

**Lyme Disease Committee
of the
Board of Health
Dover, MA**

**Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2012**

Present: Matthew Schmid, George Giunta, Barbara Roth-Schechter, Paul Tedesco, Bill Herd, Beth Webb, Jim Palmer, Diane Fielding

Absent: Steve Kruskall, Tim Holiner, Mike Francis

1. Review and Approval of the Minutes of February 16, 2012 meeting

Approved unanimously

2. Final Update and Summary of Hunting season 2011 – Jim, All

Jim presented the summary of the hunters' questionnaire (on file with Jim). Overall, the outcome was very similar to that of last year with all hunters wishing to remain in the program.

At present, the size of huntable town land is likely to remain somewhat the same for the 2012 hunting season with the possibility that more private owners will join the DMP and that Hale would consider to join as well.

3. Final Review of Letter re extension of hunting season - All

It was decided that each member as well as the LDC will write letters to representatives in support of the legislature to allow Sunday hunting (see attachment)

It was decided that the LDC write a memo to the Director of Mass Wild Life requesting the extension of the MA bow hunting season to 4.5 months (see attached)

4. Sam Telford Project – Update - Barbara

Based on the correspondence with Sam Telford, Barbara reported that although he was disappointed about not receiving a research grant, he was very gracious about accepting the negative outcome.

5. Planning of another town-wide Forum – All

After a very extensive discussion, the LDC favored the idea of providing the residents of Dover with an “ LD Forum” in the form of all sorts of links to many social media. In an explanatory letter to each household these specific links would be introduced, explained, and provided. A final decision on this approach remains to be arrived at.

6. New LDC Members

Subsequent to a discussion, it was decided to attempt to recruit additional members to the LDC. For the time being an informal, personal approach was preferred over an official announcement via newspaper and/or website.

7. If time permits: Informative letter to Abutters, Mass DPH intern program

Due to lack of time, these subjects were not discussed.

Attachments:

1. Request to extend duration of Hunting season:

DATE: March 2, 2012

To: Wayne F. McCallum, Director
Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

FROM: Dover Board of Health-Lyme Disease Committee
Barbara Roth-Schechter, Ph.D., Chair

SUBJECT: Change to the Current Deer Hunting Season

Based on our experience of a controlled deer hunt with the objective to eventually reduce deer and tick density, the Dover BOH’s Lyme Disease Committee (LDC) requests consideration by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MWL) to extend the duration of the bow hunting season to 4.5 months as is presently allowed in Connecticut.

Beginning with a pilot program in 2010, the Board of Health’s Lyme Disease Committee implemented a deer management plan (DMP) on open town land and private properties during the Massachusetts bow hunting season. More than 60 certified hunters have participated. Hunting was allowed on various town properties (indicated on the map available on the website doverma.org) amounting to more than 900 acres of town land.. These town properties are under the jurisdiction of The Dover Land Conservation Trust (DLCT), The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR), and the Dover Conservation Commission approved by the Dover Board of Selectmen. A significant number of private property owners totaling approximately 100 acres participated in the regulated hunt as well.

We based the regulated hunting project on MWL experience and guidance together with Dover-specific rules and regulations (see Meeting Minutes at doverma.org of Lyme Disease Committee of July 29, 2010 and of Board of Health of August 9, 2010). We kept residents informed and placed extensive signage on trails and entrances to the selected properties.

To ensure the efficacy of the deer cull the Boards of Health of Dover and abutting Medfield collaborated on the hunt during the 2011 hunting season. Medfield’s efforts resulted in a harvest of 27 deer, Dover a mere 17 as compared to 19 in a pilot program during 2010. Several other adjacent towns have expressed interest. It is hoped that ultimately the Dover DMP will evolve into a regional program. Dover and adjacent towns are located in Zone 10 of MWL with one of the highest incidence rates of Lyme disease in the state and a deer population of 25-30/square mile.

Ironically, in the two last hunting seasons Dover LDC has culled fewer than 40 deer, this in spite of an annual cadre of over 40 hunters, carefully vetted, and averaging 30 years of experience. Car crashes in the town have resulted in more than double that figure. Given the estimated number of deer in the area, the cull is not even approaching the reproductive rate of the herd! In order to even begin to control the burgeoning deer population, and by design achieve a reduction in the tick population, Dover must have a longer bow hunting season.

The Dover Board of Health and its Lyme Disease Committee believe that its three-pronged approach to the management of its high Lyme disease incident rates (personal hygiene, property management, and deer management) will ultimately be successful. The committee has concluded, however, (and as indicated in available studies), that the most effective means of reducing the tick population is to cull the major carrier, namely deer, whose herd will continue to expand if we cannot effectively reduce it.

Please consider our request seriously as MWL's decision is critical to the health of our community. We would be happy to meet with you for any further discussion.

2. Support of HB Legislature to allow hunting on Sundays:

Support of HB 3946 (Sunday BOW HUNTING)

March 1, 2012

Dear

I am very much encouraged by the fact that the MA legislature is considering to allow Sunday hunting in Massachusetts. HB3946, an Act relative to expanding the powers of the Director of Fisheries and Wildlife was recently reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture and is now in the House Committee on Ways and Means. HB3946 would enable the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife to allow bow hunting every day of the week, including Sundays.

I am the Chair of the Dover Board of Health Lyme Disease Committee. We have been working over the last three years to raise awareness to Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. Reduction of deer density by hunting has been shown to reduce tick density and incidence of Lyme disease as well as other ecological deer damage. Archers are critically important in this effort as they have been shown to be the safest mode of hunting. Sunday hunting would allow them to contribute to our efforts to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease in Massachusetts. Accordingly, HB3946 is an Act that promotes public health and should be viewed favorably.