

CAYUGA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deer Committee Members

Date: 2/10/09

FROM: Chief Thomas L. Boyce

SUBJECT: Involvement of Police Department in Culling Deer.

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I received an e-mail From Trustee Diana Riesman, 11/24/08, where she suggested that the Village of Cayuga Heights hire professional hunters/ shooters to conduct the culling operation of the deer herd. This of course is a suggestion that only applies if the Deer Committee were to decide that culling would be the preferred method of dealing with the deer control problem in the Village of Cayuga Heights.

Diana has some very good points in her suggestion and they are as followed:

- 1) "I feel it would make better sense to separate the job of shooting the deer from the officers' jobs as the law-keepers and law-enforcers of the Village. That way the officers' position in our community—here to protect and serve and help us when we need help—remains in tact." "They do not have to take on the added job description of "deer killer" as some who will be against the culling would perceive them." "It takes the "politics" out of their roll."
- 2) "Children also perceive the police in a certain light and it may be confusing to them to learn—inadvertently etc.—that their neighborhood police officers are killing the deer."
- 3) "I think that a 2/3 majority in a referendum would be a fair number to aim for to pass the culling plan. But that might still leave a large portion of residents uneasy and against the plan, and I think in terms of maintaining good relations between the residents and the police department, it would be wiser to have professionals do the actual shooting."
- 4) "I do not mean to take anything away from Chief Boyce and his stellar department. It's not that at all. Chief Boyce would, of course oversee and implement the plan and be able to guarantee the health and safety of our community comes first, but I just worry having the officers or any member of CHPD actually shoot the deer is not the best melding of jobs."

I will do my best to address each of the above points and point out a few things to think about in this culling process as they relate to the Cayuga Heights Police Department.

Point #1: I believe it would be very wise for the Cayuga Heights Police Department to be able to remain completely neutral in the culling process and not be involved with the shooting process. By being neutral we could better serve the interest of the community and not be brought into the politics associated with the negative side of shooting deer.

Something to think about: There are many residents in the Village of Cayuga Heights that would be more comfortable knowing that the police department was actually doing the shooting because they know us and they know we would make it safe! This comfort level would also come into play when dealing with the 500' law issue around buildings, homes, etc.

Another point that has to be dealt with is the police department can legally shoot a weapon in the Village of Cayuga Heights on property that is not owned by us and a sub-contractor can not. The Local Law reads as followed: Section 2, of Article 1, Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons, states: The carrying of a firearm, shotgun, rifle, or air gun when loaded otherwise than in the discharge of official duty, within the Village of Cayuga Heights, is prohibited. The discharge of a firearm, shotgun, rifle, or air gun otherwise than in self defense or in the discharge of official duty, within the Village of Cayuga Heights, is prohibited. Note: Official Duty is the police department. Section 3, of article 1, Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons, states: This ordinance shall be interpreted to permit the owners of property in the Village to use a gun to kill vermin provided such person does so on his own property and providing the discharge from the gun does not go beyond the boundaries of his property, and also providing such owner first obtains a permit from the Village Police Department.

Another big difference between the police department and a sub-contractor would be the way the culling process is viewed. The police departments view is one of service and safety. The police department can focus on safety because we are not profiting from the culling of deer. We would not take a marginal shot to get one more deer because we would not care if we got any deer. A sub-contractor on the other hand has to think about deer numbers because if they do not produce the Village of Cayuga Heights will not contract with them next year. I also believe the cost would go up using a contractor versus using the police department.

I think it would be advantages to let the Village of Cayuga Heights residents vote on the issue of police department versus sub-contractor doing the culling process of shooting. I can take this up with the advisory committee.

Let it be known that the police department is just committed to serving the community and we will do whatever the community wants in this deer culling process. If the community wants our services in this matter we will provide them.

Point#2: When it comes to killing deer in the Village of Cayuga Heights, the police department has been shooting deer, raccoons, woodchucks, fox, and other injured or sick animals all along. This is a service that we provide to the Village of Cayuga Heights right now.

Point #3: 2/3 majority is a good number for the political process, but I would need a much higher number. The reason I would need a bigger number is because of the controversial nature of culling and killing deer. The only way for me to combat the different organizations that would try to stop our efforts would be to have the support of the community.

Point #4: If the Village of Cayuga Heights were to sub-contract out the culling process "shooting deer" I do not think the contractor would want me dictating how they should operate. That's why we pay them to get the job done. Yes, I would make sure that all laws were adhered too. Making things safe for the community is, to a large part, making the decision to shoot or not shoot and if CHPD is not shooting I can not guarantee that safety.

I hope this helps clear up some issues that will have to be dealt with as we continue down this path of studying the culling issue.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Boyce
Chief of Police