



Community Services Advisory Commission
September 12, 2023
Minutes

Commission Members: Present: Rex Pryor, Jessica Tobias, Vivek Arunachalam, Elizabeth McClain

Absent: Steve Dritz, Hong Qiu, Vicki Von Sadovszky

Staff Members Present: Justin Paez, Chief of Police
Nick Tabernik, Deputy Chief of Police
Emily Goliver, Management Analyst

1. Call to Order

Mr. Pryor established a quorum was present and called the Community Services Advisory Commission meeting to order at 6:28 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present were Mr. Arunachalam, Ms. McClain, Mr. Pryor and Ms. Tobias. Mr. Dritz, Ms. Qiu and Ms. Von Sadovszky were absent.

3. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the June 13, 2023 meeting were distributed for review via email. Mr. Pryor asked if anyone had any changes to meeting minutes. There were no changes to the meeting minutes. Mr. Arunachalam moved to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. McClain seconded!

Vote on the motion: Mr. Arunachalam, yes; Ms. McClain, yes; Mr. Pryor, yes; and Ms. Tobias, yes.

5. Deer Management Options– Emily Goliver, Management Analyst

Mr. Pryor turned the meeting over to Ms. Goliver to discuss deer management options.

Ms. Goliver introduced Chief Paez and Deputy Chief Tabernik who are joining Ms. Goliver this evening on the topic of deer management. Ms. Goliver said the commission started discussing this topic in February 2022 during the presentation of the City's wildlife management program from Barbara Ray, Nature Education Coordinator. Ms. Goliver then provided some updates specifically to deer management in February 2023, when Ms. Goliver provided information that the City would

be working with students at the Ohio State University on a herd population assessment. In June, staff returned to the Committee to report the results of the herd population assessment that was conducted. The survey team determined that there are approximately 50-85 deer per square mile in Dublin. A healthy amount is 20-25 per square mile. This assessment was conducted using trail cameras, drive by observation and the assessment of droppings. Those are three ways to assess, but is not comprehensive of all available ways to assess a population. The City also conducted a community-wide survey at the end of May that indicated that the resident's attitude towards the deer population and potential deer management is mixed. It was divided 50/50 as far as the resident's attitude towards the deer population and deer management.

Ms. Goliver said the deer population is an issue that is seen throughout the state, county and central Ohio region. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is working to increase education on potential management tactics for all cities.

Ms. Goliver said management options can be broken down into lethal and non-lethal options. The non-lethal options are as follows:

No-Feed Ordinance

- Residents feeding deer can lead to a higher population concentration in residential areas
- No-Feed Ordinance prohibits feeding deer on private property. This would not prohibit bird feeders, but would encourage responsible use of them.
- The City of Dublin currently prohibits feeding wildlife in parks and prohibits feeding waterfowl on public property
- No-Feed Ordinances must be coupled with educational campaigns to explain why it causes issues

Contraceptives

- Injections or surgical sterilization
- It costs approx. \$1,000 surgically sterilize a doe or immobilize it for injection
- Sterilization can have the opposite impact. A doe that doesn't go through giving birth can have a longer life span
- Also deer are a really smart animal in nature and if the fawn output reduces than the number of fawn born to a fertile fawn will increase in number because they want to repopulate the herd
- ODNR will not permit this unless it is coupled with a lethal option

Relocation Program

- Trapping and relocating deer is not permitted by ODNR due to the stress and high mortality rate it causes the deer
 - Deer experience significant stress when captured and transported and this can cause health issues including heart failure
 - Taking a deer from one environment that the deer may have immunities to certain disease from that area and you put that deer in an unfamiliar environment, then it's going to be introducing that disease to a herd that does not have that immunity

Ms. Goliver moved on to explain the lethal options. Ms. Goliver has asked the Police Department to join the meeting to explain some of the concerns they would have with discharge of firearms in City limits. The lethal options are as follows:

Urban Bow Hunting Program

- Must be implemented in an area that is an appropriate distance from pedestrian facilities, homes and schools
- This program has been implemented in Gahanna, as they have more open space in Gahanna. The Gahanna Police Department said it is very difficult for them to manage and it is a very staff intensive process
- Typically implemented on public property but could be on private property, with permission
- Hunters must obtain a permit through the State of Ohio, register with the police department, pass an archery proficiency test and submit a background check
- Requires significant staff resources
- There are also very few locations in Dublin that would be appropriate, given the limitations. Also, the herd is more dense in neighborhoods than it is public property

Sharpshooting Program

- Sharpshooting occurs overnight in areas with a high population density, typically on public parks
- The City of Dublin would hire a contractor – typically costs over \$60,000, which would not include the cost of harvesting the meat of the deer
- Ms. Goliver reiterated that Dublin's high-density areas are mainly in residential areas

Ms. Goliver provided a little more information on the No-Feed Ordinance.

- Defines "feeding" as "intentionally feeding or causing to be fed"
- Violators are typically found guilty of a minor misdemeanor
- Each day is considered a new violation
- Implementation –
 - Code Enforcement violation
 - Worthington has an online complaint form

Ms. Goliver said these are ideas of how the City could implement this Ordinance. She reiterated that it would need to be coupled with an educational campaign. This a solution that the City could tackle promptly. The other tactics require additional information. In some cities, the consideration of a lethal option has been placed on the ballot. Ms. Goliver said moving forward, she is continuing to work with ODNR. She is scheduling a workshop with them to talk about these different options to study the population, so that Dublin has a great baseline on the deer herd population in Dublin. Ms. Goliver said that in the meantime, if CSAC is supportive of the idea, the City can pass a No-Feed Ordinance and that can display the City's commitment to addressing this issue.

Mr. Arunachalam asked how many licensed shooters the City currently has.

Ms. Goliver said the City does not currently have any of the lethal programs in place. The City does have an Ordinance in place that prohibits hunting of wildlife in Dublin. If a lethal option were to be considered, it would require an ordinance be passed by City Council to allow sharpshooting of deer in Dublin.

Ms. McClain commented that it doesn't really seem that there are a lot of options, so the immediate one that the City could utilize would be the No-Feed Ordinance. Ms. McClain was curious if Dublin has received any feedback from Gahanna on the bow-hunting program they have in place. What is the cost? How effective is it? What does Gahanna do with the deer meat?

Chief Paez said from a Police perspective there are some concerns regarding the introduction of a lethal option. Though seems to work in other municipalities, Ms. Goliver did an excellent job of pointing out why those options may not be effective pursuits of the end goal without there being significant complications that could cause safety concerns for residents and visitors. In the areas, as Ms. Goliver pointed out, where the population is the heaviest, he doesn't feel it would even be an options of the City of Dublin to have bow-hunting or sharpshooters.

Ms. Goliver did mention that in Gahanna, the bow-hunter is responsible for harvesting the meat from the deer. The City does not take on that ownership. The cost for Gahanna is staff time, which she was not sure what that exact cost would be, but could get more information if requested. Also, their parkland consists of larger spans of open space than what Dublin's parks include.

Ms. Tobias said in addition to the general cost of the program, Ms. Tobias was interested in the staff burden that Ms. Goliver had mentioned in respect of the bow-hunting program. How many hours would that require of City staff and the Police Department? Especially if there are hiring issues right now, she would not want to see this program take away from other services that might be more important in the City. Ms. Tobias was curious about how the sharpshooting program works. If the City hires one or multiple individuals and if guns would be used for that type of program. Is there an option to do the sharpshooting program with a crossbow instead of a gun?

Ms. Goliver said the sharpshooters typically use rifles and it is done overnight with a silencer on the gun. It could be an individual or a company could be hired, in which they may have people in different locations.

Ms. Tobias asked if other cities have actually used the cullings programs and eliminated enough deer to make a difference.

Ms. Goliver said that is an excellent question. She believes that Metro Parks has implemented this type of program in Glacier Ridge, which has a significant amount of open space, and it has seemingly worked to keep their population down. She can find out some more detail from Metro Parks.

Ms. Tobias said Ms. Goliver mentioned that ODNR would like to see some additional numbers as far as the population count. Would the drone or helicopter counts be a significant cost to do those type of counts in Dublin?

Ms. Goliver said she believes the City might be able to do with remaining fund from our operating budget for the year. She will check with Worthington on the exact cost, but Ms. Goliver remembers it being around \$15,000-\$20,000.

Ms. Tobias said the survey was very helpful in trying to get a glimpse into what residents think about deer. She asked how that survey compares to the number of complaints the City receives in regards to deer.

Ms. Goliver said that when residents call the city to discuss deer, it is generally with a complaint or concern. That doesn't mean that staff hears from everyone in the city. Surveys are a great tool to give a more comprehensive and inclusive idea of how residents feel about a topic.

Deputy Chief Tabernik said the Police Department typically only have interactions in regards to deer when they have been struck by a vehicle or if they are injured and end up in someone's back yard or in parkland. There are an average of about a dozen deer/vehicle collisions each year, just for some perspective. Fortunately, the Police Department does not field a lot of complaints.

Mr. Arunachalam asked if the police see any increase in deer incidents since the deer population seems to be increasing or if the number of incidents are steady throughout the years.

Deputy Chief Tabernik said the numbers shared in the packet are from 2015 through the end of last year. There was an uptick during 2020 which seemed like an odd outlier especially since there were less people on the roadway, but anecdotally it seems steady.

Chief Paez added that the only highlights from the data staff put together is that the average deer accidents were between 12 and 12.5. In context, there was an average of between 600-650 traffic accidents total across the city. That has taken a significant dip since the pandemic because people aren't traveling the way they used to for business every day. Prior to the pandemic 2020, there was an average of around 900 crashes a year, so the average of 12 deer incidents isn't a significant number of crashes in the overall picture. Also, among those 12, only two resulted in any type of significant damage for the vehicle and only on average 1.6 resulted in any sort of injury. In this case, injury doesn't mean there was transportation to the hospital but any type of injury due to the incident. From their perspective, there is not a public safety for there to be any significant shift in the current policy. That's doesn't mean that the other calls the City receives or other complications that might be a result of the deer population increasing, shouldn't be considered.

Mr. Arunachalam said from this perspective it seems that the easiest solution with no economic impact would be to enforce the no feed policy.

Mr. Pryor said there seem to be some concerns with the bow-hunting. He asked if there were the same concerns with sharpshooting since it would be professional sharpshooters compared to residents bow-hunting.

Deputy Chief Tabernik said the police still have concerns. He said that recently in Delaware County they hired a seasoned marksman, not exactly a sharpshooter unfortunately, a round went into a house. Safety is their biggest priority and he is sure that residents share that concern also. The pros don't seem to outweigh the cons when talking about shooting any type of firearm or shooting a bow in the city. As far as the feeling of the safety aspect of it, the reviews are mixed in the survey. Some people in the community are just not interested in those types of dynamics.

Mr. Pryor said that all makes sense and with that all being said, he probably would agree also on the No Feed Ordinance. He asked Ms. Goliver if there is a plan to follow-up with another deer population study.

Ms. Goliver said the City definitely plans to do a follow-up study. To follow up on what Deputy Chief Tabernik said, the main complaints staff gets are in relation to personal landscape damage. Residents have concerns with deer eating their flowers and gardens.

Ms. Tobias said it seems as if the bow-hunting program has more restrictions and limitations. She asked if the sharpshooting program also has the same limitations. She also asked if there are even areas where this type of program would be feasible. She couldn't think of where there are areas far enough away from residential areas that would be conducive to this.

Ms. Goliver said there are very similar restrictions. Ms. Goliver said there are certainly not many, if any, locations in Dublin where these type of programs would be feasible.

Ms. Tobias said it might be helpful down the road if the City were ever to consider a lethal options, to have a really good understanding of where that area would be or if that option could actually even occur. Also, if it could occur, is it possible to take enough deer to make a difference?

Ms. Goliver said that is a part of the issue. Where the deer population is the most-dense are is areas that the City would not be comfortable with allowing this to happen. Ms. Goliver will have that discussion when staff have the workshops with ODNR, because the team at ODNR has the same concerns about Dublin. The City does have a lot of greenspace but it is also located within or very close to residential areas.

Mr. Pryor asked if the commission needs to make a motion on the next steps.

Ms. Goliver said they do not. Staff wanted to get feedback from this commission. Ms. Goliver wanted to confirm that based on the feedback, this commission would like staff to move forward with drafting a No Feed Ordinance. The draft will come back to CSAC for review before being presented to City Council for their review.

The commission supported moving forward with drafting a no feed ordinance.

Ms. Goliver thanked the commission for their discussion and feedback.

6. Granicus Training – Emily Goliver, Management Analyst

Ms. Goliver provided Granicus training for commission members.

7. Other Items of Interest

Mr. Arunachalam said this is a popular time of year for runners to be training for marathons and out running on the streets. With the situation where the runner was hit by a vehicle in a roundabout, he was concerned with this happening again. He asked the Chief and Deputy Chief who has the right-of-way when runners are out running on the roundabouts.

Deputy Chief Tabernik said in a pedestrian situation, you will typically hear that the pedestrian has the right-of-way. However, the pedestrian does have an obligation to not leave the curb until it's safe to do so. It is always bad when a pedestrian has been struck by a vehicle, but not knowing the facts and circumstances behind what happened to the pedestrian, that would be a situation where the officers would need to investigate the situation.

Mr. Arunachalam thanked the Deputy Chief for the clarification.

Mr. Arunachalam said he recently heard of a situation in another city where someone had a heart attack while riding their bike. The police in this city did not have an AED in their vehicle, so they had to wait for the ambulance to arrive. He asked if the police officers in Dublin have AED's in their vehicles.

Deputy Chief Tabernik said that's a great question. He expressed that it's terrible to hear that someone had to be a part of that type of situation. He said Dublin is fortunate to have an AED in every police cruiser and Dublin also has a great partnership with Washington Township. There are multiple stations throughout the City and their response time is very good. Typically, the police officers arrive first and fortunately, they are equipped to help our community members that are in need.

Ms. Goliver added that because the City does have a great relationship with Washington Township, staff was able to work with them to order seven AEDs that will go be deployed into select parks. These will be placed in community parks. For active parks like Avery Park, Darree Fields and Emerald, fields, these will be placed near the concession stands. The AEDs should arrive by the end of December, so staff will have them placed before the next soccer season in the spring. They also have the ability, where there is Wi-Fi, to notify emergency responders whenever the doors for the AED device have been opened.

8. Next meeting: October 10, 2023

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Marja Keplar, Administrative Support III



Rex Pryor, Commission Chair

Attachments: None