

## **Health, Education & Welfare Committee**

### **Notes from 5-7-2012**

#### **Residents in Attendance:**

Saundra Kirsh 3265 N. Whitetree

James G. Coleman 2920 East Galbraith Rd.

Mary (Marj) Walker 3575 Sorrento

Josephine Rosenblum 3340 LeMarque Dr.

Louis H. Katz 6785 E. Beechlands Dr.

Stuart Holman 3168 Esther Dr.

Bruce Lazarus 3140 No. Whitetree

Gale Wallmark 6760 E. Beechlands

Nancy Klein 3199 S. Farmcrest

Brenda Shoenfeld

#### **Staff:**

Scott Lahrmer, Village Manager

Officer Brian Blum

#### **Council Members in Attendance:**

Natalie Wolf

Tom Muething

J.K. Byar

Ed Hattenbach (by telephone)

#### **Cincinnati Park Board Representatives:**

Jim Godby

Dave Gamestetter

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 by committee chair Natalie Wolf. Vice-Mayor Wolf stated the reason for the meeting was to start the process of examining the Village deer management policy and come up with a codified Ordinance related to managing the deer in Amberley Village. Ms. Wolf dispelled rumor that the current council was interested in eliminating all of the deer in Amberley Village

and stated that deer and wildlife are an amenity of living in the Village. The purpose of the culling was to maintain a healthy deer herd and reduce the damage caused by deer vehicle incidents and property damage caused by deer. Amberley also has a vested interest in the sustainability of French Park.

Jim Godby and Dave Gamestetter were introduced as being representatives of the CPB who would then detail for the committee the bow hunting procedure in current use by Cincinnati.

Mr. Godby stated that the parks love the deer, but the deer population had increased over time to the extent that it was causing a noticeable browse line in the parks and disrupting the natural ecosystem. He stated that it was not the goal of the CPB to eradicate the deer but that the deer are overpopulated. Mr. Godby explained that the purpose of the Cincinnati Park Board in harvesting the deer was strictly conservation of natural habitat and protecting the park itself rather than any attempt at reducing deer/vehicle incidents. It was stated that the only enemies of deer in our area are coyotes and motor vehicles. California Woods was losing lots of wildflowers and sapling tree species. Mount Airy Forrest was greatly decimated by deer.

Mr. Godby stated that the CPB has used bow hunters for three years and it has been a very safe and successful program.

Mr. Godby stated that in order to be allowed to bow hunt in the parks, a hunter must

1. Have a hunter safety card
2. Demonstrate proficiency with the bow and arrow, hitting 4 out of 5 shots in a 10" target from 20 yards away.
3. Fulfill the educational/classroom requirement (often done in advance as part of licensing process)

The CPB uses thermal imaging from airplanes to count the deer. It is infinitely more accurate than a visual helicopter count, but is more expensive. Thermal imaging provides a "snapshot in time" of deer that are in the area. Mr. Godby stated that thermal imaging is 90% accurate and that the heat signature of deer is different than that of humans. In 2010, there were 54 deer in French Park. Mr. Godby said that according to the target level of 15-20 deer per square mile, which is the recommended number of deer according to the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR), French Park could, in his opinion, support six deer.

Godby stated that downsides to bow hunting to cull the deer were

1. Complaints about closing the park to allow hunters in
2. Problems with deer wounded, but never found
3. Not as humane as sharp shooting, but sharp shooting is more expensive

Former councilmember Louis Katz explained the prior practice of deer management in Amberley Village. He stated that Amberley used 35 deer per square mile as the ideal number of deer for the village to support in 3.5 square miles. He explained that the number differed from that of the ODNR because it was determined by Council that this was a reasonable amount given Amberley's rural setting and large lots and because deer were seen as an advantage to the Village. Mr. Katz stated that Amberley Council had explored the option of bow hunting in the past and that former Police Chief Monahan was opposed to bow hunting.

Resident Josephine Rosenblum asked about the migration range of deer. Jim G. explained that deer have a home range of 1-1/2 miles. Because of Amberley's size (3.5 square miles), hunting in French Park alone will have no effect on deer outside the home range. Reading, Cross County, Northern Amberley are therefore not effected by culling in FP and AG.

A question was asked about the sustainability of French Park. Dave: Deer will eat anything within their reach. They will not eat the honeysuckle unless they are starving. Once deer eat the seedlings and native plants, and everything they can reach, all that grows is the honeysuckle. This is devastating to the other wildlife that relies on the underbrush. The CPB strives for a balance of wildlife in the parks to ensure sustainability. A browse line of honeysuckle can be seen as evidence of deer destruction in the parks.

Why are there so many more deer now than there used to be even a decade ago?

DG: We have more green space and less hunting which led to a population explosion of deer. Reproduction of deer is related to the food supply. There is a rebound effect, so if more deer are culled, there is more food for the deer which means does could give birth to multiple fawns (twins). Because of this, deer management should not be done sporadically.

Mr. Lazarus stated that the deer are very domesticated now and don't even run from his dogs.

Jim G: Bow hunting occurs late September and can continue through the first week of February. Sharpshooting can be done anytime.

AV Culling: Occurs in January and February. We work within budget and staffing levels and work with the CPB to get permission to harvest in the park. Culling occurs between dusk and 11:00 PM. (Blum)

Byar: Does unofficial "culling" occur in AV?

Officer Blum: Amberley Village police have arrested people with rifles in French Park, bows in both French Park and Amberley Green, found an arrow in a tree on Winding Way and a deer with an arrow in its side on Winding Way. When you have a lot of deer, people are going to try to come and try to shoot the deer. It is a fact of life and we have made several arrests.

Wolf: If residents hear shots at 2AM then that is not culling? Blum: No, police should be called.

Amberley has been engaged in deer culling since 2007 and uses sharp shooters. Deer meat is donated to the Free Store.

A resident asked if a browse line had been seen in French Park this year. Jim G: it is too early to see the browse line. Must wait till late summer.

A resident asked 1) could she get a tax credit for deer as she was opposed to her tax dollars being spent to cull deer. She also wanted to know if deer could be relocated.

Jim G and Dave explained that deer could not be relocated because 1) it is against the law and 2) because of the extremely high mortality rate of relocated deer (60% die within a year) and 3) because no one else wants them.

J.K. Byar asked how many distinct herds lived in Amberley Village. Mr. Godby could not say because deer ranges overlap.

Q: What will happen if we don't cull?

A: Cars are main predators to deer. Coyote will take some fawns. The deer population will increase exponentially and hit a biological carrying capacity and deer will have fewer fawns when that happens. By that time, forests will be ravaged by browsing and rubbing. Deer will starve because they will have reduced the sustainable fauna to honeysuckle only, which deer don't like to eat. The forests will be unsustainable to other animals as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00.

Natalie Wolf