

WALKER ROAD PARK
AD HOC COMMITTEE
Minutes of a Meeting held
April 21, 2015

Present: Bay Village Councilmen Dwight Clark, David Tadych, Tom Henderson
Bay Village President of Council Paul Koomar
Avon Lake President of Council Marty O'Donnell
Avon Lake Councilmen John Shondel, Larry Meiners, Rob James
Chief of Police Duane Streater, Avon Lake
Joe Reitz, Director of Public Service, Avon Lake
Chief of Police Mark Spaetzel, Bay Village
Scott Thomas, Director of Public Service/Safety Director, Bay Village (6:30 p.m.)

Audience: John Suter
William Clements
Tara Wendell
Councilwoman Karen Lieske, Bay Village
Ernest D. Minichello
Arlene Vogel
Mary Jo Mazzolini
Nancy Brown
Peggy Dague
Lydia DeGeorge
Bryan Worten
Denise Wheeler
Richard Fink
Mike Brogan

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM at the Bay Village City Hall by Avon Lake President of Council Marty O'Donnell. Mr. O'Donnell noted that Mr. Goeff Westerfield of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources had planned to be present this evening. Mr. Westerfield is the person that the City of Avon Lake works with for their deer management programs.

Mr. O'Donnell introduced the Avon Lake Council representatives John Shondel, Council-at-large, Larry Meiners, Ward Councilman, Joe Reitz, City Engineer, and Chief of Police Duane Streater. Avon Lake Councilman Rob James arrived shortly thereafter.

The objective of tonight's meeting is to give an overview of what the City of Avon Lake has done recently with deer management. The goal is to partner with the City of Bay Village for deer culling at Walker Road Park.

Mr. O'Donnell commented on the number of dead deer pick-ups in Avon Lake, increasing yearly: 2011-32; 2012-48; 2013-89; 2014-105.

The main concern is a safety issue, with herds of deer in Avon Lake. Many deer accidents have occurred with deer going through windows. Mr. Shondel has worked very diligently with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to draft the legislation which has permitted deer culling to go forward in Avon Lake. A copy of an endorsement of Avon Lake's work in this regard published in *The Lorain Journal* was distributed to those in attendance.

The next step is to address the deer on the western end of the community. Mr. Joe Reitz, Avon Lake Public Service Director stated that the City of Avon Lake has worked with the Department of Agriculture and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to establish a culling program. The facilitation of the program fell on the Police Department and the United States Department of Agriculture to cull at Weiss Field Park, 30 acres on the south side of Avon Lake. The sharpshooters came in for two nights, from 6 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., and took eight deer per night. A refrigerated trailer took the carcasses away and the meat was donated to the Second Harvest Food Bank. Archers came in to property behind the closed landfill in Avon Lake. Three archers took three deer in total. A total of 670 pounds of ground venison was donated to the Second Harvest Food Bank for both culling efforts. All culling was supervised by the Avon Lake Police Department.

Avon Lake Police Chief Duane Streater advised that the permit process is that the person is in control of the land applies for the permit through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. It is a ten-year plan based on population control. They approved the permit for the sharpshooters and archery shooters. All procedures were followed. Deer Damage Permits are applied for by homeowners for privately owned property. The three archers were volunteers and they do not work at night.

Avon Lake Councilman-at-large John Shondel stated that they got started with the sharpshooting part of their program late in the season. The Dept. of Agriculture met with Mr. Reitz and Mr. Shondel in mid-February and visited the site. The Department of Wildlife was also cooperative and was the agency to which they applied for a Population Control Permit. They asked for 15 tags for Weiss Field, and 15 tags for the closed landfill for the archers. They feel their efforts were very successful. It was determined that sharpshooting is much more efficient than bow and arrow. Mr. Shondel noted that as part of the ten year plan they want to include Walker Road Park, the Kopf Reservation, MetroParks, and large pieces of privately owned property.

Mr. O'Donnell noted the destruction to the parks in addition to the safety issues. Walker Road Park is a beautiful park with special species. The cost for deer culling at Walker Road Park would be a little less than \$6,000.

A question and answer period followed.

Bay Village Councilman Tom Henderson, Ward 4, noted that it is a complicated issue. Mr. Henderson is the council representative in the area in which Walker Road Park borders. He asked Mr. Shondel the criteria of the Population Control Permit, versus the Deer Damage Permit.

Mr. Shondel stated that when the Department of Wildlife saw the statistics from the helicopter fly-overs, the rough estimate was about 200 deer in Avon Lake. They are more concerned about the number of human-deer conflict events. November 6, 2013, a deer jumped through a window of a home. June 13, 2014, a deer jumped through a window of a home. June 28, 2014, a deer attacked a resident and her dog, causing injury to both. November 20, 2014, a deer jumped through a window of a home and injured two family dogs, one seriously. March 3, 2015 a deer jumped at and broke a bedroom window in a condominium, scaring the 91 year old resident. The police have reports of deer-vehicle accidents: 2008 – 18 deer vehicle accidents; 2009- 25 deer vehicle accidents; 2010 – 29 deer vehicle accidents; 2011 – 33 deer vehicle accidents. In 2012 they educated drivers about the problems with deer resulting in a lower count of 21 deer vehicle accidents. In 2013 there were 26 deer vehicle accidents; 2014 – 25 deer vehicle accidents. At this point the Department of Wildlife has acknowledged an overpopulation of deer in Avon Lake and they are not unique in Northeast Ohio.

They ask that a ten-year plan be prepared of how you plan to reduce the herd, and the other measures that will be taken to reduce the amount of human-deer conflict. Part of that plan is Avon Lake's hope that Walker Road Park will be one of the locations of city-owned property that deer culling can be accomplished.

Bay Village Councilman-at-large Dwight Clark stated that the primary tenet of any initiative the City undertakes is resident safety. How was the area of the perimeter secured and was there a police presence when the culling was done?

Chief Streator stated that they did close off the park and made sure no one had access to the park. They were able to secure the park without a problem. Police were present.

Bay Village Councilman Dave Tadych asked the number of miles in Avon Lake, and was informed that the square mileage is 11.1 miles, a little larger than Bay Village.

Mr. Clark asked if there is a process to do a count of the deer population after the culling. Chief Streator stated that the City of Avon Lake did three counts in three separate years, all resulting in about 200 estimated population.

Avon Lake Councilman Larry Meiners commented about the efficiency, experience and understanding of the Avon Lake personnel involved which will result in a successful culling effort.

Mr. Tadych asked if culling has begun in Kopf Reservation. Mr. O'Donnell stated that it has not begun in Kopf Reservation because the Lorain MetroParks do not like culling. But, they are open for discussion. The culling that has been done in Avon Lake is being used as a demonstration to them with an objective to permit culling there in the future.

Bay Village Councilman Tom Henderson asked Councilman Rob James of Avon Lake, the representative of the ward in Avon Lake bordering Bay Village, for his comments on the success of the demonstration projects in Avon Lake.

Councilman Rob James stated that his objective is to give the City as many tools as possible to address the issue. The sharpshooting is a tool he proposed. He has supported the legislation and feels confident that the Police Chief can look at the proposals and make a determination. Mr. James is pleased with the success of the project. Ward 4 in Bay Village shares an adjacent border to Mr. James' ward in Avon Lake. The two wards are very similar in composition and development. The difficulty is that there are not large, open areas. Walker Road Park is probably the only safe area in the two wards, Bay Village and Avon Lake, where this activity can occur. Both cities need to make a decision in the best safety interest of the citizens, a primary obligation of public officials.

Mr. Tadych commented on two human-deer incidents in Bay Village, and asked Bay Village Police Chief Spaetzel if there have been additional issues. Chief Spaetzel stated that there have been no additional incidents.

Mr. Koomar asked if there is a certain time of the year to implement deer culling. Mr. Shondel stated that culling should be done between December 1 and March 15. Potential deer culling in the Walker Road Park would occur in December, with the necessity to file the ten-year plan by July 31. This will necessitate Bay Village's permission for culling in Walker Road Park prior to that time to include it in the ten-year plan.

Mr. Reitz stated that the habitat in Avon Lake is going to change road this year because Holly Hill Horse Farm on Krebs Road (30 acres) has been sold to a developer, which will increase the deer problem. * *Statement Later corrected by Mr. Reitz. Holly Hill Horse Farm has not been sold.* The apple orchard (70 acres) may also be changed.

Mr. O'Donnell opened the meeting for questions from the audience.

Nancy Brown asked what was done as part of their education process to citizens to try to reduce deer-human conflict. Mr. O'Donnell stated that they discouraged feeding of deer, and there was a continual evolution of the community to recognize the dangers through the legislative process. Mr. Shondel noted that there were public information meetings held at the library with representatives of the ODNR Dept. of Wildlife present. The public discussions at Council meetings brought the problem of the growing deer population to the forefront.

Ms. Brown asked what the expense of \$6,000 for a culling event encompasses. Chief Streater stated that the \$6,000 is the fee paid to the Department of Agriculture for the permit. There were additional costs for safety forces and other expenses.

Arlene Vogel asked if sterilization methods have been considered. Mrs. Vogel stated that she walks her dog in Walker Road Park and has never seen a deer there. Mr. Shondel stated that sterilization methods have been used in two places in New York with mixed results. The Ohio Department of Wildlife has been in opposition to a sterilization program. The deer must be anesthetized with a veterinarian on hand to administer the contraceptive and tag the deer. It is a noble effort, but not effective. Mr. James added that deer are owned by the State of Ohio. The state makes all the rules regarding the deer and we have to work within those rules. They don't

Walker Road Park Ad Hoc Committee
April 21, 2015

allow sterilization. The chemicals injected may find their way into the food source if the deer is later hunted and consumed. They also do not allow contraception.

Ms. Brown noted that these birth control methods are permitted in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Jim Cross, Lane Drive resident, spoke at length about the deer on his property and the loss of his plantings. The methods of culling were explained to Mr. Cross.

Mr. Bill Clements, Bay Village resident, expressed that Walker Road Park is a good location for culling because of the space in the park, and the ability to have the culling done in a controlled manner.

Mr. O'Donnell reiterated their objective that they are seeking is for the two cities to work together for culling in Walker Road Park.

Mary Jo Mazzolini spoke on behalf of the deer, and encouraged more signs on the roadway and slower vehicle traffic as a method of management. She noted that there has been success in the birth control efforts and that is a method that is compassionate.

Don Hibler, Marygate Drive, expressed his frustration with the deer population at Bradley Road Park. Mr. Hibler noted that he lives near the park and the vegetation in his yard has been destroyed.

A resident who lives near Walker Road Park suggested consideration to the fact that the deer are starving to death due to overpopulation.

A resident expressed concern for her neighbor who has so many deer in their backyard their dog is endangered. They now have a small child, and it feared that something will happen to the child.

Mr. O'Donnell called for further questions. There were no further comments. He reiterated the objective of Avon Lake to seek Bay Village's cooperation with culling in Walker Road Park. The matter would have to be resolved prior to the filing of the ten-year plan with the Ohio Division of Wildlife which is due by July 31, 2015.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Joan Kemper, Clerk of Council
City of Bay Village, Ohio