

**TOWN OF HARVARD
DEER MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
ZOOM MEETING 6:30pm – 7:30 pm
Monday March 28, 2022**

Committee members

Ben Urquhart, Bob Douglas, Joe Pulido, Tom Cotton.

Bob gave the introduction.

Recommendations for additional lands.

Tom: reviewed three parcels (Kaufman, Scorgie-Tufts-Clapp, and Reed-Abbot-Powell) and discussed with Wendy from stewardship and said the three parcels may not be appropriate at this time. Tom does not advocate advance sites for approval this year – Ben offered agreement.

Bob – I think we should think about areas that could work.

Tom – I can circulate maps and provide them to scouts.

Ben – Ok with considering other properties.

Bob – as an individual committee member – I would be in favor of opening small parcels – as we heard from the Deer Biologist – simply having people in the woods will move the deer – and increase the chances for success.

Tom mentioned the more time in the woods for the hunters the better success. Hunters would like to scout earlier.

Joe- Extend scouting beyond season- would like to continue scouting into winter years.

Bob- Nothing keeping people from scouting or hiking Conservation land from dawn to dusk. No stands obviously.

Bob – brought up guest speakers. Educational component. Asked for Committee input.

Names discussed were Dr. Feehan.

Tom - Dr. Feehan could speak on monitoring density. Mass land trust – may have a suggestion for a speaker- on forest health.

Ben – Will check with DCR and Harvard and Yale Forests.

Bob will contact Martin, Tom – Trusts, Ben will contact DCR and Yale and Harvard.

Don: Possible Archery safety?

Joe: I know someone from Wildlife and Fisheries – who is a level three Archery instructor.

Collaboration with other towns.

Bob – Spoke with Kristin Obrien – collaborate with SVT and other towns. Bob will follow up.

Monitoring 2022 – Deer density – Camera study used in Mass & Wisconsin Deer Density – Bob will follow up.

Ben – Has some papers.

Tom – Oak sentinels?

Bob – Interesting to do. Would like to approach ConCom for funding to purchase saplings.

Bob – I believe 50 are fenced from being eaten by deer as a control – 50 are left available for deer to eat – and the assessment is made based on this.

Ben – Learn more about this and craft a proposal for ConCom.

2021 – Hunter survey discussion.

Joe- Access to property – Limited to one way in – one way out. Winds may not be favorable. Is it possible to gain permission from abutters to enter property? Some accesses blocked and overgrown. Can we discuss with ConCom?

Kudos were given to ConCom for the program. People were happy about assigning properties.

Question about bringing a qualified guest. Open properties to allow hunters to move to other parcels with the coordination of the assigned hunters permission.

Positive comments – enjoyed aspects of the program. The assigned spots allowed let them be accustomed to them. Opposed to a forced rotation.

Bob – our current system is a ‘meritocracy’ people who spend the most time – get the better chance to get the properties of their choice.

Don – the 2021 season worked.

Ben – Minimize changes from last year – only minor tweaks.

Joe – Hunters log- some said it was cumbersome. “Why do we need to report weather conditions?” Possible to share log during season – would be a good idea.

Some hunters would like to open larger properties. Some abutters may give permission to waive setbacks. One hunter asked about adding muzzleloading. Joe said the parcels may be too small.

Ben – No need to talk about that. Bob – I can’t imagine there ever being a shotgun hunt on conservation land. Tom: Archery is sufficient. I don’t think shotgun or muzzleloader would fly.

Joe will craft a list of action items. Tom agreed that would be a good idea.

Joe: Hunters are pleased by the program.

Vote to approve minutes Jan 20, 2022

Bob made motion – Joe seconds – Unanimous.

Stand sweep. Bob: Stands are out there - Dunlap land. Joe – Herman orchards.
Schedule future date.

Bob – waiting to hear back from State. Bob has requested info and will report.

Bob – Sent anti-harassment statement – please sign and return to clerk.

Tom – yearly checklist.

Tom called on Dan Tracey (57:0)– Covid in deer – has the DMS seen the data?

Tom- Discuss at next meeting. Ben will say a few words.

Dan Tracy: Dr Feehan is doing research and deer transmission to humans is a “very significant issue”.

Tom: We will discuss at future meeting.

Tom called on Eve Wittenberg.

Eve (59:19) Education on metrics would be very valuable.

Bob: The recent meeting with ConCom where the DMS did their presentation was inconveniently not recorded – there were some statements made that Bob would like to respond to – and he requested Eve’s comments. Eve responded she did not have “a written document.”

Bob made motion to close meeting – seconded by Joe. Unanimous.

Meet again 3 weeks perhaps.