City of Granite Shoals
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Granite Shoals, TX 78654
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MEETING MINUTES
FOR A SPECIAL CALLED TOWN HALL MEETING
OF THE WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WAC)
OF THE CITY OF GRANITE SHOALS
SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2016 - 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
GRANITE SHOALS FIRE DEPARTMENT
8410 WEST FM 1431, GRANITE SHOALS, TEXAS 78654

1. **Call meeting to order – Called to order at 9:00 AM by Chair Brady.**

Present:
Jason Brady – Chair
Doug Ripple – Vice Chair
Robbie Boswell
Mary Waters
Steve Hougen
Willie Pack

Absent:
Dennis Jowers
Tina Collier (appointed June 14, 2016)

City Staff:
Elaine Simpson, City Secretary (recording secretary)
Ken Nickel, City Manager
Peggy Smith, Assistant City Manager
John Ortiz, Granite Shoals Police Department
Tim Edwards, Granite Shoals Police Department Animal Control
Austin Stanphill, Fire Chief
Tim Campbell, Assistant Fire Chief

City Council Members:
Mayor Carl Brugger
Council Member Anita Hisey
Council Member Shirley King
Council Member Mark Morren
Council Member Todd Holland – Committee Advisor to WAC

2. General – Welcome/Introductions	**Todd Holland**
3. Conduct, Decorum and Procedures	**Mayor Brugger**
4. Purpose	**Jason Brady**
5. Very Brief Background of Topic	**Jason Brady**
6. Summary Ordinance 685	**Jason Brady**
7. Addressing the Concerns	**Jason Brady**
8. Supplemental Feeding of Deer	**Jason Brady**
9. Proposed Ordinance 680	**Todd Holland**
10. Comments, questions, input from citizens	**All**
11. Next Steps	**Mayor Brugger**
12. Adjournment.	

Committee Chair Brady gave the PowerPoint presentation which addressed the agenda items in order. (See Exhibit 'A' to these meeting minutes)

After the PowerPoint presentation, Chair Brady recognized all those citizens who wished to speak and had completed and submitted a speaker card.

Laura Campbell, 206 E. Bluebriar: She spoke to request clarity on why the 'No Feeding the Deer' proposed Ord. 680 was needed. Dr. Wehland spoke to the importance of not feeding the deer because it causes them to congregate in large groups and parasites or disease can easily be spread when many deer eat out of the same feeder. She referenced the pamphlet 'Killing Them With Kindness' which was provided with the meeting agenda.

Ms. Campbell also requested clarification regarding the exact locations (that is not public information, although property owners within 100 yards will be notified) of the hunt sites. She also requested more information on the safety procedures which had been incorporated into the program plan.

There was a brief discussion related to how many deer are in the city limits. This number is an estimate, based on the 3 deer censuses that were taken last August. The Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists prepared a route through town and a protocol for stopping every 1/10 mile

to count visible deer. This census was performed three times and then averaged by the Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists utilizing their formula to get the estimated count. There is no way to have a 100% correct count.

Chair Brady explained that the 'season' for this pilot program would be October 3 – third week of January. Also, he explained to the audience that there will not be harvesters doing any 'field dressing' of the deer in the hunt sites, or anywhere in public.

Ms. Sandra Campbell, 118 W. Maple Dr.: She clarified with Chair Brady that the harvesters will not be required to pay for the membership on the pilot program team, they will be volunteers only. They will donate their service to the program, and will have any deer that they shoot. They will have the option, and we are hopeful that many will choose to donate the venison to Food Banks or local churches.

Brad Williams, 115 W. Bluebriar Drive: He suggested that the Committee maintain careful statistics and measures of all facets of the pilot program. He commended committee on their thorough research and work on this project on the 'front' end.

There was a brief discussion related to how other cities have implemented a no-deer feeding ordinance. City of Burnet adopted one, City of Horseshoe Bay has one, and the committee members have heard that Sunrise Beach may begin a no-deer feeding ordinance of this type.

Roy Settlemyer, 1501 Ridge Valley: He stated a concern that there are many deer on his property. Also suggested to the Committee that they encourage City Council to amend the Fence Ordinance to allow for up to 8 foot (i.e.: Deer-proof) fencing to be built in the city.

Stephanie Berry, 108 W. Persimmon: Inquired about the procedures the volunteer harvesters to get the training and qualification sessions required by the Ordinance. Will there be training here in this area? Chair Brady explained that if 11-15 people are interested in taking the outside portion of the class here in Granite Shoals, an instructor from Waco has agreed to come here to present the training.

June Ronnenberg, 611 E. Briarway Drive: She asked for clarification about the harvesting sites, and how this will get the deer out of the populated city area. There was a discussion of this first year being a 'pilot program' and there is not an expectation that 528 deer can be 'removed'. This year the pilot program is being established to see if the project framework is feasible. The deer census that will be done July 2016 will give an idea regarding how many deer are in the city limits, but will only be an estimate.

Gary Bartlett, 417 Contour Drive: He thanked the Wildlife Committee for all their work. He noted that his estimate is that at least 1/3 of the deer herd now in the city should be culled to

reduce the herd to a healthy size. He also suggested that the venison be BBQ'd and sold as a fundraiser for the city parks system.

Robert Edmunstern: He noted he has concerns that the 'No Feeding the Deer' ordinance might contain 'loopholes' which people would exploit, for instance claiming that they are feeding another type animal, not deer. Dr. Erin Wehland and Mr. Stephens explained that it is important not to feed the deer because it encourages the spread of disease, and because the 'Deer Corn' is not healthy. It has almost no nutritional value for these deer. It is equivalent to candy for humans; it is popular, but not healthy.

Tammy King, 135 E. Hickory: She stated that she understood need to keep herd at a healthy size in order that they have enough to eat. She stated that she has reservations regarding the 'penalty' for violating the No Deer Feeding Ordinance. Is a penalty needed?

Mr. Johnny Comstock: He noted that many people feed the deer human food scraps, in order that these edible items not go to waste. He explained that he regularly feed the deer lettuce or other table scraps.

There was a general discussion of requirements for harvesters who volunteer for the pilot program. First preference will be given to those who reside in Granite Shoals, then those who own property in Granite Shoals. Out of town applicants will be considered, but due to the amount of time commitment, it is hoped that most harvest team members live close by.

There was a discussion of the health of the city's herd regarding Chronic Wasting Disease. It is not common. Parasites are very common in the deer in our urban herd and descriptions of the deer by many residents seem to indicate our deer have parasites.

Police Officer John Ortis spoke to the crowd and volunteered to discuss deer concerns with residents. He also discussed police vehicle/deer accidents and near misses. He assured citizens that the police department is now keeping statistics regarding deer related calls. These statistics will be helpful for the overall Deer Management program.

Chair Brady adjourned the meeting at 10:38 AM.

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 Town Hall Meeting meeting of June 18, 2016.

_____

Date: 6-23-16

CITY OF GRANITE SHOALS

TEXAS

CITY OF PARKS

June 18, 2016 Town Hall Meeting

Wildlife Advisory Committee

Deer Management Pilot Program

Outline of Deer Meeting

• General – Welcome/Introductions	Todd Holland
• Conduct, Decorum and Procedures	Mayor Brugger
• Purpose	Jason Brady
• Very Brief Background	Jason Brady
• Summary Ordinance 685	Jason Brady
• Addressing the Concerns	Jason Brady
• Supplemental Feeding of Deer	Dr. Wehland
• Proposed Ordinance 680	Todd Holland
• Comments, questions, input from citizens	All

If time permits
Discussion of comments & answers to questions
Otherwise comments and answers
will be on the City Website and posted hard copy

• Next Steps	Mayor Brugger

INTRODUCTIONS

- WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WAC)

—Jason Brady – Chair

—Doug Ripple – Vice Chair

—Mary Waters

—Robbie Boswell

—Dr. Steve Hougen

—Willie Pack

—Dennis Jowers

—Tina Collier

INTRODUCTIONS

- CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
  - Carl Brugger- Mayor
  - Tom Dillard — Mayor Pro Tem and Councilmember Place 4
  - Anita Hisey –Councilmember Place 1
  - Shirley King –Councilmember Place 2
  - Eric Tanner –Councilmember Place 3
  - Todd Holland –Councilmember Place 5
  - Mark Morren –Councilmember Place 6

INTRODUCTIONS

REPRESENTATIVES FROM TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

- Dr. Erin Wehland - Natural Resource Specialist
- Rufus Stephens – District Leader

We Are All - US

- All members of City Council and the Wildlife Advisory Committee are:
  - Volunteers – we get no pay or money
  - Concerned Residents of Granite Shoals
  - Granite Shoals Property Owners
  - Taxpayers
  - Voters
- Please do not think in terms of "Them" and "Us" – We are all "Us"

The Purpose Of This Town Hall Meeting

- **To provide information / educate the citizens of Granite Shoals related to the Pilot Project for Deer Management.**
- To communicate information, thoughts, ideas and opinions –on topic
- To hear and listen to citizens and property owners –on topic
- To answer questions if we can, or identify questions that need answers –if we can't answer here we will place answers on city website

Very Brief History of the Wildlife Advisory Committee Activities

- Committee was formed in March 2014, and has been working to find a Deer Management program that will work for "us (city and citizens)" and that does not induce financial strain on "us (city and citizens)".

- Working under TPWD guidance and recommendations.

COMMENTS ABOUT DEER

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 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 poop in my yard is annoying.
11. My dog eats the deer droppings, and sometimes he rolls in it.
12. Collisions with vehicles cause vehicle and property damage.

What attracts deer to Granite Shoals?

- People feeding the deer
- Attractive gardens, landscaping plants
- Good natural supply of food—acorns, grass…
- Absence of natural predators
- Absence of open-season hunting
- An overall safe and protective environment

LET NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE

- A "No Feeding" City Ordinance
- Introduction of Wolves
- Introduction of Mountain Lions
- Introduction of another Top Predator?

A DIFFICULT CHOICE

Being mauled by wolves

or

A Clean Arrow ?

A BETTER TOP PREDATOR

Ordinance #685

Overview of Ord. 685 (Complete Ord. on City Website)

- **Safety Regulations**
- **Pilot Program**
- **Strict Requirements for Members of Harvest 'Team'**
- **Limited 'locations' – sites selected are in secluded areas**
- **Coordination with Texas Parks and Wildlife, Granite Shoals Police Department and Game Wardens**

Addressing the Concerns #1

Concern: City wants to 'eliminate all the deer'.

- Does the City want to eliminate all the deer?

Answer: City officials aim for deer herd to be healthy.

- The deer census conducted in August of 2015 showed that we have an overpopulation issue biologically, that is, there are more deer in the city limits than the habitat can support.
- The citizen survey done in January 2015 indicated that there are many conflicts between humans and deer, this is social overpopulation.

Addressing the Concerns #2

Concern: Has Wildlife Advisory Committee researched other means of deer population control?

Answer: The Advisory Committee reviewed numerous deer management techniques.

- At the City Council Meeting on December 15, 2015, Chair Jason Brady presented results of the committees research and consultations with Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologists. More than a year's worth of research had led to the recommendation of an archery based pilot program. The Committee also presented the **pros and cons of all methods they had researched**.

Addressing the Concerns #3

Concern: Will it be Open Season for hunting in the City?

Answer: State and Local laws remain in effect regarding use of firearms in the City.

- The City Firearm Ordinance was amended to allow only those participants in the Deer Management Pilot Program to discharge an arrow in the city limits, during official 'hunt' times and at specific 'hunt' locations selected because they are safely away from structures and roadways. State poaching laws remain unchanged.

Addressing the Concerns #4

Concern: Will hunting be allowed near my house?

Answer: If your home is near any designated site, you will be approached before the program begins to seek permission to retrieve any deer on your property.

- You will be aware of any hunt site within 75 yards of your property. You will be asked if you will give advance permission for recovery of deer on your property.
- Every effort will be made to ensure no deer should leave the designated area.

Addressing the Concerns #5

Concern: Is this program a 'Good Ol' Boy' program to allow certain people to hunt deer in the City?

Answer: The Wildlife Advisory Committee conducts all business in the open. Any citizen may apply for consideration of appointment to the Committee and/or the pilot program.

- Any citizen can review the work of the committee over the last two years, review information that has been considered and reports that have been provided to Council and public. All reports are on website.
- Members applied for appointment to WAC in same manner as other city boards.
- The WAC held an open meeting for interested participants in the Pilot Program on March 24, 2016.

Addressing the Concerns #6

Concern: Is this plan well – designed so not to be a liability to the City?

Answer: WAC has designed this plan with oversight by Texas Parks and Wildlife and review by City Legal staff.

- The work of the WAC has been guided all along by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department expert biologists.
- The city legal staff reviewed the project plan and included what we believe to be needed waivers.
- Council approved the pilot program after significant safety measures were incorporated into the design.

Addressing the Concerns #7

Concern: Is this a trophy hunt?

Answer: This is a Level 1 MLD permit, so it will be antlerless deer only.

- No antlered deer will be taken.
- No other animals, vermin or otherwise, will be taken.

Addressing the Concerns #8

Concern: What will happen to the harvested deer?

Answer: State Law prohibits wasting of game animals.

- Deer belongs to harvester first.
- Deer may be donated for Food Banks, churches and other pre-arranged parties.

The 'Cons' of Feeding the Deer

KILLING DEER WITH KINDNESS – (pamphlet available)

...As suburban development continues to sprawl and drought continues to scorch the landscape**, humans are seeing the plight of hungry deer and want to help.** Some choose to offer supplemental food to the animals in the hopes that it will help offset the poor conditions. Others worry about the impact of deer on vegetable and ornamental gardens or the danger they pose to drivers on the roadways and even people and pets on their walks.

The result is often a battle, pitting neighbor against neighbor as everyone wants the best for wildlife *and* for humans, and both try to find the solution to a problem that isn't going away.

The 'Cons' of Feeding the Deer

PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD

Unfortunately, deer feeding areas can be a fertile breeding ground for pathogens and parasites. Deadly aflatoxin and mycotoxin, frequently found in bags of deer corn, can kill many deer and birds before it is even recognized, and Chronic Wasting Disease has been spread at feeding sites in other states. Feeding stations attract more than just deer: opossum, raccoon, rodents, and skunks are frequent visitors to any regular feeding station. These critters bring in and spread their own parasites and diseases, including rabies.

The 'Cons' of Feeding the Deer

And that's not even considering the fact that white-tailed deer, a ruminant species, have a complex digestive system. If fed the wrong food at the wrong time of year, they can actually starve to death – even with a full stomach.

The last complication of deer feeding may seem like a benefit: well-fed deer turn those calories into fawns. Even with all the problems mentioned above, deer that are fed will increase in number. Unfortunately, that compounds the original problem: the land wasn't able to support the amount of deer it had to begin. In a population that is being fed there are even more mouths to feed, and less and less natural food is available. So, the deer continue to starve.

The 'Cons' of Feeding the Deer

Could it be that feeding deer is even more cruel than not feeding them?

If we let the natural habitat set the population level of the herd the deer population, overall, will be healthier. In good years, numbers will increase, and in tough years, we'll lose a few individuals. But the population itself will be stable.

Proposed Ord. 680 *No Feeding Deer*

Chapter 4 (Animals) of the City of Granite Shoals Code of Ordinances is hereby amended to create a new Section 4-15 (Feeding of Deer Prohibited) of the City of Granite Shoals Code of Ordinances is hereby created as follows:

"Sec. 4-15. Feeding of Deer Prohibited.

No person shall purposely feed or provide food (as described in subsection (c) below), through a ground-feeding station, salt lick or by other means, to wild deer in the city on any public or private land.

For the purpose of this section, all deer shall be deemed to be wild.

Proposed Ord. 680 *No Feeding Deer*

A person shall be deemed to have purposely fed or caused deer to be fed if the person places wheat, pelleted livestock food, corn in any form, fruit, vegetables, hay or alfalfa, human food scraps, any form of commercially sold wildlife feed, birdseed or livestock feed, or any other edible matter that deer will consume (not including live vegetation such as ornamental landscaping or flowers) on the ground, or within reach of deer (not including birdseed in a bird feeder). This prohibition shall not apply to edible matter located either in an enclosed building or stored in a securely sealed package.

Proposed Ord. 680 *No Feeding Deer*

The prohibition of this section shall not apply to any peace officer, animal control officer, **or other agent of the city acting pursuant to a deer control program approved by the City Council.**

Penalties. A person who violates the proscription set forth in the Deer Feeding Ordinance commits a Class C misdemeanor punishable under the General Penalty provision, Section 1-10 of the City of Granite Shoals Code of Ordinances or by an administrative penalty imposed by this ordinance.

Proposed Ord. 680 *No Feeding Deer*

Proposed Ordinance 680 will considered by the City Council at their next regular meeting, to be held June 28, 2016, Tuesday, at City Hall Council Chambers at 6 PM.

Texas Parks and Wildlife recommends that a No Deer Feeding Ordinance be passed as a part of the overall Deer Management effort.

Reference and Resources

The following are available from the city official website at www.graniteshoals.org :

- All agendas and meeting minutes from WAC meetings from 2014-current.
- Application form for those interested in applying for consideration of appointment to the WAC or the Pilot Program.
- Review of May 2, 2015 Town Hall Meeting regarding Deer Overpopulation.
- December 15, 2015 WAC Chair report to Council on management options.
- Ordinances
  - establishing the Wildlife Committee
  - Adopting the Pilot Program for Deer Management
  - Modifying the City's Firearm Ordinance

Next Steps:

- Pilot program qualification testing and training sessions begin.
- Notification of residents within 100 yards of the designated sites.
- August 2016, a new Deer Census Count to be conducted by WAC under guidance of Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists.
- Fall 2016 - WAC committee coordinates program with representatives of Parks and Wildlife Dept.

Other Questions?

The Committee members understand that there are many questions we may not have addressed in this presentation.

If your question is detailed, please submit in writing and the answer will be provided to you and copied onto the city website for all to see.

Thank you for your time and participation!