

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
November 6, 2006

A special meeting of the Jamestown Town Council was called to order at the Jamestown Philomenian Library at 7:00 PM by Council President David J. Long. The following members were present:

Julio J. DiGiando, Vice President  
William A. Kelly  
Michael Schnack

absent: Barbara A. Szepatowski

also present:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator  
Arlene D. Petit, Town Clerk

present for RIDEM:

Michael Lapiski, Acting Chief, Fish and Wildlife Management  
Lori Gibson, Wildlife Biologist  
Larry Mouradjian, Acting Associate Director, Natural Resources

NEW BUSINESS

1)      Controlled Deer Hunt at Beavertail State Park

Lori Gibson gave a slide presentation illustrating the growth rate of the deer population in Jamestown if left unchecked by a controlled management program. Ms. Gibson also noted that a lack of a controlled deer management plan could result in damage to ornamental plants, loss of forest, loss of plants and songbirds, increase in automobile strikes, an abundance of ticks, and disease transmission.

The proposed Beavertail Cooperative Archery Hunt would allow for bow hunting only. The following are a summary of the specifics as outlined by RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife:

- Archery hunting would occur between November 13, 2006 and January 31, 2007 on weekdays; no hunting on weekends prior to December 31, 2006. Either sex and antlerless archery deer permits are valid for this season (Conanicut Island).
- No hunting of any other species of wildlife is permitted. All regulations in General Deer Part \* and Archery Deer Part IV of these regulations shall apply.
- No firearms are allowed on the property at any time.
- No permanent tree stands are allowed. Climbing tree stands are permitted and must be removed at the end of the season.
- Proficiency testing is required for all archery hunters on the Beavertail Cooperative Archery Deer Hunting Area.
- A Beavertail Cooperative Archery Deer Hunting Area Permit is required and will serve as written permission to hunt this private land (sign up at Police Station).
- Countersigned permission of the Chief of Police or designee is required.

Ms. Gibson referred to the “Review of Holterra Report on Whitetail Deer Population Estimate for Jamestown Island” prepared by the Rhode Island Division Fish and Wildlife and in summary stated that the Division is concerned that the focus of the Jamestown deer debate is on the absolute population abundance. More importantly, Ms. Gibson stated, is that consideration should be given to the rate of population growth (doubling) and the choice of viable management alternatives.

Michael Lapiski stated that RIDEM is prepared to actively work with the Town Council for a reduction of the herd on Jamestown. Mr. Lapiski strongly recommended that the Council consider opening other areas for controlled hunting.

Town Council members asked specific questions in an attempt to determine the need and expected results of a proposed deer hunt, as well as to ensure the safety of the public visiting the park. The Council was assured that the safety records of archery hunting were excellent.

Council President Long asked that consideration be given to the opening of some town properties to a controlled deer hunt as well as the administration proactively working with private property owners to allow hunting in an attempt to address the island wide overpopulation of the deer herd.

Mr. Lapiski stated that the Division of Fish and Wildlife could work directly with the town to initiate the same type of controlled deer hunt on town property.

In answer to the question of what the expiration date would be for the hunt at Beavertail, Mr. Lapiski informed the Council that the arrangements for a controlled deer hunt at Beavertail would be renewed and promulgated annually.

Christopher Savastano, member of the Jamestown Wildlife Committee, stated that RIDEM does not have sovereignty and by agreement must consult with the Beavertail State Park Advisory Committee.

Frank Meyers, member of the Beavertail State Park Advisory Committee, read a portion of the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Rhode Island and the Town of Jamestown regarding the management of Beavertail whereby, ...”the State shall manage the Beavertail State Park in consultation with the Advisory Committee”... Mr. Meyer stated that this has not happened.

The Town Administrator displayed a map showing the large portions of town-owned properties that could be considered as an additional location for a controlled deer hunt; as well as showing smaller lots, both privately-owned and town-owned, that might be combined and available for hunting through a Town program.

In President Long’s summation, he encouraged the Town Administrator to continue efforts to identify town-owned property to be used in the management of deer and to encourage property owners to participate in a program with the Town and State to control the deer herd located in Jamestown.

It was moved by Councilor Schnack, seconded by Councilor DiGiando to support the controlled deer hunt at the Beavertail State Park with the stipulation that the hunting area be limited to the park boundaries north of parking lots #1 & 4 and with hunting excluded in the area to the south, circumscribed by the access road into and out of the park. In addition, there will be signage posted in and around the park and hunting area, notifying the public of the hunting area and the effective dates of the hunt. So unanimously voted.

There being no further business before the Council, it was moved by Councilor Schnack, seconded by Council President Long to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM. So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Arlene D. Petit  
Town Clerk

c: Town Council Members (5)  
Town Administrator  
Town Solicitor  
Administrative Circulation