

**CITY OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS  
MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING  
AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
HELD: JANUARY 28, 2020  
7:45 PM**

PRESENT: Mayor Brunello; Council Representatives D'Amico, DeLisio, DiLalla, Ganser, Hargate, Milroy, Stickan; Clerk of Council Cahill; Fire Chief Turner; Police Chief Cook, Service Director Evans; Building Commissioner Grabfelder; City Engineer Mader; Finance Director Filippo; Law Director Paluf

**AGENDA  
DEER SURVEY RESULTS**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The reading of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held January 14, 2020 was dispensed with. A motion was made by Mr. Milroy to accept Minutes; seconded by Mrs. Ganser. Ayes all; motion carried.

**DEER SURVEY RESULTS**

Chief Cook provided Council with the completed 2019 Deer Control Survey and Deer Management Plan. Chief Cook summarized the discussions of the deer survey. Mayor Brunello received many deer complaints from residents requesting a resolution to the deer problem. ODNR representative Geoffrey Westerfield was contacted and made a presentation to Council. The Department of Agriculture conducted an infrared deer count and determined there are approximately 286 deer or 55 deer per square mile in Highland Heights; which is a high concentration of deer in the community.

Mayor Brunello and Chief Cook developed a survey compiled from numerous cities. The survey was sent to the residents and also available online. One thousand four hundred and twenty surveys were submitted. The survey reported approximately 80% of the residents in the community considered the deer population a problem and would support a deer control plan. The majority of the residents had 10 or more deer on their property and were concerned about deer motor vehicle accidents and disease transmission. Vegetation damage was a concern; however, Mayor Brunello and Chief Cook were mainly concerned with safety issues.

The survey determined that 80% of the respondents supported lethal methods of culling deer such as bow hunting or sharpshooting. Chief Cook stated hunters would not be allowed to cull; sharpshooting would be performed by a federal agency such as the Department of Agriculture to ensure the safety of residents.

Chief Cook also submitted to Council a Deer Management Plan which is required by the Ohio Division of Wildlife if the City of Highland Heights proceeds to control the current deer population. Mr. Westerfield from ODNR requested the following information be provided: resident call log concerning deer; identified problems and goals; city responding calls; citizen complaints; the deer survey; goals and objectives and evaluation. The map from the infrared study was also included. The Deer Management Plan has been approved should the City determine to move forward.

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Chief Cook stated early meetings of Council requested information to determine if there was a deer issue in the City. The information gathered: infrared deer count; motor vehicle accidents; and deer survey all indicate that there is a deer issue.

Mayor Brunello clarified and confirmed with Chief Cook that culling, if approved by Council, would be performed on public lands only. Chief Cook stated he would recommend contracting with the Department of Agriculture to perform culling on public lands, not residential properties. Chief Cook would not recommend issuing hunting permits this year. Hunting and other alternatives may be considered in the future. Chief Cook stated culling is a long-term commitment for approximately 5-8 years to initiate a significant effect.

Mr. Milroy appreciated the long-term goals suggested and stated an annual re-evaluation would be beneficial. Mr. Milroy questioned what other surrounding cities have a culling program. Chief Cook stated Lyndhurst is the only abutting community that has a program with hunting and police sharpshooters. Chief Cook is not in favor of utilizing police officers as sharpshooters. Chief Cook stated Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village and Richmond Heights are considering a program. Gates Mills and Pepper Pike also have programs; however, their residential properties are on larger lots. Mayor Brunello stated Richmond Heights will be involved in a program in conjunction with the County Airport. Mayfield Village has a program through the Metroparks. South Euclid will be conducting an infrared deer count and citizen survey. Mayor Brunello stated surrounding communities have realized the benefits of working cooperatively to achieve better results.

Ms. D'Amico asked if the City of Lyndhurst is using an ODNR program. Chief Cook stated all municipalities are required to have ODNR approval to ensure the correct amount of tags be issued.

Mr. DiLalla commented that the 80% is of the 1420 respondents; not of the 8,000 residents. Chief Cook stated yes, 80% of the 1420 respondents. Mr. DiLalla questioned if the citizen survey responses could be identified by ward. Chief Cook stated no; however, he will distribute to Council the entire survey which will include comments. Chief Cook responded to Mr. DiLalla's question that the cost would not exceed \$14,000 to cull 40 deer tags. If the contract is approved, the culling would be exercised between February 17<sup>th</sup> – March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Paluf commented that there are 3500 households in the city; therefore, the 1420 survey results may reflect one survey per household which creates a higher percentage of respondents.

Mayor Brunello complimented Chief Cook for his outstanding efforts and diligence in providing concise information and developing a Deer Management Plan.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Ms. D'Amico and seconded by Mr. DeLisio to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Ayes all; motion carried.