



CITY COUNCIL

March 20, 2023

A work session meeting of the City of Petoskey City Council was held in the City Hall Council Chambers, Petoskey, Michigan, on Monday, March 20, 2023. This meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M.; then, after a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, a roll call then determined that the following were

Present: John Murphy, Mayor
Tina DeMoore, City Councilmember
Derek Shiels, City Councilmember
Brian Wagner, City Councilmember
Lindsey Walker, City Councilmember

Absent: None

Also in attendance were City Manager Shane Horn and City Clerk Sarah Bek.

Hear Urban Deer Management Presentation

Jacqueline Courteau, Ecologist located in Ann Arbor, gave a presentation on urban deer management specifically reviewing deer impacts, public health and safety, deer management options and impacts in natural areas. Ms. Courteau gave a brief overview on white-tailed deer; that overhunting causes an increase in population; that deer populations grow fast; reviewed how land use changes have affected deer habitat; reviewed deer and impacts in cities and suburbs; public health and safety issues including deer and tick borne diseases and that Lyme disease is expanding; that deer lose fear of people due to planted landscapes including gardens and public parks, community gardens and private yards and gardens; reviewed impacts in natural areas and direct impacts include mortality, growth reduction, prevents reproduction and forests might not regenerate; and reviewed different solutions used to monitor deer impacts in communities including photo monitoring, species inventory, surveys, tag and track existing plants, permanent plots and fence and unfenced plots.

Chad Stewart, Deer and Elk Management Specialist with the DNR Wildlife Division, gave a presentation on urban deer management and reviewed that urban deer have higher survival rates; reviewed maintenance of high deer productivity; that urban deer management is conflict management; and that landscape changes have an affect on deer. Mr. Stewart reviewed community-based deer management and that a plan should be created with community goals and objectives and communities should define problem, implement and evaluate and adapt; reviewed management options such as no action or response; reviewed response options including non-lethal options such as fencing and repellent; hunting; sharpshooting is lethal which reduces population quickly and safely if a reputable company is used, but can be expensive and controversial; trap, remove and relocate; contraception which is not an option and sterilization; and reviewed deer management programs in Ann Arbor, Meridian Township and Oakland County.

Councilmembers inquired if resident concerns could be directed to the presenters; heard that there are speeding and deer issues in Ward 2 since it is close to North Central Michigan College and natural areas and inquired if there were recommendations on how to track deer data; inquired on cost of tracking; heard concerns on deer management effectiveness due to geography and size of rural areas surrounding the city; that management should be looked at on a community-level; that the issue is not going away and managing deer is getting harder; asked for more details on the Meridian Township's program; and inquired if hunting is a safe model.

The presenters responded that resident questions and concerns could be directed to them; that dedicated staff could track deer data, but would cause additional duties, or that contracting is also an option; that a contract could cost anywhere from \$2,000 upwards to \$20,000 per year; that Meridian Township implemented an urban archery hunt with bows and arrows only, that USDA trained police force and now the township uses the police and archery to manage deer, and processes deer and participates with non-profits to provide food for those in need; and that hunting through sharpshooting and bows is safe.

Mayor Murphy asked for public comments and heard that a process is necessary to define problem which ultimately defines success; heard from those urging Council not to do data search, but rather work with surrounding communities since there is an increase in deer population in rural areas; heard an inquiry if deer hunting seasons were expanded in Meridian Township as part of the management program; heard from those interested in courses on maintaining bows and encouraged Council to look for other models of deer management; and heard from those in favor of allowing bow hunters to hunt within the City limits.

There being no further business to come before the City Council, this March 20, 2023, meeting of the City Council adjourned at 7:10 P.M.

John Murphy, Mayor

Sarah Bek, City Clerk