



Making a difference...together

CRD Regional Deer Management Strategy Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 27, 2012 – 4:00pm

Activity Room, Burnside-Gorge Community Centre, Victoria

Meeting Notes

Present:

Jocelyn Skrlac (Chair)
Richard Christiansen
Wendy Fox
Lisa Kadonaga
Sol Kinnis (arrived at 4:15pm)
Patrick O'Rourke
Kerri Ward

Regrets:

Robin Bassett
Phil Tom
Terry Michell
Robert Moody

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

J. Skrlac asked the CAG for approval to add a section for Chair's Comments.

W. Fox moved approval of the amended agenda. P. O'Rourke seconded.

CARRIED

2. Chair's Comments

J. Skrlac informed the CAG about her interview with CBC on June 28, 2012 regarding deer management and the CAG. K. Ward asked why CBC had incorrectly named her as a member of DeerSafe. J. Skrlac said that she had misspoken and apologized to K. Ward for the oversight, and publically announced her error and apology. J. Skrlac said that the CAG is composed CRD residents from all different backgrounds and that she was not denigrating DeerSafe. J. Skrlac asked the CAG if any were members of DeerSafe and none indicated that they were.

3. Review and Approval of Minutes of June 19, 2012

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

CARRIED

4. Correspondence

J. Weightman started with an email from R. Kline, who looked into the issue of active crop loss insurance files to investigate losses by the Ministry of Agricultural and found that the total number was three. Further details could not be released due to privacy concerns for the farmers. R. Kline noted in his email that the threshold for releasing data was five for privacy reasons, so could not provide more information.

J. Weightman also noted that R. Kline responded to the issue of repellants on food.

J. Weightman said the CAG asked about information from some Core municipalities regarding their use of repellents on municipal lands. J. Weightman said that none had indicated any use of repellents. But rather, strong consideration was given to plant choice and some forms of fencing for more delicate plants. C. Burger noted that Oak Bay Parks & Recreation was considering using Bobbex on their rose garden at Windsor Park.

J. Weightman mentioned the Animal Alliance report that had been forwarded to the CAG and the Expert Resources Working Group (ERWG), adding that responses from the ERWG had accompanied the submission. The CAG asked if the responses were only from some of the ERWG and J. Weightman replied that only some of the ERWG had responded.

The CAG asked about the correspondence from Mark Reed regarding the online feedback form and J. Weightman replied that it could be dealt with later in the meeting under section 7.

J. Weightman spoke about the online feedback form for the Principles, Objectives and Goals and noted how the public had agreed for the most part with the CAG's wording of principles, goals and objectives. The CAG asked about the rationale for the online feedback form and J. Weightman replied that it was in the Terms of Reference in addition to the fact that the CRD is committed to ongoing communication and consultation with its residents and the online feedback form was part of that process. J. Weightman noted that the CRD Board may opt to do public opinion survey in addition to the work of the CAG, but these online feedback forms can provide non-representative indications to the Board and the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee (PT&PSC). The CAG asked who was notified of the online feedback forms and J. Weightman replied that it was being sent out to any email address that had submitted to the deermanagement@crd.bc.ca email address and that CRD staff had hoped to gain some earned media, which did not happen prior to the online submission

close. The CAG asked if there was a space for open-ended commentary and J. Weightman replied that there was but that feedback was being sorted by CRD staff as the online feedback tool had closed at noon on June 27.

ACTION: CRD Staff to provide the CAG with the organized feedback from the online feedback form

5. Facilitated Discussion

J. Weightman said that the next step was to validate the Evaluation Criteria now that the CAG had used the criteria for another online feedback opportunity.

J. Pezarro noted that of the 12 Principles, Objectives and Goals, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. J. Pezarro noted that of the three principles, the consensus principle was one of least agreed with principles. J. Pezarro also noted personal disappointment that the First Nations principle also scored fairly low. The CAG reiterated that 282 responses of over than 360,000 people in the CRD, the feedback must be qualified as non-representative. J. Pezarro said that although it might not be indicative, it does show that people are interested in the issue and willing to engage. The CAG also noted that if consensus had not been a principle, its absence likely would have been noticed.

J. Pezarro then asked the CAG if they were comfortable with the Evaluation Criteria being released for public input. The CAG noted that there was some confusion between Feasibility and Capability, as both included information regarding the legal or regulatory status of a particular management option. The CAG discussed how to separate out the two categories and how or if moving the legal matters into a single category may be beneficial. M. Misk-Evans suggested grouping Feasibility and Capacity together as the technical means to complete a particular management option and suggested Capability encompass the legal, jurisdictional and regulatory issues. The CAG discussed specific examples from previously evaluated management options, noting that with Fencing they had discussed legal matters under both Feasibility and Capability.

The CAG agreed on defining Feasibility/Capacity as the technical capacity to implement a management option while Capability was defined as the legal, jurisdictional and regulatory criteria.

The CAG then discussed the decision to split effectiveness into two major groupings, individual and the root cause of deer-human conflict.

The CAG then discussed whether the cost criteria needed to look at the bearer of the cost of the management option, whether it was public, private or a shared cost. The CAG noted that the cost criteria naturally sorted itself into private or public, using the two management option examples of Fencing versus Deer/vehicle collision mitigation.

The CAG discussed footnoting the beginning of a management option evaluation section, noting which aspect of effectiveness the option deals with and the primary group bearing the cost. M. Misek-Evans also noted that cost needs to look at capital or initial costs versus ongoing or operating/maintenance costs.

The CAG then discussed the Cost/Economic Impact sub-criteria “Examine the overall economic impact”, noting that it was difficult to measure overall economic impact. The CAG noted that the economic impact may be positive but due to the lack of information, in some cases measurement was difficult. The CAG noted that politicians may seek economic impact information in order to make a decision. J. Pezarro asked the CAG if it wanted to strike the economic impact sub-criteria and just footnote any qualitative or societal costs.

The CAG noted that cost scoring may include cost recovery such as the example of Sidney Island selling the venison harvested to offset the cost of hunting. The CAG discussed crop damage numbers as a proxy for economic impact but noted that the issue of determining economic impact was common with all three geographies and the rural and urban geographies have limited information available similar to the crop damage estimates.

The CAG discussed the next step in the process, a discussion of the entire set of management options to develop recommendations, after each option has been considered individually. One of the agricultural representatives noted that they have looked at all the various management options for their own operations and found fencing to have the best cost/benefit analysis. The representative noted that the CAG could do a similar analysis after all the options are initially evaluated.

J. Pezarro noted a level of discomfort in the CAG with the lack of metrics on economic impact. The CAG discussed the crop loss data received to date, noting some of the farmers reporting no losses raised animals and would have lower expected losses due to deer damage.

The CAG asked how the seven criteria were created and J. Pezarro replied that the CAG had initially written thirteen evaluation criteria and then the CAG had grouped those thirteen uneven criteria into seven broader categories. The CAG discussed that grouping process, noting that the additional economic impact wording had evolved during the process.

The CAG further discussed economic impact, noting that employment of people in implementing management options could have a positive economic impact. The CAG also discussed the varying difficulty between measuring impact for an individual and impact for the entire region.

J. Pezarro asked the CAG if it should remove the economic impact sub-criteria and the CAG discussed inserting the word “known” into the economic impact statement and to note any qualitative impacts.

The CAG discussed combining the two sub-criteria in Community Impact and removing the word education from the sub-criteria. The CAG discussed Public Education as a management option and noted that some options do create education of the issue as byproduct but that the CAG has been noting those in the issues and comments for each management option.

The CAG then discussed the timeline for posting the evaluation criteria for public input and J. Weightman noted that he would rewrite the criteria over the dinner break and then bring them back to the CAG at the end of the meeting so that they could validate them to be posted for feedback.

The CAG then moved to discussing Repellents as a management option in the agricultural geography. J. Weightman noted the email from R. Kline discussing how to use repellents in agricultural areas. One of the agriculture representatives noted the high costs for spraying repellents over a larger farm, as well as the potential issue with use on organic farms. Another of the agriculture representatives noted that they had experimented with repellents in a small area but the results were inconclusive. The CAG discussed the specific brands of repellents that were currently in use. The use of repellents was also discussed in establishing a perimeter.

The CAG discussed Effectiveness, noting that effectiveness was higher for producers not growing vegetables or fruits but in some cases vegetable and fruit growers were spraying the edges of the fields rather than the crop itself. The CAG also discussed the need for repeat applications reducing effectiveness and creating an issue with organic foods. The CAG discussed a specific example of an organic fruit and vegetable that used repellents that a CAG member is personally familiar with. The CAG agreed to score Effectiveness of Individuals as 1 and Effectiveness at addressing the root cause as 1.

5. Break for Dinner

6. Facilitated Discussion Continued

The CAG discussed Feasibility/Capacity for repellents in the agricultural geography, noting that repellent use was feasible for smaller areas. The CAG agreed on a score of 2 for Feasibility/Capacity.

The CAG then discussed Capability again noting the issue with organic food regulations, although one CAG member dissented and raised the previous example of an organic farm that used repellents. The CAG discussed how there are many repellent brands and the likelihood of finding an organic repellent was high. The CAG agreed on a score of 2.5 for Capability with the note regarding certain products being unsuitable for use on organic farms.

The CAG then discussed Cost and discussed one member's personal experience with the cost and that larger users could buy larger quantities with lower per unit costs. The

CAG also discussed the equipment costs for applying repellents, noting that might increase capital costs. The CAG also discussed the cost of the time for application and how variable weather may impact costs. The CAG discussed the relative costs between repellents and fencing. The CAG discussed the differences in costs between sizes of farms and asked for a definition of farm sizes. J. Weightman replied that the Census of Agriculture defines farms in two categories: those larger than 5 acres and those smaller. The CAG also discussed areas with lots of smaller farms clustered in a single area, such as the Blenkinsop Valley.

J. Pezarro noted the CAG's ability to footnote costs variability based on the size of the farm, much as they did with the Fencing option. The CAG also discussed how larger farms generally have staff but that may not actually change the overall cost due to staffing costs. The CAG then provisionally agreed on a score of 1.5 for Cost with a decision to revisit at the end of the evaluation.

The CAG then discussed Time, noting the inclusion of both time of initial implementation as well as ongoing time requirements. The CAG noted that repellents require ongoing application which has a time cost. The CAG noted that the efficacy of the repellent affected its time score, depending on how often the repellent needed to be applied per season. The CAG noted that the weather was a major factor in time due to the need to reapply after rain. The CAG agreed on a score of 2 for Time.

The CAG then discussed Support & Enthusiasm, noting that neighbours might become unhappy due to displacement of deer. One CAG member questioned the likelihood of displacement of deer impacts. One of the agriculture representatives also stated that they would not use repellents due to increased public awareness of spray application to food and concerns about loss of revenue due to public aversion to treated food. The CAG discussed the difference between individuals and the greater good. The CAG noted that of the issues mentioned in R. Kline's email, many unknown variables and potential issues remained. The CAG also noted that if repellents were to be proven safe, the public perception may not change. One of the agriculture representatives also noted that spray applications tend to spread and that regulations requiring what could be sprayed and where might be required, especially with the issue of organic farming. The CAG noted that currently the public is relatively unaware of the use of repellents and awareness of the recommendation might affect public support. The CAG agreed on a score of 1.5 for Support and Enthusiasm.

The CAG then discussed Community Impacts including the comments raised in R. Kline's email, regarding soil and runoff especially when considering large quantities. The CAG also noted the issue of displacing deer into wild areas where biodiversity might be impacted. One of the CAG members dissented on the issue of deer damage to understory plants, stating it was speculation. The CAG agreed on a score of 1 for Community Impacts.

The CAG then moved to Repellents in the rural geography. The CAG discussed the definition of rural. J. Weightman noted that it was challenging but that rural was typically

defined as larger unfarmed properties outside an urban area and that a property as large as sixty or seventy acres without agricultural use was relatively rare in the region. The CAG noted that they discussed this issue last meeting before coming up with a definition of a property that was largely wild with a small cultivated area including food and/or ornamental plants and a house.

The CAG then discussed Effectiveness for Individuals and the issue of deer sense of smell as well as the issue of displacement of deer due to repellents. One of the CAG members raised their personal experience noting limited effectiveness. The CAG noted that one member lives in a rural geography and they no longer attempt to protect their ornamentals from deer.

One of the CAG dissented on the issue of displacement of deer, stating that it may not be such a huge issue as it may displace deer onto properties where people may not object to their presence.

The CAG further discussed Effectiveness for the Individual, noting that deer can become habituated to the smell and that the need to reapply reduced repellents effectiveness. The CAG also noted that changing to native plantings reduced the issues as does covering the affected plants. The CAG agreed on a score of 2 for Effectiveness for the Individual for repellents in the rural geography.

The CAG then discussed Effectiveness at addressing the Root Cause and its definition. The CAG discussed how many of their members might live in a rural geography and several indicated that they do. The CAG noted that not everybody will fence or apply repellents. J. Pezarro noted that the CAG is a group of citizens from a variety of backgrounds and all can bring relevant experiences and fact to the table. The CAG further discussed the issue of root cause of deer-human conflict before J. Pezarro indicated that due to the time, she had to leave. The CAG agreed to finish the Repellents at the next meeting.

J. Weightman then asked the CAG to validate the reworded Evaluation Criteria and agreed on the new wording for public feedback.

7. Next Steps and Outstanding Items

M. Misek-Evans then laid out the timeline and next steps with the CAG, going over a timeline of approximately what work will need to be done each week. M. Misek-Evans noted that each part of the report would first be discussed by the CAG and then written up by CRD Staff. M. Misek-Evans noted the original goal to report out to the July PT&PTSC meeting but that if a report went now it would be a progress report only and not include any draft elements of the RDMS. M. Misek-Evans noted that there would likely be a discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the PT&PSC regarding the progress of the CAG. M. Misek-Evans then indicated the overall plan is to have a report for the August meeting of the PT&PSC meeting with the final reporting going to the CRD Board in Sept.



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8. Next Meeting

The CAG then discussed the date for the next meeting, agreeing on 4-8pm, July 4 at Burnside Gorge if available.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm