



City of Grand Haven
City Manager's Office
519 Washington Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616-847-4888
www.grandhaven.org

TO: City Council
FROM: Pat McGinnis, City Manager
DATE: December 7, 2009
SUBJECT: Deer Update

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Pat McGinnis", is written over the "FROM:" line of the header.

Management Intern Sam Janson spent most of his first several weeks with the City becoming familiar with the deer management issue. He has drafted and assembled a great deal of information for your review.

1. Review of June 1, 2009 Council Resolution
2. Fence Requirement Summary (Kristin Keery)
3. Car/Deer Accidents
4. 2009 Deer Culling Report
5. 2009 Expenses – Deer Culling
6. Deer Complaint History
7. Deer Census Options

Plans for 2010 include:

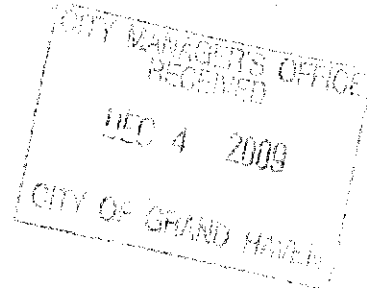
1. Ongoing monitoring of deer property complaints
2. Continued observation and reporting of car/deer accidents
3. Intergovernmental discussion and regional herd management
4. Qualified deer census to track both total deer and nuisance deer in Grand Haven

This report will be posted on the City Web Site.



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TO: Pat McGinnis, City Manager
FROM: Sam Janson, Management Intern
DATE: December 4, 2009
SUBJECT: Deer Management Efforts

The June 1 Resolution provided that the administration work on a variety of management efforts to help the City better control deer nuisance issues. Here is an update on each of Council's directives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that administration is directed to take all reasonable steps to coordinate heard reduction efforts with Ottawa County and neighboring jurisdictions

Subject: Coordination with neighboring jurisdictions
Current Status: On June 30 the administration met with the surrounding jurisdictions to discuss the regional issues concerning deer management at which Grand Haven Township reported an average of 50 deer accidents per year. More recently, Ferrysburg formed a task force to tackle this issue.
Target Dates: We are looking to have another regional deer summit in January.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission be asked to consider ordinance recommendations that may allow for innovative yard improvements that may restrict or channel the movement of deer population away from areas where they are creating a nuisance

Subject: Zoning Amendment to Permit Barriers
Current Status: The Zoning Commission considered an amendment to the fence requirements of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for "farm-type fencing," and decided against amending the ordinance

based on the following reasons: 1. The use of zoning is inappropriate to mitigate problems; 2. Modifying any part of the regulation would be a “band-aid” and would not cure the problem of deer on residential property; and 3. The Commission felt that there was not enough data to support a city-wide deer fencing effort that would affect the aesthetics of the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the administration research and consider the implementation of roadway warning devices that may divert deer from entering high traffic area

Subject: Roadway Warning Devices

Current Status: Vehicle-deer accident data does not support the costly research and implementation of an extensive network of roadside warning devices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that efforts continue to further educate City residents regarding herd management techniques and other innovative and effective methods to prevent nuisance conditions

Subject: Public Awareness

Current Status: The City website contains a robust amount of information concerning current trends and research on urban deer management. Citizens interested in learning more about “deer-proofing” their yards and other information concerning the City’s Deer Management efforts are referred to the website.

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
Building and Planning Department

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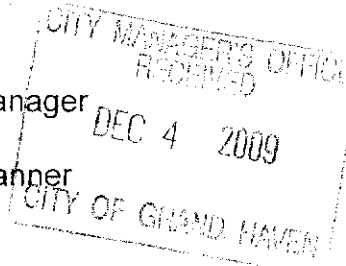


TO: Pat McGinnis, City Manager

FROM: Kristin Keery, City Planner

DATE: December 04, 2009

SUBJECT: Fence Requirements and Deer Management



At the May 12, 2009 Planning Commission meeting, Mr. Richard Clapp, a resident of the City spoke to the Commission and asked them to consider an amendment to the fence requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Clapp received a violation notice from the Planning Department for an electronic wire fence he had installed without a permit. The fence was considered illegal based on staff's determination that it was a "farm type fence" and, except in the Industrial Zoning District or as permitted by the Planning Commission, no fence shall contain an electric current or charge of electricity.

At the June 1, 2009 Council meeting, City Council asked the Planning Commission to consider deer deterrent fencing as part of the City's Deer Management Plan. The Commission was to send a recommendation back to Council.

At the June 9th meeting, the Commission considered the issue and decided against amending the ordinance to allow deer type fencing based on the following reasons:

- In general, the deer issue is a community wide issue and that it was not appropriate to utilize land use tools (ie. zoning) to try and mitigate problems.
- Modifying the fencing regulations would be a "band-aid" approach meaning we would be only treating the symptoms and not really curing the problem. Allowing deer fences could cause the deer to move to other "non-problem" areas which would result in more problems and more complaints.
- The Commission felt that they did not have sufficient data to support a determination on where deer fencing should or should not be allowed and could not support implementing regulations to permit deer fencing city wide due to aesthetics and the notion that they consider this a city wide issue and not one to be solved using land use regulations.

The Commission did agree that they should better define what types of fences should be permitted in residential districts. In general, the following ordinance revisions were made and recently adopted by the City Council:

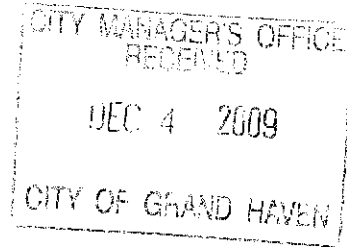
- Re-ordered regulations to ensure that regulations were located under the appropriate category headings (ie. Location, Height & Opacity etc).
- Added language under the *Height & Opacity* category to clarify that the maximum height of the fence was to be measured from grade to the top of the fence and that posts may extend a maximum of 6 inches above the fence.
- Added language under the *Design & Type* category that better articulates what materials may be used in constructing a residential fence.
- Eliminated language under the *Design & Type* category that enabled a property owner to seek approval from the Planning Commission to install an electric fence. Language was also added into this section to specifically state that electric fences were permitted where required by Local, State or Federal Law enforcement authorities.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Kristin Keery

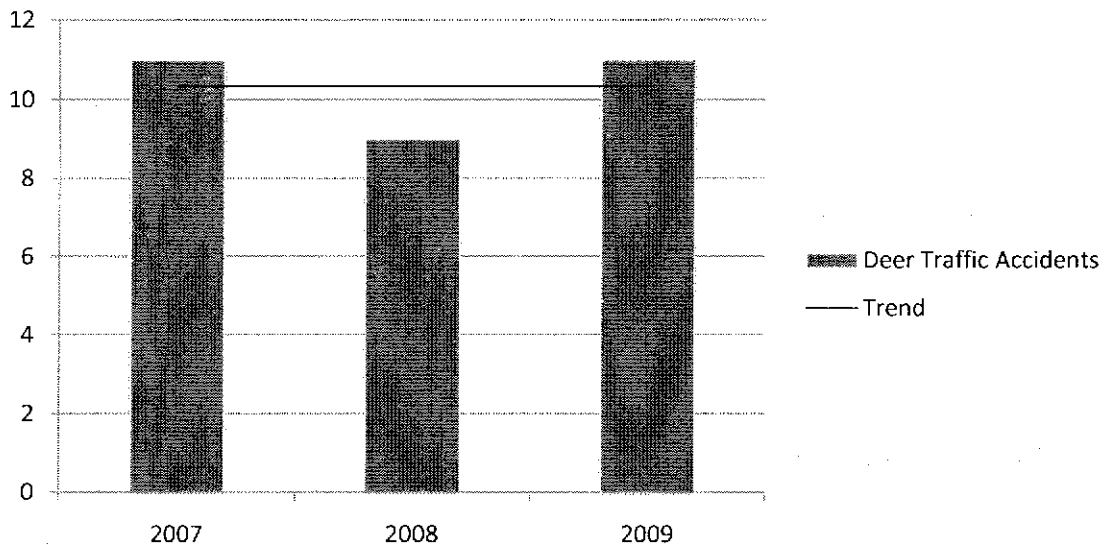


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TO: Pat McGinnis, City Manager
FROM: Sam Janson, Management Intern
DATE: December 4, 2009
SUBJECT: Deer Accidents within the City

Deer Traffic Accidents

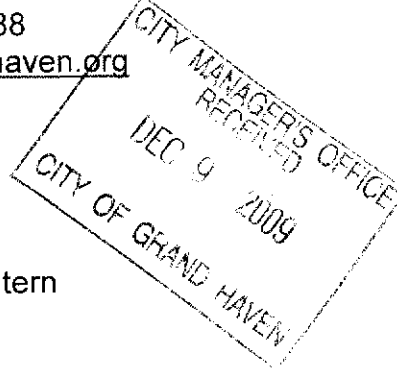


For purposes of determining an average number of accidents per a year, it is my feeling that the past three years provide the best information for the number of deer traffic accidents in the City. During this time, Lt. Boyle has instructed his patrol officers to report any deer accidents directly to him. Archival research, over the past 10 years, has indicated that there has been an increase in the number of deer traffic accidents. It is my feeling that because we had to perform achival research to determine these numbers there may be inaccuracies in the data.



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TO: Pat McGinnis, City Manager
FROM: Sam Janson, Management Intern
DATE: December 9, 2009
SUBJECT: Urban Deer Management Statistics (Corrected Numbers)

As a result of data input error one of the deer harvested failed to make our final count. Below are the corrected numbers.

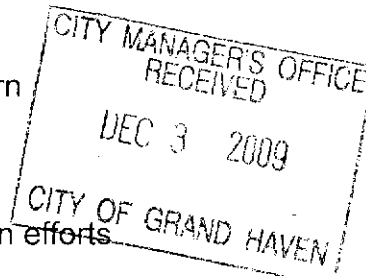
In 2009, ~~50~~ **51** deer were harvested in the City at the following locations:

Grand Haven Airport - 4
Grand Haven Cemetery - 3
Harbor Island - 19
Mulligan's Hollow - 24 **25**



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TO: Pat McGinnis, City Manager
FROM: Sam Janson, Management Intern
DATE: December 3, 2009
SUBJECT: Funds utilized for deer reduction efforts



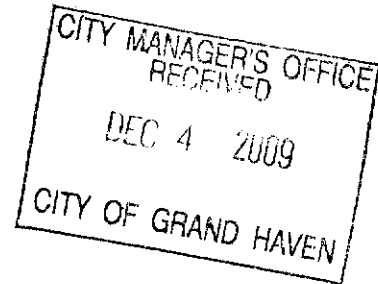
To date, the City has spent approximately \$9,624 on deer reduction efforts. The United State Department of Agriculture has yet to bill the City for services rendered in November 2009. This bill will be issued to the City at the end of December. I was given an estimate by the acting director.

SERVICES	EXPENSES
Deer Reduction (estimate)	\$7,299
Deer Processing	\$2,325
Estimated Total	\$9,624



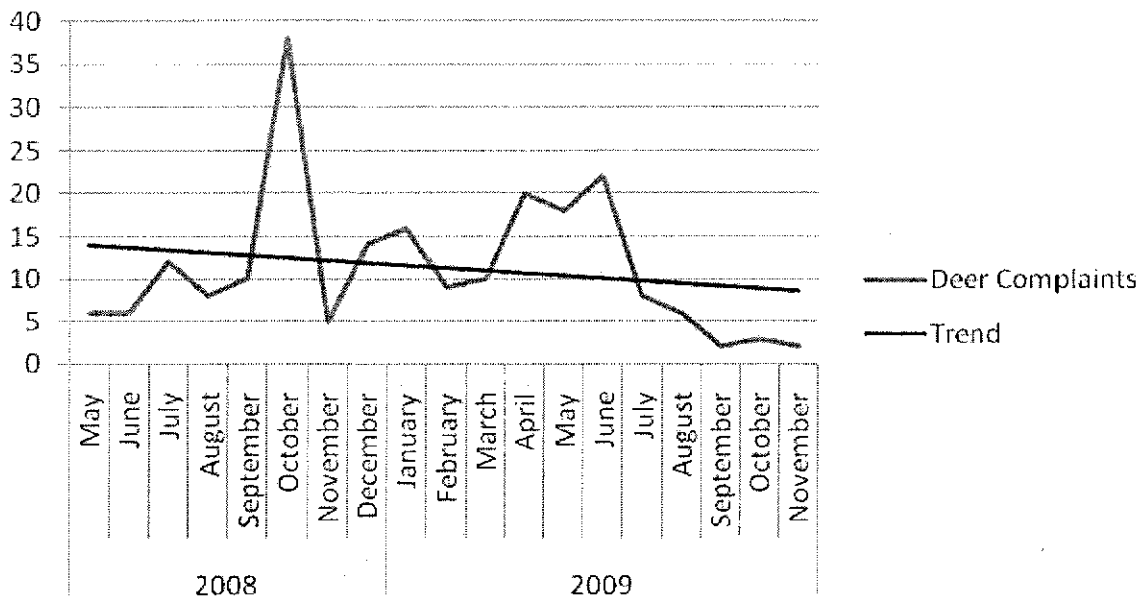
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TO: Pat McGinnis, City Manager
FROM: Sam Janson, Management Intern
DATE: December 4, 2009
SUBJECT: Review of Deer Damage Complaints



After reviewing the property damage complaints* received by the City from May 2008 through November 2009 I was able to determine that there has been a downward trend in the number of complaints received**. Below is a graphical representation of deer damage complaints.

Deer Complaints



* Each complaintant was limited to one damage complaint per month.

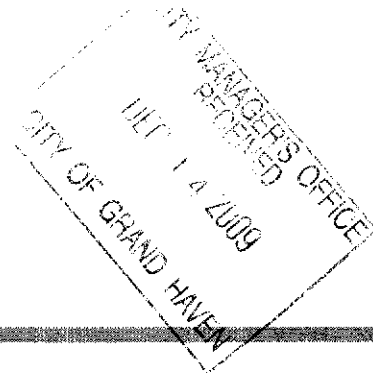
**Numbers do not reflect praise, criticism or messages with no comment concerning deer population reduction. Additionally, complaints only represent individuals who reported an address within City limits.



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TO: Pat McGinnis, City Manager
FROM: Sam Janson, Management Intern
DATE: December 14, 2009
SUBJECT: Deer Census Options



After my own conducting research and speaking with Brent Rudolph, a deer specialist with the Department of Natural Resources, I have found three options to addressing the issue of counting deer within the limits of the City.

1. Police helicopter flyover
2. University field study
3. Private contractor field study

Police helicopter flyover

Captain Rick Yonker of the Grand Haven Department of Public Safety informed me that the Michigan State Police would be willing to conduct a night-time flyover of the city, using infrared cameras, to record the population of deer within the City. According to Capt. Yonker the State Police would be willing to do one flyover at a prearranged date. According to my research four inches of snow must be present for the infrared to achieve its highest level of accuracy. Additionally, Mr. Rudolph informed me that to achieve an increased level of accuracy with our count multiple flyovers must be performed and that similar weather conditions and matching flight plans are used.

This method will give us a rough estimate to the current number of deer, but there is no guarantee that the State Police will be willing to conduct this flyover again next year. The State Police have offered to do the flyover at no charge to the city.

University field study

After contacting Grand Valley State University (GVSU) I was put in contact with biology professor Dr. Paul Keenlance. After speaking with Dr. Keenlance he is willing to offer his time and believes that members from the Soil and Water Conservation Society

(which includes individuals majoring in natural resource management) will also do the same. The Soil and Water Conservation Society at GVSU is a community service-learning venture for students to gain experience and impact the surrounding communities. Currently, Dr. Keenlance is conducting a preliminary review of literature on the subject of urban deer population estimates before he is able to provide us with information on the method in which he will conduct a population estimate. He should have this information ready for us the first week of January.

Dr. Keenlance has offered to work on this long-term with the possibility of this becoming a future thesis topic for master's student or a succession of capstone papers for senior natural resource management majors. With aid from GVSU we will be able to conduct a repeatable scientific study with no cost to the city, but we will be dependent on aid of Dr. Keenlance and students to conduct the research and provide any analysis of the current situation.

Private contractor field study

In the process of my research, I came upon a news article about a similar deer management issue in another state. The city contracted with a private company for a deer population estimate. Lining up perpendicular with the deer, the researchers use a range finder to estimate distance, and then record the sex and age of the deer. With the collected data this company uses a statistical model that estimates the population per a square mile.

After speaking with the CEO, he stated that for a city of our size and location (close to one of their field offices) the cost would be approximately \$3,000-\$3,500 for a three to five day study. During this time, one of his staff will train city officials on the methods of data collection, so that future studies may be done in house. Additionally, the first study will include analysis and any further counts will be analyzed at a cost of \$1,000.