



COMMUNITY SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION

January 14, 2026

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Community Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) was called to order by Vice Chair Cathy Axcell at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 in Council Chamber, 5555 Perimeter Drive.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Robert VanVliet, Rex Pryor, Hong Qiu, Ann Bohman, Jessica Tobias, Cathy Axcell, Carol Clinton

Committee Members Absent: Vicki Guinther

Staff Present: Mitchell Ament, Michael Barker, Barbara Ray, John Iannucci

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Pryor inquired if there were any corrections to the December 9, 2025 CSAC meeting minutes. [No corrections were requested.]

Mr. VanVliet moved, Ms. Qiu seconded approval of the December 9, 2025 meeting minutes.

Vote: Ms. Tobias, yes; Ms. Qiu, yes; Ms. Bohman, yes; Mr. VanVliet, yes; Mr. Pryor, yes; Ms. Axcell, yes; Ms. Clinton, yes.

[Motion carried 7-0.]

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments offered.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Deer Management Follow Up**

Ms. Axcell introduced the Deer Management Follow-up topic, noting the recently revised memo on deer management dated January 13. Mr. Ament introduced his colleagues participating in the presentation: Ms. Barbara Ray, Nature Education Coordinator; Mr. John Iannucci, Code Enforcement Officer; and Mr. Mike Barker, Deputy City Manager. Mr. Ament noted that Ms. Goliver, who had presented previously, was unable to attend this evening.

Mr. Ament provided background on the deer management topic, explaining that the City's study has been ongoing since February 2022, when staff first presented about the City's wildlife management program. He detailed how CSAC had recommended that City Council adopt an outdoor feeding ordinance, which ultimately was developed and adopted via Ordinance 47-23. Council referred the topic back to CSAC at their October 21, 2024 meeting for further study. Representatives from the City of Dublin and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) presented at the November 2024 CSAC meeting, providing an overview of deer management

tactics implemented across Ohio. Following review of ODNR's information, CSAC recommended that City staff continue monitoring the regional landscape, and City Council supported this recommendation at its May 5, 2025 meeting.

Mr. Ament presented benchmarking information on the City of Worthington's deer management program. He explained that Worthington City Council voted in January 2025 to move forward with a deer management program that could include targeted removal and an archery hunting program. The City of Worthington has indicated the City would likely focus on targeted removal for several years before considering an archery deer hunting program. The targeted removal would primarily take place on City-owned property, although some residents volunteered their private property. All properties were thoroughly reviewed by both the City of Worthington and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for safety concerns.

Mr. Ament detailed Worthington's notification process, explaining that residents within 200 feet of removal sites received notification in December of removal operations to be conducted from January 1 through March 31. The contract with USDA specified removal of 100 deer total, with potential for an additional 25 if the initial goal was met before the budget was expended. Worthington service staff would work overtime to field dress the deer, with police on-site to ensure safe operations. The total contract cost was just under \$57,000, not including overtime costs for Police and Service Center staff.

Mr. Ament shared community survey results from Worthington, which had received 5,118 responses across two surveys in 2024. Key findings showed that 71% of residents supported decreasing the deer population.

Mr. Ament reviewed the City of Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks' deer management programs. He explained that Metro Parks' resource management goal was to manage natural resources to provide optimal composition of native communities and benefit the largest diversity of native species possible. The Metro Parks deer management program covered all parklands, including Glacier Ridge Metro Park just northwest of Dublin. This targeted removal program was introduced in 1994 and has continued to present day, with Glacier Ridge Metro Park being added as the tenth park in 2021.

Ms. Qiu raised a question about the data presented, noting confusion about the 2024 numbers where 66 deer were targeted for removal, but the total population count showed only 65. Mr. Ament explained that deer populations are transient and there is no perfect way to gather population data throughout the removal season. Mr. Barker elaborated that getting an accurate snapshot of deer population in a constrained area like Glacier Ridge was a high-level estimate at best, recognizing that there is continuous movement of deer throughout metro park areas. He noted that the acceptable population range at Glacier Ridge was determined to be 40 to 60 deer, according to the 2025-2035 deer management plan.

Ms. Clinton expressed concern about the declining aerial count numbers, suggesting this indicated there was not really a deer problem in Glacier Ridge. Mr. Barker responded that the numbers showed Metro Parks' programming was effective in controlling the population, clarifying they were not trying to wipe out the deer population but maintain it at acceptable levels. He emphasized that inventory calculations were snapshots in time based on many levels of estimation.

Ms. Clinton inquired about the availability of recent data on deer populations and distribution specifically within Dublin. Mr. Barker stated the most recent information came from a 2023 Ohio State University (OSU) study estimating Dublin's deer population at 50 to 85 deer per square mile across the City's approximately 25 square miles. He has contacted the OSU professor who facilitated the study, who indicated there had not been meaningful change to those estimates despite some clustering in specialized areas.

Mr. Bob VanVliet asked two questions: first, about the methods used by Metro Parks for deer management, which Mr. Barker confirmed was a sharpshooting program with staff who self-perform the work; and second, whether the population numbers included Washington Township properties surrounded by Dublin or just the City proper. Mr. Barker clarified the data was intended for Dublin's corporate boundary, although deer movement naturally flowed both inward and outward.

Ms. Qiu shared her observation that she sees more deer in her neighborhood than at Glacier Ridge Metro Park; she acknowledged this is based on daily observances within her own neighborhood.

Ms. Ray explained that surveys reflect one square mile, but deer travel regularly within five square mile territories, which explains fluctuating numbers. She noted that herds moving through the area temporarily expand the effective population density.

Mr. Ament continued with information about City of Dublin surveys, explaining the last resident survey conducted in May 2023 had 297 responses. A new survey was recently launched the previous week to better understand residents' attitudes toward and impacts from deer, as well as to track sentiment changes. The survey would close January 30, 2026, so staff will be able to share survey results shared at the February 10 CSAC meeting. As of 4:00 PM today, they have received 1,756 responses, showing considerable engagement.

Ms. Clinton asked if there was a target number of responses for statistical significance. Mr. Ament responded that he did not believe they had established a specific target. Ms. Clinton noted Worthington had over 5,000 responses and wondered about the percentage of population responding, also noting the self-selected nature of survey respondents. Mr. Barker acknowledged the City of Worthington had conducted multiple surveys, which contributed to their high response rate; he expressed satisfaction with Dublin's trending response numbers in its present survey.

Mr. Ament presented data relevant to Dublin, explaining that deer inquiries tend to be seasonal, peaking from late May through summer. Dublin received 22 documented inquiries in 2025 about deer, including negative interactions, fawns bedding in backyards, and landscape damage. Since 2019, 67 complaints were received through the GoDublin app, including potential no-feed ordinance violations.

Ms. Clinton questioned the data, noting discrepancies between the 37 complaints in 2023, 25 in 2024, and 22 in 2025, totaling 84, versus the stated 67 total since 2019. Mr. Ament and Ms. Ray clarified the distinction between inquiries received through formal channels like Tell Dublin versus complaints through Go Dublin app. Ms. Ray added she receives about 300 calls or emails annually about deer, separate from formal complaints about specific damage issues.

Mr. Ament presented data on deer-vehicle incidents, tracked using crash report data. He emphasized the importance of reporting accidents for data accuracy, acknowledging additional unreported collisions occur. In 2025, 21 deer were dispatched due to catastrophic injuries compared to 19 in 2024. These injuries could result from vehicle collisions or other causes, such as fence-jumping accidents.

Mr. Ament displayed maps tracking deer-vehicle collision locations and dead deer pickups by Dublin street crews. The dead deer pickup map covered 2021-2025 with different colored dots for each year. An interactive map link was provided in the packet materials.

Ms. Clinton asked about the number of dead deer pickups shown on the map. Mr. Barker explained the distinction between documented deer-vehicle accidents in police reports versus dead animal pickups by public service teams.

Ms. Ray clarified that annual dead deer pickups average 90 to 100, with most having succumbed to injuries even if initially surviving vehicle strikes. She shared personal experience of hitting 14 deer since age 18, but only reporting 2 for insurance purposes, illustrating how many strikes go unreported.

Ms. Qiu noted the discrepancy between low reported vehicle collisions (less than 50 total from 2021-2025) versus the 90-100 annual carcass pickups. Ms. Ray explained these included fawns under 40 pounds that likely would not be reported as strikes.

Mr. Ament moved the discussion to the City's no-feed ordinance enforcement. He explained that since adoption of Ordinance 47-23 prohibiting outdoor feeding of wild animals, Ms. Ray has proactively informed residents about the legislation requirements.

Ms. Ray indicated that she has distributed informational materials on responsible bird feeding to 44 residents and issued educational letters to 14 residents, with 6 receiving follow-up letters if violations persisted. Additionally, she provided consultation to 36 residents seeking to understand the City's Code changes.

Ms. Axcell asked if enforcement had gone beyond notification. Mr. Ament confirmed three cases were initiated by Code Enforcement in 2025 for unresolved violations, but all were dismissed as residents achieved voluntary compliance. He detailed each case: the first involved various feeders, with the resident agreeing to remove all feeders for 30 days to modify animal behavior before gradually reintroducing limited hanging bird feeders; the second involved multiple feeders creating a deer pathway between homes, resolved by relocating feeders and installing drop catchers; the third involved multiple violations with feeding issues addressed immediately and ongoing monitoring through spring.

Mr. Barker emphasized the no-feed ordinance was a first step focused on education and voluntary compliance rather than enforcement. The goal had been achieved without contentious court cases.

Mr. Pryor expressed confusion. He recalls a past committee discussion about not continuing the no-feed ordinance because it was not proving to be an effective method for deer management. Mr. Ament indicated he was not aware of such previous discussion, although the ordinance was amended to remove reference to stray cats.

Ms. Ray clarified there has always been a no-feed ordinance within Dublin parks, and the 2008 waterfowl feeding ordinance has been very effective. The first year of the current ordinance was only educational, which might have caused confusion.

Mr. Ament reviewed Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)'s prior presentation from November 2024, which covered biological versus sociological carrying capacity. ODNR estimated Dublin was near sociological carrying capacity based on the 2023 survey but likely not at biological carrying capacity where disease or starvation risks would be high.

Ms. Qiu asked for clarification on sociological versus biological carrying capacity. Ms. Ray explained sociological capacity refers to what the community will tolerate. Dublin could biologically handle 150 deer per square mile, but residents probably would not tolerate that level, hence ODNR's opinion that Dublin was reaching sociological capacity.

Ms. Axcell noted the interesting split in survey results between those who think deer should be managed versus those who think it is fine, despite over 200 people reporting property damage. Ms. Ray agreed the current survey would be informative for future decision-making about tolerance levels.

Ms. Hong Qiu added that biological capacity of 150 in the wild differs from 20 in neighborhoods, asking if that distinction related to sociological capacity. Mr. Ament confirmed this was exactly what the term referred to.

Mr. Ament discussed deer management options, noting ODNR's presentation focused on lethal options although non-lethal options exist. Ohio Revised Code Chapter 1531 makes it illegal to trap and relocate deer due to stress and disease spread potential. Birth control methods (surgical sterilization and contraceptives) are generally for research purposes and would not be approved as sole management options. When approved, they are coupled with lethal programs, as reflected in Shaker Heights. Neither option reduces existing populations but can impact future populations, sometimes extending doe lifespan by avoiding birthing stress.

Regarding aggressive deer, 2025 saw 20 reports of dogs attacked by deer and 35 reports of deer stalking/chasing humans, almost all involving does protecting fawns. Current guidance directs residents to seek safety, call Dublin Police non-emergency line for officer dispatch, and contact ODNR wildlife officers for removal. Due to ODNR's limited staff resources, Dublin staff met with two organizations offering as-needed deer removal services. The City plans to work with a company providing innovative, discrete approaches using corrals with motion sensors to alert staff when deer enter, allowing remote gate closure and prompt humane dispatch. Corrals would be in non-visible locations with overnight operations only.

Ms. Tobias asked about serious deer-related injuries beyond the one discussed last year. Mr. Barker confirmed that, fortunately, there had not been additional serious injuries, although some people were understandably concerned. The corral program would address these specific safety concerns on a limited basis, not as a general deer reduction program.

Ms. Clinton asked how they would ensure the trapped deer was the aggressive one. Mr. Barker explained the ideal plan involved marking aggressive deer with oil-based paintball guns. He acknowledged the practical challenges, since deer would likely flee when approached. He admitted they might not have certainty every time and might need to remove multiple deer to

ensure they got the right one, emphasizing the goal of being minimally invasive while addressing safety concerns.

Ms. Clinton inquired about the "aggressive deer trend," as only 2025 data is shown.

Ms. Ray provided historical context, explaining the first aggressive doe appeared in Brandon Park around 2018, stalking dog walkers. Residents initially posted warnings but did not want the doe removed since she had a fawn. The following year, the doe became more sensitized, entering yards to strike at dogs proactively. By 2020, calls came about does in Indian Run Meadows. For the first three years, it was just one or two does, but in recent years the problem has progressed significantly. She explained the biological factors: fawns learn behavior from mothers, females stay in groups, and they have high territory fidelity, meaning marked deer would likely return and be caught in corrals since they are fed there at night.

Ms. Ray addressed Ms. Clinton's question about population growth and development patterns, explaining that animals like deer actually take advantage of urban environments due to no hunting pressure, abundant food, and high fecundity. Does in urban areas now regularly have twins and triplets compared to single fawns historically, potentially tripling populations in urban settings. These deer grow up around people and dogs without fear, using human structures for protection from predators.

Mr. VanVliet asked about population dynamics if numbers were reduced and deer migration from surrounding areas.

Ms. Ray explained removal programs must be ongoing, not one-time efforts. Communities with deer management programs have operated for 5 to 30 years, adjusting annual removal numbers as populations stabilize. Urban deer can live 20 years, and migration occurs regularly. She noted that discussions about regional efforts have occurred, which have included Jerome, Plain City, Westerville, and Worthington, with Columbus not yet addressing the issue.

Mr. Ament outlined the next steps. The new community survey results would be presented at the February 10 CSAC meeting, where a committee recommendation to City Council regarding Dublin's deer management program would be sought. The survey results would inform the committee's recommendation, which would be presented at a subsequent Council meeting for consideration and potential action.

Ms. Tobias asked why Worthington was delaying their archery program.

Mr. Barker explained sharpshooting yields deer population reduction sooner, while archery programs are typically implemented at maintenance levels after several years. Part of the delay also considered residents' social tolerance, giving people time to adapt emotionally to the method. Ms. Ray added that safety concerns are common when people first hear about lethal removal, though no people have been harmed in 40 years of Ohio programs. Archery programs also require more logistics like vetting hunters and securing property permissions, so starting with professional removal helps residents become comfortable with the concept.

Ms. Tobias asked about Worthington's 200-foot notification radius rationale. Mr. Barker indicated he did not know specifically but noted 200 feet is an industry standard for various City notifications like rezoning; it was likely adopted for consistency.

Ms. Clinton provided feedback on the discussion questions presented. For additional information to review at the CSAC February meeting, she would like to have data on the actual hazards of deer beyond landscaping damage, referencing ODNR's statement about no danger from herd size or disease risk. She noted the survey's general categories for disease concerns might not capture specific issues like chronic wasting disease.

Mr. Ament inquired if she wanted biological hazards in general or related to carrying capacity. Ms. Clinton clarified she would like to have data on the general hazards of backyard deer. Ms. Tobias noted the committee had discussed the deer chronic wasting disease at either their January or February 2025 meetings, so information should be included in those minutes.

Ms. Clinton also requested survey response data showing percentage of population responding for statistical significance and comparison to other surveys like Worthington's. Ms. Qiu asked when survey results would be available for review.

Mr. Ament responded that the results would be provided in the meeting packet materials one week before the meeting.

Ms. Axcell shared personal experience from 16 years in Westlake, Northeast Ohio, where daily deer sightings and near-misses became common. Recently, she contacted a former Westlake City Council member who confirmed Dublin had covered all the same due diligence steps. Westlake took swift action on feeding violations with positive community response. Their program partnered with neighboring communities after starting independently, and implementing deer removal within wooded areas and parklands made significant impact without requiring neighborhood removal. She asked about timeframes and costs. She is curious if starting targeted removal now might take one year versus three years before the City could then proceed to maintenance programs.

Mr. VanVliet asked about ward-level analysis of survey responses, noting Ward 2 (south side toward Hilliard) showed fewer deer-related incidents on the maps. He inquired if that reflects a difference in development or if Hilliard was doing something else to result in that difference.

Mr. Ament confirmed the survey asked about connection to Dublin with various residency and work options.

Mr. Barker expressed appreciation for the suggestion for ward-level analysis, noting they could correlate responses with incident concentrations and population density. He acknowledged people experiencing more deer interactions would be more inclined to respond.

Ms. Tobias asked if initiating targeted removal sooner might eliminate the need for an archery program.

Mr. Barker responded that Dublin is in the data collection and benchmarking mode. He referenced Worthington's program as a model for Dublin to consider, with an emphasis on safety, both real and optical, as their foremost priority. He indicated he presently was uncertain about police or community tolerance for archery programs in Dublin. He noted that targeted removal yields higher reduction rates, and once maintenance levels are achieved, the method might matter less than just ensuring it happens. He confirmed that Columbus Metro Parks only uses targeted removal.

Mr. Barker referenced Worthington's survey showing residents were much less supportive of archery than sharpshooting with trained professionals, which the public perceived as safer.

Ms. Ray noted some Ohio communities use both methods or only hunting, with hunting programs sometimes not removing enough deer annually.

Mr. Barker added that archery provides less certainty of killing animals humanely and creates tracking challenges, with considerations about where wounded deer might end up. He believes archery programs work better in sprawling, open communities; he is not sure what areas within Dublin could accommodate that method of removal.

Ms. Clinton shared anecdotal deer interactions, describing an 10-point buck with a group of does in her backyard. She plans to respond to the survey with these details, noting she had not been aware of the survey despite getting community news from Nextdoor. She mentioned recent City of Worthington news about a resident lawsuit regarding its deer management program. A recent Worthington City Council meeting where that topic was addressed had approximately a dozen resident attendees.

Mr. Ament indicated that no Dublin staff attended that meeting, but he maintains close contact with a former Dublin staff member, who is now helping administer Worthington's deer program.

Ms. Axcell asked if Worthington's legal issues occurred after their Council voted for the program. Staff responded affirmatively.

Ms. Clinton noted that the suit was dropped without explanation of what City interactions led to that withdrawal, and their deer removals are proceeding.

Ms. Clinton shared that on January 12, a resident posted on Nextdoor a deer management plan option overview. Ms. Clinton offered to share it with committee members. The proposal suggested gathering data on deer density and attractants to map deer locations; identification of feeding issues; use of public education and volunteer engagement for herd movement data. The plan also discussed OSU partnerships, structured planning, density and attractant studies mapping neighborhoods, thermal drone surveys to track deer and avoid counting the same ones multiple times, cost comparisons, public interaction about survey results, and prevention-first approaches. Ms. Clinton noted that her home security camera has documented nightly deer activity in her yard.

Mr. Ament indicated the results of Dublin's community survey on deer management would be scheduled on CSAC's next meeting agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Ament confirmed there was no new business.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Ament indicated there were no staff comments.

- **ROUNDTABLE**

Ms. Qiu raised a question about the AI-powered lighting system at the crosswalk at the Brand Road and Coventry Woods Drive intersection, which was recently covered by Channel 10 news. She questioned whether AI technology truly was needed, noting the project seemed to simply provide lights for pedestrians to cross the street. She expressed concern about costs, suggesting the same safety goal could be achieved for less money. She is interested in ensuring fiscal responsibility despite adequate funding.

Mr. Ament indicated that he currently is not aware of the cost of the project, but noted it addressed a public safety concern at a mid-block crossing with limited lighting. He would ask the Transportation and Mobility Division to follow up with cost information.

- **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Acting 
C.S.A.C. Chair


Assistant Clerk of Council