



## Agenda Abstract

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Meeting Date:           | Jan. 8, 2024            |
| Department:             | Administrative Services |
| Agenda Section:         | Regular                 |
| Public hearing:         | No                      |
| Date of public hearing: | N/A                     |

#### PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT

Hillsborough Resident Bill Harris

#### ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED

**Subject:** Deer Population Mitigation

**Attachments:**

1. PowerPoint presentation slides
2. 2023 Reported Urban Archery Season Harvest – number of deer killed in permitted municipalities

**Summary:**

Hillsborough residents Bill Harris and Eileen Camp have asked to address the board regarding the overpopulation of deer in Hillsborough and to discuss options for mitigation. Their presentation and recommendations regarding the issue are attached.

**Financial impacts:**

N/A

**Staff recommendation and comments:**

The presentation prepared by Mr. Harris and Ms. Camp does an excellent job summarizing the issue and in describing North Carolina's Urban Archery program as an option going forward.

Urban Archery was brought before the board roughly 20 years ago and the board decided against allowing it primarily for public safety reasons. A few factors considered at the time were that once restrictions were put in the town code to limit hunting close to buildings, public spaces, and other areas of concern, it would have limited the number of places hunting could occur. The following are two examples of Urban Archery codes for the cities of Lenoir and Albemarle:

- (<https://www.cityoflenoir.com/182/Urban-Archery>)
- (<https://www.albemarlenc.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/urban-archery>)

Some limits on where bow hunting for deer can take place in these two ordinances include: no hunting on a lot unless it's at least two or three acres, hunter must be at least 10 feet in the air, no hunting on public property, no hunting on water/sewer easements, being 250 or 500 feet away from other buildings, no shots from a bow unless at least 100 feet from a property line, etc. Note: if Hillsborough included similar limitations to Lenoir and Albemarle there are likely only a few areas where hunting would be allowed, thus potentially minimizing the effectiveness of the program. It does appear local governments have flexibility regarding the details of the ordinance regulating Urban Archery in their jurisdiction. There were 63 municipalities that participated in 2023, so there is likely a wide variety of restrictions, or lack thereof, in the many variants of codes adopted. Based on the

presentation provided by Mr. Harris and Ms. Camp it seems that Chapel Hill's regulations are far less restrictive than Lenior and Albemarle, thus that could open hunting to far more areas inside Hillsborough, if so desired by the board.

Statistics: Deer that were killed in 2023 statewide in ALL the participating municipalities totaled 179. The town with the most deer kills was Summerfield with 18. (Summerfield has many huge lots and wooded areas, it's a very rural setting.) The next was Elkin with 15. Approximately half (33 of 63) of the participating units in 2023 had 0-1 deer kills. The most common kills were in the 2-6 range (see attached). While these numbers seem extremely low and thus raise questions about the effectiveness of the program. It is possible the number of kills was much higher in earlier years and the low numbers are an indication of bringing the deer populations down. This would require more research to determine the effectiveness of these programs.

Having such low numbers of deer harvested in participating units through North Carolina and asking staff to implement a new program to manage raises two key questions: 1) Will this program be worth it? 2) Will it make a difference?

If the town starts down the road of pursuing this program there is a good probability there will be many people for and against it, thus the expectation should be this will require a major investment of staff and board time to go through the process of considering implementation and adopting a new ordinance. Other questions include who from staff will develop the new ordinance, manage the application process, manage the implementation, future complaints, as well as what work will staff need to defer to make this happen?

If the board deems this a major health or safety risk and would like to investigate further for these or other reasons, it can direct the town manager to either 1) fully pursue implementation of this program, or 2) do further investigation and bring a report back at a future meeting to allow the discussion to be continued. Other options include tabling, taking no action but monitoring, or voting to not proceed.

**Action requested:**

Receive presentation and provide direction.