



City of Granite Shoals
 2221 N. Phillips Ranch Road
 Granite Shoals, TX 78654
 (830) 598-2424 fax (830) 598-6538
www.graniteshoals.org

**FOR A SPECIAL CALLED WORKSHOP MEETING
 OF THE WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WAC)
 OF THE CITY OF GRANITE SHOALS
 GRANITE SHOALS CITY HALL, DOWNSTAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM
 2221 N. PHILLIPS RANCH ROAD, GRANITE SHOALS, TX
 THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016 6:30 PM**

1. Call meeting to order / Welcome / Introduction of new members:
 Meeting called to order at 6:38 PM by Jason Brady.

Present:

Doug Ripple
 Jason Brady – Chair
 Willie Pack
 Todd Holland – Council Liaison
 Steve Hougen
 Dennis Jowers

Absent:

Mary Waters
 Robbie Boswell

Other participants:

Kelly Misfeldt
 John Burns

City Staff:

Elaine Simpson, City Secretary

2. Citizens Comments/Items of Interest:

There were no citizens' comments.

3. Review and discuss information presented to City Council at 12-15-2015 Regular Council meeting. (*Chair Jason Brady*)

See meeting minutes from 12-15-2015 Regular City Council meeting. Meeting minutes were reviewed. The Committee reviewed the history of the committee and listed all milestones, including the deer census, which was conducted in August. (See 'Exhibit A and Exhibit B' to these meeting minutes).

4. Discuss concerns expressed by Council Members during 12-15-2015 Meeting regarding options for Deer Management. (*Chair Brady, Vice Chair Ripple, Mr. Pack*)

Mr. Willie Pack provided a very large amount of information regarding how archery based programs were conducted in other states. The Committee members determined to read this information and discuss it at their next meeting, a workshop on January 19, 2016.

5. Review information, discuss, consider and formulate information to present to City Council during January 26, 2016 Joint Council and WAC Special Workshop.
 - a. No Feeding Ordinance (modify to allow for feeding in hunt areas?).
 - b. Needed modifications to Firearms Ordinance to allow archery pilot program.
 - c. Ordinance for Instituting a Deer Management Program.
 - i. Logistics. (Who, What, Where, How and When...)
 - ii. Education Program for public.
 - iii. Any budgetary considerations or other concerns of Council.

The Committee discussed some topics related to logistics.

- Discussion of recovering deer from private property if it leaves the 'hunt area'.
- Discussion of requirement to use a string tracker on all bows.
- Discussion of requirements for arrowhead diameter.
- Discussion of a few areas which might be considered as areas for the program.
- Discussion of the requirements / proficiency testing that will be required of team members.
- Discussion of having the City Attorney draft liability waivers.
- Discussion of the need to provide an education program related to the deer management pilot program, if it is approved.
- Discussion of Dr. Hougen's ideas from his recent email (See Exhibit 'C' to these meeting minutes.)

6. Identify Future Agenda items

The next meeting will be focused upon preparing the proposal for the pilot program to City Council.

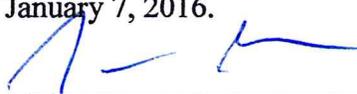
7. Adjournment.

The next meeting of the Wildlife Advisory committee will be a short workshop to refine the Deer Management Proposal, to be held January 19, 2016 at 6:30 PM. After that, the next meeting of the Wildlife Committee will be the Joint Special Called Meeting of WAC and the City Council on January 26, 2016 at 6:00 PM

There being no further business and no objections from the members of the Committee, Chair Brady adjourned the meeting at 8:52 PM.

I, Jason Brady, Chairman of the Wildlife Advisory Committee for the City of Granite Shoals, Texas, certify that the attached are true and correct minutes taken from recordings and notes of the Wildlife Advisory Committee meeting of January 7, 2016.

Date: _____


2-25-16

*Exhibit 'A' to
Wildlife Advisory Committee, min.
1-7-16*

At this time, any person with business before the council not scheduled on the agenda may speak to the council. No formal action can be taken on these items at this meeting. No discussion or deliberation can occur. Comments regarding specific agenda items should occur when the item is called. Anyone wishing to speak under this agenda item must complete a comment card and submit to the city secretary prior to addressing the council.

Council Member Tanner announced he had scheduled a meeting for Marble Falls ISD representatives to come to City Hall 12/16/2015 for a meeting about partnering for park improvements with the City and members of the Faith Alliance. At the next Council meeting, there will be a report on this meeting.

There were no citizen comments.

5. Updates, Presentations or Reports:

- Bond Counsel for the City of Granite Shoals; Richard Donoghue with the firm McCall, Parkhurst & Horton LLP: Introduction/Discussion of possible bond issue in 2016 for Public Improvements/Road Improvements. Also, discussion of proposed Reimbursing Resolution which is Item 8.a. Proposed Resolution #503.

Mr. Donoghue explained that he and his firm worked with the City on the project to finance this City Hall in 2010. The firm practices exclusively in bonds. They are prepared to assist the City for either a May 2016 or a November 2016 election. Item 8.a. on tonight's agenda is Resolution #503 and is for the City to reimburse itself for any costs up to \$100,000 related to this project for Road Improvements. The IRS requires that the City state in advance that they intend to reimburse themselves from bond proceeds for bond counsel and financial advisor.

- Mayor Carl Brugger: Awards from 2015 Christmas Lighting Contest.

Mayor Brugger awards the 1st and 2nd Prize awards to the winners of the 2015 Christmas Light Contest.

1. Mr. and Mrs. Estaban Ramirez, 2003 Prairie Creek, won first place. \$100
2. Ms. Tammy Martinka, 1118 N. Shorewood, won second place. \$50

- Jason Brady; Chair of Granite Shoals Wildlife Advisory Committee :
Update on the activities of the Committee and discussion of options for deer management programs for consideration of City Council.

Chair Brady spoke to provide an update on the activities of the Committee and the discussion of options for deer management programs for consideration of City Council. He requested that City Council provide some direction. He briefly discussed the results of the recent 'deer census' conducted in August. He then outlined some potential options for deer management programs which have been identified by the Committee. The Committee has not devised detailed time-lines or cost estimates for any of the program options at this time; due to the number of options.

The Committee asks City Council for direction regarding which option to investigate further/pursue.

There will be a Joint Meeting of Granite Shoals Wildlife Advisory Committee with the City Council at the regular City Council meeting on January 26th in a workshop setting during the Council's regular meeting.

<http://www.newsy.com/videos/the-deer-population-is-out-of-control-so-communities-are-culling/#.VmSDmoeGYEc.mailto>

On the agenda cover sheet, the above link was provided to a news story regarding the scope of the deer overpopulation situation nationally. The agenda packet also contained a recent newspaper article from the Daily Tribune (online Picayune newspaper) from December 1, 2015 which deals with this topic on a regional scale.

Chair Brady read his report into the record.

*Chair Jason Brady – Granite Shoals, Texas - Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC)
Presentation to City Council – 12/15/2015*

The WAC was formed as an advisory committee to the council. That being said, we the WAC have taken up the task to advise the Council of the options that are present to control the urban white-tailed deer population of the City.

The deer survey results are as follows: (results see pg. 3.) The numbers indicate that there needs to be approximately 585 deer removed.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists have informed the Committee that the first priority should be to begin to track the deer-related accidents and deer/human conflicts/incidents to help track our progress. We would request that the police dispatch create a method to track accidents and incidents reported to the city involving deer, and that the animal control/public works departments track the number of carcasses removed from the roadways. These are standard statistics which are regularly tracked by other cities as they formulate and conduct deer management programs.

The reasonable methods of control that are available are:

- 1. Do nothing: Pros: cost nothing and not labor intensive. Cons: gains nothing, opportunity cost –deer population continues to grow.*
- 2. Trap transport process (roughly \$150/animal) per last conversation with Mr. Bond (estimated total cost \$87,750). Pros: contractor conducts program as a 'turnkey' project & is an efficient (proven) program that has been instituted in other nearby cities. Con: Too expensive – 29x the budget allotted to the WAC.*
- 3. Archery program (Would consist of education, volunteers (many of them very skilled), many moving parts, planning and organization)
A. pilot program on private and public lands (not parks) with a very select # of participants to test the program in year 1.*

B. program restriction of Antlerless deer permit issued by TPWD (Absolutely no Antlered deer to be harvested)

Pros: Program can/could be implemented with little funding, can utilize many volunteers with skill in bow-hunting who live in this area and harvested animal can be given directly to citizens to be processed as desired.

Cons: Ordinance would have to be amended to allow the bow-hunting in the city limits; the education program required would need to be comprehensive (to combat false rumors that it is 'open season' for bow-hunting in the city and false rumors that there will be hunters in the city parks). Would require time, labor and volunteers to coordinate, organize and conduct. Deer could run after being hit, leaving the official 'hunt' areas to die. This program would be designed and conducted by Granite Shoals WAC, so we would have no other cities to provide guidance. It is unknown how much guidance TPWD could provide. Unknown liability for the City depending on how tags were assigned from TPWD.

4. City-owned trap transport process program. Volunteers provide labor for trapping/netting program. Pros: No injured deer leaving the 'trap area'. Cons: Costs: Traps cost between \$4000.00 and \$6500 each, trapping usually done at night (difficult to get volunteers at night?), no deer can be released – if a fawn or antlered deer is caught, they must be harvested. There may be large number of animals trapped at one time, and all must be kept in edible condition (overnight?) under State Law – cannot 'waste' animal meat, this leads to meat processing fee involved. Trapping 500+ deer would be very labor intensive. Like #3, this program would be designed and conducted by Granite Shoals WAC and City personnel and associated volunteers: no guidance available from any other cities, and unknown amount of guidance from TPWD.

5. Youth hunt program. This is a new idea/concept. The incorporation of youth volunteers might be something to use in conjunction with the archery program, if it is pursued in the future. Pros: Get youth involved. Cons: many variables and unknowns since this program would be built/dependent upon the success of another program.

We were stifled by the above options because we have little direction to focus on. I believe we need one of the above to focus our efforts on instead of trying to attain every variable for every option, with our limited resources.

Every option presents its own set of challenges to hurdle, but the WAC needs a direction to focus on, that being said we would like the council to seriously consider, and or approve the WAC to move forward with option 3.

We know there will be questions and hurdles, and we may not have all the answers at this time but we will value every concern. I am happy to answer any question that I can at this time, or you are welcome to gather your questions and we can work thru them in our workshop on January 26th.

The Deer Census report is attached to these meeting minutes as Exhibit 'A'.

On December 15th morning, city staff received an email from local resident (and former Wildlife Advisory Committee member Dennis McCoy) detailing his thoughts on Chairman Brady's presentation for tonight (text of which was included in the agenda packets). A copy of this email was provided to all the Council Members at the dais before the meeting began.

City Manager Ken Nickel took for action to research what kind of tracking might be done of deer/vehicle accidents and number of deer carcasses picked up by city departments.

The following points were stressed:

- This will not be a 'one and done' program. Once the deer management program is adopted, there will need to be a deer census done each year, which, along with the 'tracking' statistics, should help guide the effort from year to year.
- If netting/trapping is done, 10% of the deer caught would have to be prepared for autopsy at Texas A&M, in order to keep current statistics statewide for 'Chronic Wasting Disease'. If the City sets a goal of removing 586 deer, this will be about 58 will need to be processed for A&M.
- At this time, the Committee recommends further investigation of option #3, the archery program. The Committee did not and could not answer every question about every option at tonight's report, but at the Joint Special Called Workshop meeting on January 26th, the Committee and Council will be able to discuss option #3 in more detail. Chair Brady and Council Member Holland have discussed this proposed archery program with the Wildlife Biologists at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, as well as the local game warden. The Committee wants to have the Game Warden and local law enforcement involved in all plans that the Committee might make regarding any archery program. The Texas Parks and Wildlife representatives, the Game Warden and local law enforcement representatives have been consulted and the Committee will rely on guidance from all during any deer management program.
- The archery program could be started as a small 'pilot project'. Probably could not harvest 586 deer the first year utilizing just a few hunters.

The City Council wished for the Committee to return with information in detail related to option #3 archery program to include:

- Integration of the Non-Feeding Ordinance (prepared by City Attorney Young earlier this year) into the larger deer management plan.
- Ordinance to establish the deer management program.
- Modifications required to the Firearms Ordinance – City Code Sec 24-19 – that will be needed to allow for a pilot program based on archery use within the city limits. This cannot open the doors for other firearms usage, or free-for-all hunting in the city by people not in the pilot program.
- Proposed locations for 'hunt areas' – public only or public and private? Liabilities involved with each.
- Proposed methodology for notifying property owners near proposed 'hunt areas'.
- Could this be non-public or private area? i.e. MUD district property, Texas Granite Property?

- Options for donations of venison: Food Bank, list of locals, etc. Is there a meat processor who will process donated venison for free?
- Education program for citizens.
- Archer 'qualifying' trials. Design? Oversight?

Mayor Brugger explained that he wanted the details on Where, Who, How, When, How Often, What and many other details investigated in order for the Council to consider related to option #3.

Kelly Misfeldt, 303 E. Bluebriar: was recognized and he listed several concerns related to a proposed archery program. His concerns included: safety of residents, property values, homeowners insurance issues if the city approves bow hunters in the neighborhoods, disposal of non-edible portions of the 586 carcasses and deer running outside the hunt area and dying on private property.

Council agreed by consensus that they would like to discuss, in detail, all the concerns brought up tonight about option #3 at their Joint Special Workshop on Jan 26th.

6. Management Reports

a.) City Manager

- Park grants update. 2 grants still open. One only needs the last payment to the subcontractor to be processed, then can be closed.
- Committee meetings in December. No more committee meetings in December. 50th Anniversary Committee met today and is considering moving the date of the 2016 50th Birthday Bash up one week, in order to accommodate the schedule of Leo Manzano. The Committee desires that Manzano attend the Fun Run held in conjunction with the event. He cannot do the last weekend in April, but can do the 23rd and 24th. P&Z Commission and Parks Committee, respectively, are not meeting in December. 50th Anniversary will meet again in January. The Board of Adjustments will meet January 11th. The Wildlife Advisory Committee has not scheduled a meeting in December as yet.
- Staff activities – December 17, 2015, 11:00 am-1:30 pm Employee Appreciation Party At The Fire Hall/Christmas party.
- Resolution next month to declare certain city vehicles and equipment as surplus property and declare them eligible for sale. There are public safety vehicles as well as two items from utility department, which will be sold at auction or scrapped.

b.) Assistant City Manager

- AMRS / smart meters – installing fixed base and receivers.
- Christmas by the highway (recap): successful event which got good coverage in the *Highlander News*.
- LCRA drought fee – future removal of pass-through fee – this is on hold until written confirmation can be received from LCRA board that the drought fee is going to be removed from our LCRA raw water bills.

Exhibit 'B'
Wildlife Advisory Committee Minutes

DEER POPULATION SUMMARY

Ranch: Granite Shoals

Survey Technique: Mobile Survey

County: Burnet

Year: 2015

Survey Route/Pasture	Date	Deer Observed					Acres Sampled	Acres Per Deer	Deer Per 1,000 Ac.
		Bucks	Does	Fawns	Undet	Total			
Mobile	08/13/15	37	162	63	9	271	579	2.14	467.3
Mobile	8/20/2015	42	192	67	3	304	579	1.90	526.3
Mobile	8/29/2015	29	126	48		203	579	2.85	350.9
Survey Totals		108	480	178	12	778	1,737	2.23	448.4
Incidental Observations									
Combined Totals		108	480	178		766			

Ranch Size (ac.): _____

Harvest Recommendation

Acres/Deer: 2.23
Does/Buck: 4.44
Fawns/Doe: 0.37

Antlered Bucks:

Composition -

Bucks: 14.1%
Does: 62.7%
Fawns: 23.2%

Antlerless Deer:

Deer/1,000Ac: 447.90
Adult/1,000Ac: 343.82
Acres/Adult: 2.91

Estimated Population -

Bucks:
Does:
Fawns:
Total:

Remarks:

Elaine Simpson

Exhibit 'C'
Wildlife Advisory Comm. 4/1/16

From: Hougen, Stephen T
Sent: Monday, January 04, 2016 4:32 PM
To: citysecretary@graniteshoals.org; mayor@graniteshoals.org;

Cc:
Subject: Wildlife Committee Deer Control
Attachments: DEER CONTROL FOR THE WILDLIFE COMMITTEE.docx

Attached are some of my thoughts regarding the deer in Granite Shoals. This plan does not change the deer population any, but it may redistribute the deer away from the more traveled roads to prevent deer collisions, at no cost to the City. Basically, the plan is:

1. No feeding the deer, or at least no feeding within 100 feet of a roadway.
2. Signs to alert drivers to watch for deer.
3. Paintball use to encourage the deer to leave the roadways and stay away from vehicles. Don't laugh, as I think the deer are trainable!

Thanks for your consideration.

Steve Hougen

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WILDLIFE COMMITTEE: DEER CONCERNS

Deer in our City of Granite Shoals have been the subject of much discussion. The Wildlife Committee is charged with identifying specific problems concerning the deer and developing a plan to help ameliorate those problems in a humane and fiscally responsible manner. Assumptions based upon nonscientific studies, comparison with high-fenced trophy wildlife ranch management, and unfounded fears of potential diseases should be avoided.

Here are some of the problems mentioned regarding the deer in Granite Shoals:

1. There are too many deer.
2. The deer are over-populated according to a deer survey.
3. The deer are not healthy.
4. The deer are starving.
5. The "browse line" is evidence that the deer don't have enough to eat.
6. The deer might develop "deer wasting disease".
7. The deer could spread Lyme disease from ticks.
8. The deer eat landscaping plants.
9. The deer "enter my garden and eat my sweet corn."
10. The deer scat, the poop, in my yard is annoying.
11. My dog eats the deer droppings, and sometimes he rolls in it.
12. Collisions with vehicles are the cause of vehicle and property damage.

The Deer Survey: Comments and Questions

As I understand the deer survey, a representative from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and some Wildlife Committee members drove down some streets in May and counted deer along the roadway. The number of counted deer were divided by the number of acres covered, giving a ratio of deer per acre. Recommendations were made based upon general wildlife management principles for producing healthy, robust deer suitable for hunters and land owners trying to attract those hunters.

Comments were made that "for every deer we saw, there were 5 others that we did not see." It is not known if the "unseen" deer were counted in the study. Is it 5, or 6, or 4 more deer for every deer actually seen? What is the margin of error in the deer count: plus or minus 20%, 30%? The study was conducted when fawns were plentiful, and mother deer might have been more inclined to stay close to neighborhoods during that time of year. Thus, there may be a distribution bias, counting deer only where the population was most dense at the time. Would a survey performed in December give the same results? What was the cost of this deer survey?

It is also not known exactly what streets were used, and if the survey included other areas within the City of Granite Shoals, such as the Honeymoon Ranch Road, North Wirtz Dam Road, and County Road 120. The more remote areas may have a less dense deer population, as those areas do not have the protection afforded to the deer in areas of more human development.

Here are some considerations:

1. The deer in Granite Shoals are free to roam. They are not confined. They are here because they want to be here. If they don't like it here, if they were starving, then they are free to leave.
2. The deer may choose to live in Granite Shoals, particularly in areas of more housing, due to the presence of food sources such as acorns, pecans, edible vegetation, and deliberate feeding by people. Protection from predators including coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, feral dogs, feral hogs, buzzards (which can prey upon newborn fawns), and hunters is another reason why deer may find a sanctuary within the city limits.
3. Unlike trophy game management ranches, the city is not charged with managing a trophy population of robust deer.
4. Measures taken for the "benefit" and "health" of the deer population should be challenged, as Mother Nature may have a better mechanism at work rather than one we humans can devise. Certainly killing a skinny but otherwise happy deer is not a preferred option for that deer! Furthermore, is a fat deer, like a fat person, really healthier?
5. The natural deer population may self-regulate, meaning a decimated deer herd may result in more reproduction of the remaining deer, better survival of fawns including sets of twins, and an influx of outside deer into our area, as long as whatever attracts the deer to the area remains available. Then, despite eradication efforts and great costs, the deer herd would remain in a state of equilibrium, and the problem would not be solved.
6. There is no evidence of deer-associated diseases affecting people in this area.
7. The number of collisions and circumstances of those collisions, such as the location, speed of the vehicle, and condition of the driver, should be reported and monitored.
8. There are some very good things about the deer. People enjoy seeing large bucks, the playful antics of young deer, seeing a doe give birth to a fawn, and witnessing the first few steps of a newborn fawn—all rarely experienced by folks, even in the country on ranches. Visitors to the area are amazed when seeing our deer, which could be an asset to Granite Shoals.

Potential Solutions:

1. **An archery hunt** was proposed at the December meeting of the Wildlife Committee. Collecting a fee from the hunters might off-set some of the costs of the program. Parents involved in a youth archery program might be interested. However, there seems to be huge logistic and legal problems associated with such a City-Sponsored hunt. Any accidental injury to a person, even to one of the involved hunters, would be a problem. A lost arrow later picked up by a child could be a problem. A wounded deer that wandered into and died in the private backyard of a resident would be a problem. A wounded deer with an arrow hanging from her flank wandering the streets would be a terrible sight for anyone to see. A wounded and dying deer would most likely have to be shot with a pneumatic cattle gun, as discharge of a firearm in the city would be frowned upon. Field dressing, proper cooling, storage, and transport of deer for professional processing and distribution would be a cost to the city. A food-borne illness from alleged improper handling of the venison, from the point of kill to donation, might be a problem.

2. **Netting** by a professional netting company at a cost of \$150 per deer, or \$90,000 for 600 deer per year, has been used by Horseshoe Bay. It has been said that all netted deer must be killed, even the bucks, because they might otherwise die anyway. Apparently, netting and transport of deer to other areas is not feasible because landowners may not want our deer and deer may eventually die from the stress of handling and transport, which may or may not be true. In addition, it has been said that "if a netted deer is released, it will never be netted again because it will learn to avoid the nets."
3. **Sterilization—Birth Control for deer** has been proposed and is cost-prohibitive and logistically not possible.
4. **High-Fencing the entire City Limits**—not feasible.
5. **Warning Signs** were discussed at the December meeting of the Committee. Since the main serious complaint is about deer collisions with cars, the drivers should be educated and warned about the deer. Signs might say: "Drive Slowly, Watch for Deer," "Deer Crossing," "Watch and Enjoy the Deer," "Free-Range Deer: Drive Slowly," and "Do not Feed the Deer." In addition, speed limits and stop signs should be respected and more rigorously enforced, just as they are in neighborhoods with a lot of children.
6. **Information to Residents** should encourage the use of landscaping with native plants that deer do not prefer, such as mountain sage bushes. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department might be able to make suggestions for other deer-proof landscaping plants. As for personal gardens, even if there is only one deer remaining in the county, that deer would probably find a garden of sweet corn! Such personal gardens should be high-fenced. Feeding within 100 yards of a paved roadway should be discouraged.
7. **Paint Balling**, yes, and I mean it. Since deer are so smart that they learn about nets and won't be netted twice, perhaps they can be taught to avoid the main highways, where collisions are most likely to occur. Being struck by a paint ball would only hurt a little, and it would make deer more cautious of cars. A "Deer Patrol" of paint gun enthusiasts could be successful in keeping deer away from the roads and from approaching cars. Paint ball guns clearly marked with yellow tape, from clearly marked vehicles stating their purpose, could be used to discourage deer from getting close to the roads and approaching vehicles.

In conclusion, control of the deer population is a complex, multifactorial problem with no easy solutions. Prevention of collisions, injuries to people, and damage to property are the main objectives. I believe some steps may be taken to help improve the situation. One more thought: It would be a sad day if we never saw any deer again on our way to our homes.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Hougen, M.D.
Granite Shoals
January 4, 2016