



KURE BEACH TOWN COUNCIL  
PUBLIC HEARING  
OVERPOPULATION OF DEER  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

## MINUTES

The Kure Beach Town Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, September 9, 2008 at 6:00 pm for the purpose of holding a public hearing on the overpopulation of deer. Notice of the meeting was posted at Town Hall on August 22, 2008 and advertised in the Island Gazette newspaper on August 27 and September 3, 2008.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mayor Pro Tem	Jim Dugan
Commissioner	Dean Lambeth (left at 6:50 pm)
Commissioner	Barry Nelder
Commissioner	Jim Vartt

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mayor	Mac Montgomery
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**STAFF PRESENT:**

Town Administrator	Michelle James
Town Clerk	Nancy Avery

Town Attorney A. A. Canoutas was in attendance. There was a quorum of the Town Council present.

Call to order

Mayor Pro Tem Dugan called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm stating the purpose was to hold a public hearing to receive comments from the public regarding ways to address the overpopulation of deer.

Town Administrator James stated the Town's receptionist put together a map showing deer sightings and accidents compiled from May of this year and presented the map for viewing.

Richard Lockwood with the Military Ocean Terminal Depot at Sunny Point (MOTSU) introduced Michael Fuller who is the wildlife manager on staff and the contact for this topic in the future.

Mr. Lockwood stated:

- We originally started a treatment to contain ticks because we wanted to provide a tick free area for recreation for our soldiers. Tickacide is applied when the deer eat corn provided. There was a 90% reduction of ticks in that area and it was very effective.
- Options for controlling an overpopulation of deer are:
  - Do nothing based on how serious or not the issue is.

- Build a fence. To be effective, the fence would need to be 10 feet high.
- Hire professionals like Bald Head Island and Landfall have done to eradicate the deer. This is very expensive and could cost the Town several thousand dollars per deer.
- Open up a portion of the buffer zone to hunting to be controlled by the state. This would be for bow hunting only, no weapons. They wouldn't be hunting behind your house. It is too late to do this year. It would have to wait until next hunting season.

Robert Norville with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission stated:

- Deer are part of the public trust and public domain, so regardless of where an animal resides, they belong to all of us here. We are state employees that act as custodian on your behalf.
- I am the District 2 wildlife biologist and work in over 12 counties mainly with hunters for all types of wildlife.
- There is no easy answer to controlling the deer population.
- Deer are the number one game animal and state wide deer hunting brings a minimum of \$450 million in income annually for the state.
- We have to determine what kind of problem exists. Just seeing deer isn't necessarily a problem. There are different levels of tolerance. We all have a right to protect our property from damage.
- We could allow public hunting on part of MOTSU. Information from the Town could help direct the pattern of hunters when removing the deer. This won't remove all the deer. Public hunting has been the best manner of handling. Bow hunting is the only type allowed and the archery season runs from September to January.
- There are methods to deter deer coming on to your property. Many chemical products are available on the market and small fences and electrified fences work well.
- Professional culling/removal options is really bow hunters that volunteer to help with deer removal and they have removed up to 147 deer in one hunting season. They are very good at what they do. Using rifles or weapons in the Kure Beach area is not a good idea because of the size of the area.
- There is the do nothing option.
- Hunting may happen, but it is MOTSU's decision.
- When you start controlling deer using professionals as an entity through the Town, it can become extremely expensive.
- The meat of the hunted deer is donated to feed the needy.
- Other options are using birth control in deer, but it doesn't work in deer any better than it does in people because it is not 100% effective. Imagine trying to find every female deer on the island. This is logistically impossible and not effective when treated. Studies show there have been treated deer in pens protected from males and a female still became pregnant. It is also not long lasting.
- Trapping and removal doesn't work - nobody wants the deer. This is the more inhumane way that causes a lot of trauma to the deer with low survival rates.

- There are plants that deer won't eat, but if you fertilize your plants, they will eat them. Our website ([www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org)) has a list of preferred plants that deer usually won't eat.

### 3. Opening of the public hearing

Mayor Pro Tem Dugan opened the hearing at 6:29 pm.

Phil Edwards, resident on Mississippi Avenue, stated:

- There are more deer than where that map shows.
- They eat my foliage and tomatoes.
- I have fenced gardens, but they reach through.
- I am concerned about small undeveloped deer that are tick infested. This is spreading all over. You can't walk in the woods without getting these ticks.
- I am concerned about them causing car accidents – someone could get killed.

Judy Larrick, resident on Settlers Lane, stated:

- I am 100% adamantly opposed to killing any deer on this island.
- I am astounded that we are talking about killing deer because they are eating plants.
- We are taking the deer out of their habitat and taking their land.
- Each of us can control our own yard – there are many things we can do.
- I put black netting over my tomato plants and it worked.
- I love the interaction and seeing the deer.
- I don't think there is a problem.
- It is ironic that we are talking about deer but not the fox that are running all over town carrying rabies. That is more concerning to me.
- Landfall and Bald Head caused a huge public outcry when they started removal.
- Landfall became the laughing joke in the newspaper for rich people and their plants. We bring in tourists and I don't think we want to be known as a community that kills our deer.
- I wish we would address the feeding problem. I think MOTSU does a feeding/tick control program and I would like to see them keep that up.

Eric Vann, 733 Sailor Court, stated:

- I think the deer are over populated.
- I am concerned about the tick issue.
- I would like to see the Town and MOTSU work together.
- I think we should have a hunt to control the deer population.
- Come and sit on my porch if you want to see the deer.
- Don't plant hawthorn – they love that.

Garry Krause, Largo Way, stated:

- Legalized hunting is not a sinful way to get rid of deer.
- The meat goes to feed people that are starving to death.
- It is the humanized way to control the deer population.

- Defending one's own personal property, is not the only problem.
- I had an accident with a deer in my car – the deer hit me.
- We have to defend ourselves.

John Gordon, resident, stated:

- I do advocate some kind of hunting.
- When the deer get over populated, they get diseased and starve, which is why they are eating the plants and they suffer.
- They are responsible for spreading lime disease through ticks which can be deadly.
- My impression of MOTSU's property is that it hasn't been managed well. There is a lot of overgrowth.
- I have concerns that a bow hunt would be practical.

Sandy Cox, Davis Road, stated:

- I am concerned about the safety issue in the Davis Road area. On one occasion, I saw people in there hunting with a bow and arrow. If we have hunting from September to January 1st, there are people that walk down Davis Road all the time even though they are not necessarily supposed to. Since 9-11, it has been closed off. Safety is a huge issue. People will still go down there because they don't see any harm in doing it.
- Living so close to the woods, I wouldn't want anyone shooting any weapon near my house.
- I see the military all the time. Couldn't they do the hunt instead of having other people running amok in the woods?

Mr. Fuller, MOTSU, replied:

- The soldiers come here for training, not to hunt. Taxpayers pay a lot of money for this training and the soldiers have a higher calling right now besides hunting deer.

Phyllis Mojzis, Largo Way, stated:

- The deer come out all day, not just after dusk. This has started happening recently.

Francis Regan, resident, stated:

- Do we have any indication whether we are overpopulated or not?
- I have had an accident on Dow Road with a deer jumping out at me. And there have been a couple of times when deer have jumped out in front of my car.
- Are there tick problems – are they bringing and leaving ticks? We need to consider this when deciding whether to take down the population or not. Also it won't stop. The population will keep increasing. Deer have been on the beach and Fort Fisher Boulevard.
- My main concern is the traffic problem and ticks that could be severe.
- I have a place in South Carolina and put up a four foot fence that didn't work. I have put up barbed wire up to 9 feet and that didn't work. I have tried the sprays,

but you have to keep doing it every day or on a regular basis, but the problem is still there.

Chuck Keener, resident, stated:

- When the deer come along a path, will ticks drop onto the ground?

John Gordon, resident, stated:

- I think there should be more than a hunting type effort. I would like to see MOTSU do a better job of managing the forest, maybe with some controlled burnings. This would provide more food for the remaining deer to encourage them not to come over to the Town's side. An overall type of effort is needed.

Mr. Lockwood, MOTSU, replied:

- We do controlled burns on the other side of the river, and have only talked about doing it on Kure Beach's side because of tourists and residents.
- What would be the reaction to a controlled burn?
- We would do controlled burns overnight from late in the afternoon to late at night.
- Burns control the tick population, but not the deer population; bring out vegetation which give the deer something else to eat; and thin out the woods without damaging the trees.
- We could add this to the list of options.

An unidentified member of the audience commented that the north water tower area is a big feeding area for deer and ticks are really bad in that area. The deer are skinnier this year than in past years.

Judy Larrick, resident, stated:

- I want to be on the record that I don't advocate that we kill fox either. I don't want deer or fox killed.

#### Closing of the public hearing

Mayor Pro Tem Dugan closed the public hearing at 7:03 pm.

#### Commissioner comments

Commissioner Vatrt stated:

- I am concerned about lime disease. I see a herd of about 18 deer every night and I am starting to see them during the day. That many co-mingling with humans is a problem.

Commissioner Nelder stated:

- The deer problem is not the only problem. It is a complete island wildlife problem. We have all sorts of wildlife that need to be controlled and taken care of for both their quality of life and ours. I think it is important that we control the wildlife. We are lucky there are resources such as MOTSU and NC Wildlife. We are worried about not hurting deer but there are other animals that we aren't

worried about hurting. The whole thing comes down to control of the entire population of wildlife, not just the deer.

Mayor Pro Tem Dugan stated:

- The extent of the problem is different for each of us.
- We will always have to interact as long as we have wildlife on the island.
- It is a lot easier for deer to eat someone's roses than go foraging through the forest for food.

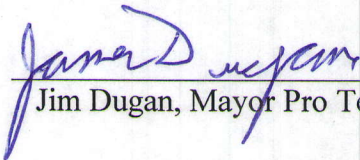
Mayor Pro Tem Dugan read into the record a letter from Hiram Tucker. Said letter is herein incorporated as part of these minutes

Mr. Norville, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, stated:

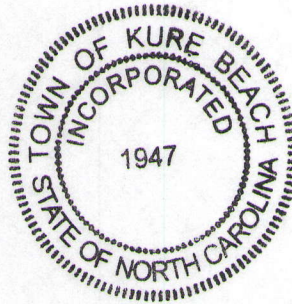
- April is the deadline for notification if the Town wants a hunt.
- Archery hunting is either sex, but mostly antlerless which is females.
- Culling deer is something the Town would have to pay for.
- We don't do counts or limit the number of deer that can be hunted.

Adjournment

ACTION – Commissioner Nelder MADE THE MOTION to adjourn at 7:16 pm. Commissioner Vatr seconded the motion. THE VOTE OF APPROVAL WAS UNANIMOUS.

  
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Jim Dugan, Mayor Pro Tem

NA  
~~DRAFT~~  
**ORIGINAL**



ATTEST:   
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Nancy Avery, Town Clerk

NOTE: These are action minutes reflecting items considered and actions taken by Council. These minutes are not a transcript of the meeting. Persons wishing to hear the recording of this meeting may request to do so by contacting the Town Clerk.