

I4. RI DEM Fish and Wildlife presentation relating to the local Deer population and the Towns Hunting Ordinance

Sweeney/Parella- Voted unanimously to refer to the Town Administrator and Police Chief to work with the RI DEM to provide recommendations and action plan for various land use, hunting regulations, and safety measures; not to include firearms or riffles.

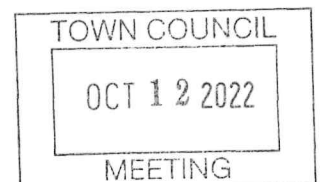
Prior to the vote taken, Dylan Ferreira, a representative from the RI Department of Environmental Protection (DEM) addressed the Council. He provided a summary of White-Tailed deer including their geographical range, habitat, diet, physical characteristics, and reproduction. He explained issues and hazards of areas of overpopulated deer including cultural carrying capacity, increase in deer-vehicle collisions, tick-borne diseases, and personal property damages. He noted that Bristol was prone to overpopulated deer to due favorable habitat, lack of predators, and reduced hunting pressure.

Mr. Ferreira further explained deer management reduction options including legal regulated hunting, sharpshooting, fertility control, translocating, and fencing.

Mr. Ferreira stated that Bristol's two main roadblocks to hunting effectiveness were the "no firearm discharge" ordinance and few public places to hunt. He recommended the town amend the "no firearm discharge" ordinance to legal regulated hunting; allowing hunters to abide by a 500ft buffer state statute and open private properties to legal regulated hunting through cooperative hunting programs.

Council Chairman Calouro asked what the alternative remedy was to allowing open firearms and how local authorities would be informed of registered hunters and enforcing hunting regulations.

Police Chief Lynch noted his concern with the use of firearm discharges especially since the town had many dense residential neighborhoods. He further noted his concerns with current DEM staffing restrictions. He suggested the town begin with limited hunting day rather than opening the whole season. He would



further recommend that the police department be notified of where and when hunting was taken place to ensure the safety of the residents; and that the local authorities with the DEM to work out a plan of action.

Councilman Ley noted his previous experience living in Minnesota where seasonal deer hunting was common. However, Bristol was not accustomed to open firearm hunting, and he was concerned about residence awareness and safety when walking through trails when they were never subject to firearm discharges.

A conversation ensued regarding deer density.

The council agreed by consensus that the increase in deer population was a concern and hazard, especially relating to tick-borne diseases and property damages.

Councilman Teixeira and Councilman Sweeney were agreeable to modifying the ordinance so long as safety measures and precautions were in place.

Mr. Ferreira noted that the deer hunting season was September through December and that deer were most active in November and December.