current process of evaluating the management options. M. Misek-Evans noted that from the CRD staff perspective, the CAG was doing a fantastic job and acknowledged that it was difficult and challenging work. She further noted that the detailed minutes of each session were to assist CAG members in subsequent discussions on management options and recommendations as well as to provide a transparent public record.

7. The CAG broke from dinner from 6:25 to 7:00pm

8. Facilitated Discussion Continued

The CAG began discussing the Effectiveness Criteria for Capture and Euthanize in the Agricultural geography noting Effectiveness: Broader Impact may actually be higher than Effectiveness for the individual based on information that K. Brunt of the Ministry of Environment provided about small deer home ranges. The CAG discussed how a cull may be geographically broad-based, noting that this management option was one that the CRD would undertake rather than individuals. The CAG discussed the ERWG-supplied material and K. Brunt's presentation noting that he indicated that many animals might need to be culled for the option to be truly effective and any cull would need to be ongoing or pulsed over time. The CAG discussed the challenges with specific tools used to catch animals, noting that the tranquilize and euthanize method used for other species such as bears are not always successful. The CAG discussed the concept of adding metrics to the Capture & Euthanize option, noting an information gap regarding the rate of reproduction that would return the deer population to its current size. The CAG discussed whether or not to evaluate Capture & Euthanize with a different methodology where the scoring of low, medium and high would refer to the impacted percentage of the population but decided that such percentages would apply to any management option. The CAG also noted the Effectiveness Criterion evaluates a management option's ability to reduce conflicts. The CAG then agreed on a score of 2.5 for both Effectiveness for the Individual and Effectiveness: Broader Impact.

The CAG then discussed Effectiveness in the rural geography, noting that it was the same, thus, agreed on a score of 2.5 for both Effectiveness for the Individual and Effectiveness: Broader Impact. The CAG then discussed the urban geography, discussing whether or not a cull would even be possible in an urban area. The CAG then agreed to a score of 2.5 for Effectiveness for the Individual and Effectiveness: Broader Impact in the urban geography.

The CAG then discussed Feasibility/Capacity, including tranquilizing animals before they are killed and net and bolt method used by other BC communities. The CAG noted that fields in the agricultural geography would make capturing deer relatively easier. The CAG noted an assumption that any cull would be done by professionals monitored by government employees. The CAG noted that it was not perfectly feasible and that even professionals do not always succeed, therefore a score of 2.5 for Feasibility/Capacity in the agricultural geography was chosen.

The CAG then discussed Feasibility/Capacity in the rural and urban geographies, noting that with smaller properties the potential techniques change and that higher distribution of the population lowers the number of animals that could be caught at one time. The CAG also noted that it would be relatively more difficult to find a place to setup a trap in the Rural or Urban geographies versus the Agricultural geography. The CAG discussed the example of Cranbrook where the hours of the day within which the Capture and

Euthanize process could be completed were limited. The CAG then agreed on a score of 2 in rural and 1.5 in urban for Feasibility/Capacity.

The CAG then discussed Capability and whether or not the CRD had the legal capability to implement Capture & Euthanize. M. Misek-Evans replied that the province would have to provide the CRD with the capability and that the CRD would need to change their own bylaws as currently CRD animal control services only has jurisdiction over cats and dogs. The CAG discussed the *Wildlife Act*. The legal barriers for a private company to carry out the Capture and Euthanize process would require provincial approval. The CAG noted that the Capture & Euthanize process has been done before in other communities including on Sidney Island where large numbers of deer were taken. J. Weightman noted that prior to the establishment of the CAG the CRD had written a letter to the province stating that wildlife conflicts fell under the jurisdiction of the province and the province should address deer human conflicts in the CRD. The response was that the province would not take on this task. The province has informed the CRD of the available resources that will support the local decisions (provincial staff and equipment) but that the process the CAG is undergoing right now is the process the province requires before granting that support. The CAG then agreed to a score of 2 for Capability in the Agricultural geography with a note that the CRD would implement and would need to get provincial support.

The CAG then discussed Capability in the urban geography, for Capture and Euthanize, noting that with a large number of private properties it could be relatively harder to find a location. The CAG noted that it was not difficult to get a collection permit for deer for scientific purposes; one of the CAG members had personal experience with collection permits in the past. The CAG noted three different legal jurisdictions involved: provincial, municipal and the individual property owner. The CAG then agreed on a score of 2 for Urban and Rural geographies with the proviso that it requires provincial support.

The CAG then discussed Time, noting that it takes some time for the province to give permission and then implement. The CAG then agreed to score of 2 for Time in agricultural, rural and urban geographies.

The CAG then discussed Support & Enthusiasm, noting the differences between the geographies. The CAG noted that there is very little Crown land on Vancouver Island. The CAG discussed whether they could interpret the level of Support & Enthusiasm without a representative public survey. The CAG then agreed on a score of 2 for Support & Enthusiasm for agricultural and 1.5 in both rural and urban geographies.

The CAG then discussed Community Impacts, for Capture and Euthanize, noting that there are very few and agreed to score Community Impacts as Low in all three geographies.

The CAG then discussed Cost, noting the high costs for chemical euthanasia agents and the costs of salaries and transportation. The CAG discussed the relative costs for Capture & Euthanize versus Capture & Relocate, noting that they would be lower for Capture & Euthanize. The CAG agreed to a score of High for Cost in all three geographies.

On the suggestion of one member, the CAG discussed using medians rather than averages of all individual scores for establishing the initial score for discussion purposes, which would provide a better estimation with less rounding bias.

J. Pezarro then asked the CAG to score the remaining management options and send those scores to CRD staff to allow for the preliminary discussion score to be calculated before the next CAG meeting.

ACTION: CAG members to evaluate all remaining management options and send them to CRD staff for averaging in advance of the next meeting for media score calculation.

9. Next Steps and Outstanding Items

J. Skrlac then asked J. Weightman to explain the next steps. J. Weightman indicated that he would resend the Evaluation Criteria electronic form to the CAG as well as the results of the public feedback forms for the Principles, Goals and Objectives and Evaluation Criteria as he had indicated at the beginning of the meeting.

10. Next Meeting

J. Skrlac then asked the CAG for next meeting date and they agreed to the following Wednesday from 4 – 8pm at the Burnside Gorge Community Centre's Activity Room pending availability.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm