



COMMUNITY SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION

February 11, 2025, 6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Guinther called the February 11, 2025 regular meeting of the Community Services Advisory Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 5555 Perimeter Drive.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Vice Chair Cathy Axcell, Jessica Tobias, Chair Vicki Guinther, Vivek Arunachalam, Rex Pryor, Hong Qiu, Ann Bohman

Staff Members Present: Emily Goliver, Barbara Ray, Deputy Chief Tabernik, Madison Kregel

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments offered.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Guinther inquired if there were any corrections to the November 25, 2024 CSAC meeting minutes. [No corrections were requested.]

Mr. Pryor moved, Vice Chair Axcell seconded approval of the November 25, 2024 meeting minutes.

Vote: Mr. Pryor, yes; Chair Guinther, yes; Ms. Tobias, yes; Ms. Qiu, yes; Ms. Bohman, yes; Mr. Arunachalam, yes; Vice Chair Axcell, yes.

[Motion carried 7-0.]

Chair Guinther asked if there were any corrections to the 12-10-24 Joint CSAC and CIAC meeting minutes. [No corrections were requested.]

Mr. Pryor moved, Ms. Tobias seconded approval of the November 25, 2024 meeting minutes.

Vote: Mr. Arunachalam, yes; Ms. Tobias, yes; Ms. Qiu, yes; Ms. Bohman, yes; Vice Chair Axcell, yes; Chair Guinther, yes; Mr. Pryor, yes.

[Motion carried 7-0.]

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Deer Management Follow-up**

Ms. Goliver stated that this topic has been a matter of discussion since February 2022. At that time, Barbara Ray, City of Dublin Nature Education Coordinator, provided an overview of the City's wildlife management practices. Through discussion throughout 2023, CSAC recommended to City Council the adoption of an outdoor feed ordinance; subsequently, Ordinance 47-23 was adopted on November 27, 2023. In early 2024, the ordinance was updated to remove the

reference to feral cats. In late 2024, the topic of deer management was referred back to CSAC. At the November 25, 2024 CSAC meeting, a representative of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife, presented an update on statewide deer management options. The purpose of tonight's discussion is to provide an overview of the City's work to date. In May 2023, the City conducted a community survey of residents' views on City deer management. The survey results indicated that most residents had seen white-tailed deer on their property. The survey was brief, and 297 responses were received in a short period of time. It is evidently a topic on which our residents are interested in engaging. Ms. Goliver provided an overview of other central Ohio municipalities' actions concerning deer management. On December 21, 2024, the City of Worthington City Council voted unanimously to direct their staff to implement a deer management program, which will include targeted removal and an archery hunting program. Their next steps are to refine their existing ordinance that currently prohibits hunting within the City of Worthington. The Worthington Police Department is working on establishing the archery hunting program, including the boundaries within which it is permitted. They anticipate implementation of the archery hunting program for the 2025 hunting season and implementation of the targeted removal program in 2026. She noted that she has provided committee members with a link to view the December 2024 Worthington City Council meeting. The City of Gahanna previously had a deer-related archery hunting program for 20 years, which was discontinued in 2018. However, due to receipt of recent deer population complaints, Gahanna also has surveyed its residents to gain their perspectives on deer removal. Area metro parks have been using lethal removal since the 1980s. The cities of Marysville and New Albany allow deer hunting within designated zones, per ODNR guidelines. The New Albany Police Department has experienced a reduction in the number of deer-vehicle collisions as a result of their deer hunting program.

Ms. Goliver stated that in 2023, the City of Dublin documented 37 inquiries about deer issues. In 2024, 25 citizen contacts regarding deer complaints were received via TellDublin, an app that includes ability to track wildlife complaints. Complaints are also received via the GoDublin app. Since it was launched, the City has received 53 wildlife-related complaints. Upon receipt of a complaint, Ms. Ray contacts the resident to offer recommendations and then often continues to track the issue. As noted previously, Dublin has adopted a no feed ordinance that prohibits feeding of wild animals or animals running at large on private property. Public Information Officer (PIO) Maddie Kregel and her team have done a great job making the community aware of the new City code. In regard to enforcement, as a first step, Ms. Ray sends out a letter of awareness to a citizen making them aware of the City's no feed ordinance and subsequent enforcement, should it be necessary. If the resident's noncompliant behavior continues, a cease and desist letter is sent. Should it be needed, the next step is handled by City Code Enforcement, which handles the City's Code compliance process. That process can result in the case being filed with the City Municipal Court and their subsequent finding of a misdemeanor with associated fines. Ms. Goliver displayed two maps showing (1) deer-vehicle collisions in recent years in various City locations and (2) dead deer pick-up locations. She also shared data received from the social media posts regarding deer population concerns. She invited the Committee's feedback on the update.

Committee Questions/Comments

Vice Chair Axcell inquired if the proposed deer hunting program would be a City expense, or if there were other ways to fund it.

Ms. Goliver responded that the only existing programs of which she is aware are City-funded programs, conducted through a contract with the Division of Wildlife. That contract covers not only the dispatching to remove the deer body, but also the harvesting of the meat.

Ms. Ray stated that the meat processing cost is approximately \$150/deer; the meat is donated to local food pantries. The City of Worthington has budgeted \$75,000 for their combined program of targeted removal and archery hunting.

Ms. Tobias inquired if fees are associated with the hunting permits.

Deputy Chief (DC) Tabernick responded that the cost of the City of Marysville's hunting permit is \$20 or \$30, whereby they can recoup a minimal portion of the city's administrative cost.

Ms. Qiu inquired if the hunter were to kill a deer, they would be required to pay any additional fees to the City.

Ms. Goliver indicated they would not. The hunting permit involves a one-time annual fee. The hunters may be asked to provide a report, but they are not charged additional fees for any deer they killed.

Chair Guinther inquired what data Dublin would anticipate collecting to confirm the success of the program.

Ms. Goliver responded that in the past, the City's data regarding deer population has been shared with Ohio State for their deer population assessment program. The data was part of a report that OSU provided a few years ago. That report indicates how the state-wide data was gathered. She anticipates that a few years after instituting a deer hunting program, the City probably would look at doing another deer population assessment to learn if the population has changed. One statistic that could be used is the number of dead deer pickups within the related time period. Those numbers would reveal if there have been fewer deer-vehicle incidents. The ODNR might have a recommendation concerning number of deer that should be eliminated annually.

Chair Guinther inquired if Dublin were to implement a deer hunting program, what would be its boundaries within the City limits.

Ms. Goliver responded that it would be determined by the type of hunting. The Police Department would ensure that it's within a safe area. If their permit allowed, hunters could hunt within their own backyard. Neighbor approval would be a critical factor.

Chair Guinther inquired how Dublin would determine neighbor approvals.

Ms. Goliver responded that a person requesting a permit to hunt on his property would probably need to obtain signatures of approval from his neighbors. Waivers could be involved. Our Police Department will not approve permits that they do not consider to be safe.

DC Tabernick stated that other models involve designating three or four areas of the City where the population is either low or there are no homes and no schools.

Ms. Guinther inquired if it would be possible to phase in a program or wait until the success of the hunting programs in surrounding communities has been assessed.

Chair Goliver responded that staff will continue to monitor the success in surrounding areas. We are not developing next steps at this point. When we arrive at the point where staff is prepared to provide recommendations, that information will be shared with CSAC.

Vice Chair Axcell stated that at the Worthington City Council meeting, liability was discussed. If a pet were to be injured, for example, is that an issue for the City to address?

Ms. Goliver responded that Dublin's answer would be similar to the City of Worthington's, which is that whoever is conducting the hunting incurs the liability involved. That understanding would be clarified with any permitting process. Safety will always be Dublin's #1 priority. The City would be absolved of the liability as per the permit granted.

DC Tabernik responded that he also would anticipate the City would work with the Law Director's office to develop a waiver that would be part of the permitting process.

Ms. Qiu inquired if the number of deer that are permitted to be eliminated via the hunting program is limited.

Ms. Ray stated that the number permitted has been fairly standard in those communities in Ohio that have implemented deer hunting programs, including the metro parks. Glacier Ridge Metro Park uses targeted removal, rather than hunting, and they have been removing 75 deer per year for approximately 10 years. Her understanding is that the number has remained steady. Other communities have initiated programs permitting removal of 80-100 deer, but the number has been reduced after the first 5-6 years, when the deer population has dropped. The Dublin deer population has access to substantial natural and landscape food. The deer births may often be twins or triplets, so the deer population might be reproducing as quickly as they are being removed through a hunting program. The deer removal program has to be in place at least 10-15 years before results are seen.

Ms. Tobias stated that the deer complaints most received are related to safety or landscape damage. Have other communities discussed concern about deer diseases, including the chronic wasting disease, which can be transmitted animal to animal?

Ms. Ray responded that residents have inquired about deer they have observed that appear thin or sickly. In Dublin, such cases typically are found to be related to pre-existing injuries, perhaps from a car accident, which resulted in a systemic infection. Deer also can be impacted by the papilloma virus. Tumors around a deer's face, neck and mouth can hinder its ability to eat well. No case of the virus has been detected in the Dublin area, but it has been reported within the five counties north of Dublin. She commented on other deer health issues, including the wasting disease and neurological issues that can affect the deer's brain and behavior. She noted that the ODNR is interested in testing any deer that are suspected of a neurological health issue. ODNR provides a contact number on their website that residents can call if they observe a deer with certain signs of illness that differ from those related to a vehicle strike.

Ms. Tobias inquired if a deer management program could reduce the risk of the chronic wasting disease being brought into this area.

Ms. Ray responded that if the City has a smaller deer population, there would be less chance of that occurring. The chronic wasting disease is very contagious among the deer, but transmittal of the disease is dependent on how the deer are moving. Deer in urban settings tend to remain within their territorial range, typically within a 5-mile circle. It is not common for deer to move a greater distance, but it can occur. For instance, young bucks are driven out of their natal herds, so they need to travel elsewhere. At this time of year, the bucks are gathering together in bachelor herds, but they remain within their territorial circle.

Ms. Goliver stated that part of the reason for an outdoor feed ordinance is to reduce disease spread. Chronic wasting disease can be spread via bodily fluids, such as saliva. Setting out a trough to feed numerous deer would pose a risk.

Ms. Qui inquired approximately how many reports of dead deer are provided to the City annually. Ms. Goliver responded that 74 requests for dead deer pickups were received in 2022, 84 in 2023, and 93 in 2024.

Ms. Qiu inquired if the increase is normal.

Ms. Ray responded that it's normal to experience some increase. In regard to the deer habitat, Dublin is not at maximum carrying capacity. The City now provides several reporting avenues, which could be the reason for increased reports.

Ms. Goliver noted that in 2023, dead animal pickup requests were added to the GoDublin app.

Ms. Ray noted that preceding the new reporting options, the previous Nature Education Coordinator, Ms. Migliore, manually kept good records of the number of deer City crews picked up; there is data extending back to 2011. The numbers recorded range between 60-80 dead deer pickups per year, so she believes the City's numbers have been steady for a long period of time. She noted that many deer are being struck by vehicles on main roads with higher speed limits and in specific crossing areas.

Ms. Qiu stated that although the numbers documented appear to be steady, her personal perception is that there are many more deer.

Ms. Ray responded that in the last 10-15 years, residents' comments have been that there are more deer. Interestingly, the deer themselves are gradually learning how to cross some of the roads.

Chair Guinther stated that she has observed a deer using a crosswalk.

Vice Chair Axcell stated that a well-researched, comprehensive program should be put in place, if that is the direction we choose. In hand with that, there needs to be a transparent, comprehensive communication program.

Ms. Tobias inquired if City Council is anticipating receiving a recommendation from CSAC.

Ms. Goliver responded that City Council referred the topic back to CSAC for additional discussion. As of today, staff is not ready to seek a recommendation from the committee. Staff was interested in learning if CSAC saw a recommendation as the next step. What she has learned from the committee tonight is their desire is to monitor other communities, such as the City of Worthington, to gauge their success. In the meantime, staff can update City Council on CSAC's continuing discussion.

Ms. Qiu recommended that the City of Dublin conduct another survey of its residents, sharing some of the information about the potential solutions that have been identified, such as targeted removal and archery hunting, to better understand our residents' preferences.

Ms. Tobias stated that in addition to providing the education, it would be beneficial to have a solid justification for the City's cost and the administrative burden. The potential of human injury is an important consideration.

Chair Guinther thanked staff for the deer management update and confirmed that there were no additional discussion items.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.



Community Services Advisory Commission, Chair



Assistant Clerk of Council