

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

August 4, 2014

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Trocki called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, August 4, 2014 in the Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers of the Jamestown Town Hall at 93 Narragansett Avenue.

II. ROLL CALL

Council Members present:

Kristine S. Trocki, President
Mary E. Meagher, Vice President
Thomas P. Tighe
Eugene B. Mihaly
Blake A. Dickinson

Also in Attendance:

Andrew E. Nota, Town Administrator
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
Wyatt A. Brochu, Town Solicitor
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

III. TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

- A) Tick Task Force presentation to the Town Council of the Lyme Disease reduction recommendations

Town Council Member and Tick Task Force Chair Eugene Mihaly noted printed copies of the Tick Task Force Recommendations and appendices available at the back of the room, online, using the sign-up sheet, or contacting the Town Clerk.

- 1) Review and Discussion.

Mr. Mihaly explained the process followed by the Tick Task Force over the last year. The common thread of their work was a sense of urgency, as it is estimated up to 60% of our population has been affected by Lyme diseases. The conclusion: anything less than action is unconscionable. Members of the TTF took on specific assignments and reported back to the diverse membership consisting of: Blake Dickinson, Maureen Coleman, Jemma Craig, Bruce Dickinson, Dr. Joe England, David Fuquea, Julie Janson, Randy Keck, Clifford Kurz, Jeff McDonough, Christian Smith, Barbara Szepatowski, and Dr. Tom Mather, Science Advisor from URI. The TTF recommendations were made unanimously and fall under three categories:

1. Education and Prevention
2. Treatment
3. Tick Reduction

Education and Prevention. It was learned too many members of the community do not know enough about ticks and how to deal with them when bitten. The TTF proposes a multi-faceted campaign, with one element for the community at large and a second element for the schools. Stories in the *Jamestown Press*, public forums, and posters around town were referenced.

Treatment. The TTF cannot affect this outcome, so no recommendations were made, except that everyone should be careful and pay attention; if any citizen notices a rash or other symptoms such as those similar to the flu, they should contacting a physician with Lyme diseases experience. It is important to catch it early. There are two websites and links on the TTF website to medical information.

Tick Reduction. This is the central pillar of the TTF's approach. Unless the tick population is reduced, the plague of tick borne diseases will not end, in particular Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, and Babesiosis. This is critical. Any community who has attempted to reduce tick borne diseases has come to this conclusion. The disease is transmitted through the circle of mice and small critters, ticks, and deer. Deer are the host, ticks feed on them for a period of time, drop off, and produce many eggs; each deer is responsible for 450,000 tick larvae annually. The ticks feed on mice and small critters, who then become infected, and the deer ticks become vectors or carriers of the disease from one creature to another. Deer are not carriers of the diseases, but a critical element in the circle. A history of the young phenomena of Lyme disease (since early 1980's) in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts was explained.

Tick reduction measures of tick tubes, spraying (no recommendation), sterilization, and deer herd reduction were referenced. In the conclusion appendices there is explanation of how all alternatives were considered and evaluated in a serious manner (see recommendations document), and it was concluded not one of them does the job. There is no other effective way to reduce the epidemic of Lyme diseases than by the actual reduction of the deer herd (not every member of the TTF is a hunter). This is a serious public health issue, and there is no other way. There are three options: professional hunting, conventional hunting, and conventional hunting with semi-professional oversight. The TTF concluded that the third option is the best one. Later this evening the TTF will present its recommendation of a target of 10 deer per square mile, or 100 deer for the Island, to the Town Council. Presently there are between 400 to 500 deer on the Island, or 40 to 50 per square mile, which is 4 to 5 times what it should be. Explanation of tick tubes with permethrin, spraying, and other methods ensued. Culling the herd by trained hunters is the best option.

- 2) Questions and Answers.

Conservation Commission Chair and TTF Member Maureen Coleman was introduced and will answer questions. President Trocki asked about spraying, in particular permethrin, and concerns expressed by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Coleman stated there was not a consensus on the TTF regarding spraying, so no recommendations is being made. The Conservation Commission is opposed to spraying, and she would not spray her property, as it is harmful to the environment and a potential danger to humans. There are varying opinions on this subject, and people should read the information available and make up their own minds.

Councilor Dickinson stated the TTF agreed that if there was not a unanimous consensus on a topic, the TTF would not make a recommendation to support it. Initially he was a proponent of professional culling, and he changed his view on this which is reflected in the recommendations. If the deer were eliminated tomorrow, the Lyme diseases would still be a problem for a couple of years. That is why we all have to be educated about prevention. Spraying is an issue, and he has deer that bed down just over the wall from his home, and he is going to spray. He understands the risks, but for him and his family, this outweighs the serious threat to the health of his family from Lyme tick borne diseases. The deer are a significant issue in Jamestown, and they must be brought down to a number that is acceptable in nature. Stakeholder support is needed to be successful, and we have partnered with the hunters in Jamestown. who believe they can help us. Recommendations were developed that specifically target deer reduction and it is the TTF's hope there is Council acceptance, along with partnering with the State, to fulfill the reduction goals.

President Trocki noted she spent three hours reviewing the recommendations, and was impressed by the effort, thought, and dedication exhibited by the TTF. She learned a lot from the forums she attended as well and extended Kudos to the TTF for their invested time and effort that produced the series of recommendations. Councilor Mihaly recognized Bruce Dickinson who gave them the boundaries of what is possible and how to approach this in the most effective way possible. Councilor Dickinson gave kudos to David Fuquea who coined the phrase "to do nothing is no longer an option to solve this problem" which is why everyone on the TTF was so dedicated to seeing this through to the end. We are working with the schools and they are great partners. The kids will become stakeholders and bring this information home to their parents and get them involved as well.

Public comment and questions.

Ann Lane of East Shore Road asked how the TTF will proceed with hunting. Councilor Dickinson explained the recommendation of a target of 10 deer per square mile and what they ask the Town for is a multi-faceted set of recommendations to support the deer reduction policy, which includes a budget, and targeting a processor (butcher) we can use as a resource, and refrigeration services. We still have to work with RIDEM to reach the reduction goals. We want to ask the Council for approval to work with RIDEM to achieve the goals. The hunting organization is serious about policing itself and our police will be involved. There is a GIS land map and we want to be able to assign hunters to

particular parcels. Thanks to Christian Smith and Elizabeth Delude Dix who have offered places to hunt. Any level of support is accepted and appreciated.

Councilor Mihaly noted hunters are limited to what they can do with what they have. To that end there is consideration for a refrigeration unit and brining in a processor. As far as donating to any food bank, this is a difficult issue for all, as food banks cannot accept any meat that is not USDA inspected, and the USDA will not touch any wildlife. There is discussion of a RIDOH and RIDEM development of a State certification, which is a ways off, and hunting season begins next month. We will keep trying.

Catherine Shafts of East Shore Road expressed her concern for spraying of pesticides and asked who would be spraying. The Council noted only private citizens would be spraying, no town property would be sprayed, and there will be no town recommendations for spraying.

Ellen Winsor of East Shore Road congratulated and thanked the TTF for doing a wonderful job and commented on the reduced number of deer due to hunting. She commented on what RIDEM would consider an emergency situation and a new rolled oats vaccine for mice by US Biologic which has been used successfully in New York. Dr. Tom Mather commented on the use of the vaccine and would hold his enthusiasm for further study, as the study was done in a small test area. He believes it has potential. She commented on two lawsuits against culling and it was found that the culling policy was found constitutional. Councilor Dickinson commented the proposed deer reduction policy is framed within State Management Policy guidelines, and if the Town approves adoption of a deer reduction policy, it is based on their rules, so they are very encouraging, and there is little chance of a legal challenge. Ms. Winsor commented on the use of helicopters for coordinating hunting. She was informed this is also done here in Jamestown.

Bruce Dickinson of Arnold Avenue, TTF member, asked what the TTF plans to do to inform landowners they have no liability when allowing a hunter on their property. Discussion ensued of hunting on Dutch Island and whether permission will be sought for hunting on Dutch Island, as deer will seek refuge there. Discussion ensued of the letter to be sent to landowners asking them to open their properties to hunting, which will state there is no liability for allowing hunting.

Ellen Winsor commented on hunting on Dutch Island and the declaration of a health emergency. Councilor Mihaly commented RIDEM will be cooperative. On Block Island the emergency was based on wildlife management grounds declared by RIDEM, as RIDOH would not declare it a health emergency.

Vice President Meagher asked if there is a target area to start with. The population is strongest in the north end. Councilor Dickinson noted the TTF will ask the Town to forward a request to the Water Commission to hunt on Water Commission town-owned property and will request permission from the Town to hunt on town-owned property.

Discussion ensued of property locations. Times of day and locations of deer sightings around Jamestown were noted.

Joe Teixeira of Howland Avenue asked if there has been any discussion with the Land Trust people to hunt there. He was informed there has been discussion, and progress has been minimal. Vice President Meagher suggested people who contribute to the Land Trust might convey that to the management of the Land Trust. Councilor Dickinson stated the Land Trust voted to not allow hunting on the Land Trust property. He feels this was based on misinformation. He believes under the current health circumstances, people would be willing to give up use of the property for short periods of time during hunting season. Bruce Dickinson stated he contacted the Land Trust and asked them to give up two weeks of time and they have not agreed.

3) Next Steps

President Trocki stated the TTF will present their findings to the Council and the Council will address their recommendations. She hopes the people in attendance will stay for the Council meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the work session was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Attest:

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council (5)
Town Administrator
Finance Director
Town Solicitor