

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
February 8, 2011

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Fish and Game Council was held on the above date.

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 am by Acting Chairman Burke.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman Dave Burke
Councilman Phillip Brodhecker
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman Jeffrey Link
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilman Robert Puskas

Division employees included Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Lisa Barno, Tony Petrongolo, Craig Lemon, Carole Kandoth, Sue Predl, Barbara Stoff, Jodi Powers and Ed Connelly.

Members of the public included representatives of the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the Farm Bureau and others.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

The following was read aloud: In accordance with P.L. 1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the office of the Secretary of State and sent to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on January 26, 2011.

Minutes of the January 11, 2011 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to accept the minutes as presented.** One correction was noted, and **a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed to approve the minutes as corrected.**

Acting Chairman Burke noted that Committee assignments would be addressed later today.

Director Chanda addressed the Council. He noted that the Pequest public trout meeting this coming weekend. He also commented that the Garden State Deer Classic went well, and that staff had done a nice job.

Director Chanda noted he would be leaving at 1 pm today.

Approvals have been received to move forward with the Law Enforcement promotions.

It was noted that staff from the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program and the Bureau of Land Management had met with staff from the Bureau of Forestry. Topics discussed included landscape, stakeholders and stewardship, and it was noted that additional meeting will be scheduled.

Director Chanda recently attended a Board of Directors meeting of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, where he shared the new outdoor fishing brochures that were shown to Council previously by Information and Education Chief Sciascia.

Councilman Messeroll asked about a meeting with the Commissioner as a follow up to the black bear season. It was noted that this will be scheduled after the completion of data analyses

The public comment period was opened on noted agenda items. Janet Pizar from Essex County noted her concerns on the Community Based Deer Management Program (CBDMP) applications.

Barbara Sauchau from Hunterdon County shared her thoughts on the CBDMP process, the extension of the beaver and otter season, and asked that Acting Chairman Burke refer to her as an “Animal Protector” in his notes to the Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs. (Ms. Sauchau also left information for the file).

Committee reports began. Councilman Link reported for the Agriculture Committee. He noted that the weather has made it difficult on farms and nurseries. With so little food available, rabbits have been feeding on nursery stock, and the snow and Canada geese have been doing crop damage. The snow and ice have also affected the winter rye season.

Acting Chairman Burke noted he had spoken with Councilman Puskas, who still had 20 inches of snow in his area.

Councilman Messeroll noted that the crops left to overwinter on the Rutgers farm property had been eaten to the ground by the geese.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. He noted that the Raritan sportsmen’s show went well, adding that the deer display was excellent and the measuring programs were successful.

Several county meetings were cancelled due to bad weather, but it was noted that a large number of people attended the Union County meeting recently.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Finance Committee. They will meet on March 8 at 9 am, before the start of the regular Council meeting.

Councilman Messeroll reported that the Fisheries Committee had met earlier today, and would continue their meeting during the lunch break.

Acting Chairman Burke noted no meetings were currently scheduled for the Game Committee. Assistant Director Herrightly added that work is continuing on the Game Code proposals.

Councilmen Messeroll and Gudmundsson both noted Legislative actions that were being introduced regarding public meetings.

Legislative Liaison Nelson reported for the Legislative Committee. She presented and reviewed new bills for the Council, including:

A 2695 Authorizes free State park admission and free hunting, fishing and trapping licenses for persons with certain types of military service.

It was noted that this had passed the Assembly Committee, and was sent to the full Assembly.

A 3695 The “Wildlife Rehabilitation Act” establishes Wildlife Rehabilitation Board, in, but not of, DEP; and establishes continuing education requirements and permit program for wildlife rehabilitation.

It was noted that the Division opposed this bill, and this matter was further discussed.

S 2448 Requires cemeteries to implement woodchuck management strategies.

It was noted that the Division agrees with the intent, but questions if it is a necessary law.

There was further discussion on the information presented today.

Councilwoman Brummer reported for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee (ENSAC). The Committee met in January. There was a final report on the stakeholder process for landscape, and the finalized information is being sent to the Commissioner.

A stakeholders meeting regarding feral cats will be held, and Councilwoman Brummer will share further information on this matter.

The next ENSAC meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2011. Stakeholders will be invited to the meeting, where the Committee will re-open the Delphi process on Atlantic sturgeon to re-determine classifications based on current data. The Bureau of Wildlife will also be presenting a deer management program at that meeting.

Acting Chairman Burke noted a copy of a letter he had received from Councilwoman Brummer from the Parks Service on lead.

Bureau reports were given. Chief Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. Also in attendance were Hackettstown Hatchery Superintendent Lemon and Crew Supervisor Conley. A brief review of the Hackettstown Hatchery and their work was given to the Council.

Chief Barno noted that at last month's meeting she distributed a draft of the Bonus Broodstock Trout Program stocking schedule, and discussed possibly stocking the pond at Ponder Lodge. As previously noted, a demolition project was pending for the facilities at Ponder Lodge, and Chief Barno noted that there was no guarantee that this project would be completed before the opening day of the trout season. Giampetro Park Pond will be used in place of the pond at the Ponder Lodge facility, but Ponder Lodge can still be added in the future. There was additional discussion this program. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilwoman Brummer to accept the proposed Bonus Broodstock Trout stocking list. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

A handout of changes to the Spring trout stocking allocations was distributed.

Council was reminded of the public trout meeting this Saturday at the Pequest Trout Hatchery at 10 am.

Chief Barno noted that Assistant Biologist Schramko has been updating Bureau information into a GIS system.

Research and Management information was distributed and reviewed. Chief Barno noted it contained Federal Aid report criteria as well as a summary for the Department.

There was additional discussion between Chief Barno and the Council on dam removals and culverts.

Lunch break began at 12:20 pm. The meeting resumed at 1:30 pm.

Members were reminded of the Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee meeting this evening. Two property acquisitions and funding for a water control structure will be discussed.

Acting Chairman Burke noted a change in order for today's agenda. Principal Biologist Burnett was in attendance to propose extending the beaver and otter trapping season. He has been contacted by many trappers who have had a lack of access to their trapping areas due to the amount of snow, and noted that the Game Code authorizes the Director to extend the season by up to 14 days. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to give the Director authorization to extend the beaver and otter trapping season.** There was additional discussion this matter, and **a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

(Acting Chairman Burke asked that the minutes reflect Councilman Brodhecker's arrival time today at 1:30 pm).

Assistant Director Herrighty addressed the Council requesting to extend the semi-wild hunting season due to weather conditions, and noted many calls are being received on this matter. He explained that the Council has the authority to extend the season up to 20 days. **A motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, and clarified by Acting Chairman Burke, to extend the semi-wild hunting season until April 3, 2011. This was seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Supervising Biologist Kandoth presented a draft of changes to the Game Code language regarding the automated deer check system and reviewed same for the Council, noting this would create three technical changes to the Game Code. After some additional discussion and review, **a motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to accept the technical changes as proposed. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Principal Biologist Predl presented an application for a Community Based Deer Management Permit (CBDMP) for the Watchung Reservation in Union County. She noted that the public has ample time to comment on these applications at a local level when the applicants are preparing their resolution to endorse the application. A handout of the history of CBDMP's was distributed. There was additional discussion specific to the Watchung Reservation. Principal Biologist Predl reviewed their application with the Council, noting that the exemptions Council would be voting on today included hunting at designated times and no requirement to wear an outer garment of florescent orange. Discussion on the permit and the deer population continued. **A motion was made Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Link, to accept the application from the Watchung Reservation as presented. Acting Chairman Burke added that this would include exemptions of hunting at designated times and no requirement to wear an outer garment of florescent orange. After some additional discussion, a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed to approve the CBDMP application for the Watchung Reservation.**

There was no report from the Bureau of Information and Education.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He gave some additional information on the Ponder Lodge demolition project, noting that the award should be made in a week or two, and that the contractor had 180 days to perform the work. There was additional discussion on the Ponder Lodge property, including a request to retain two of the original asphalt golf cart paths for handicapped access throughout the property. Discussion continued on maintenance to these paths, especially with the limited number of personnel in the Bureau, and the anticipated additional reduction due to retirements in the near future.

Chief Petrongolo noted the scheduled demolition of an old barn on the Thundergut Pond WMA near Alloway. Vandals had cut through the iron gate with a torch, and also cut and removed the iron I-beams from inside the structure. Additionally, someone had constructed a skateboard park inside of the barn. This demolition project should take place shortly.

Chief Petrongolo reviewed dam maintenance projects with the Council.

Acting Chief Chicketano reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He reviewed some of the monthly report highlights from each region for the Council.

Acting Chief Chicketano also noted that the Bureau is working with the Department on getting Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA) certification, and described the program. Additionally, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being reviewed to make sure they are in compliance with the CALEA requirements, and ultimately making the Bureau a better and more professional department.

There was some additional discussion on the highlights reviewed today.

Old Business was discussed. A letter was sent to the Governor's Office regarding the saltwater registry. At this time, the bill is still pending the Governor's decision, but Principal Biologist Stoff from the Permit Section is already working with staff from Marine Fisheries on a possible program design for the electronic license system, and this was further discussed.

Principal Biologist Stoff also noted that the turkey permit applications are now online.

Acting Chairman Burke asked for any comments for changes to the agenda format he had prepared. Several suggestions were made by the Council for additional changes they would like to see.

The meeting schedule and the number of meetings needed throughout the year was discussed.

Committee assignments were reviewed. Acting Chairman Burke will prepare and distribute the new assignment list.

The public comment period was opened.

Barbara Sauchau noted her concerns on the public accessibility to CBDMP applications, the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact, Federal monies utilized by the Division, a news article written regarding the Fish and Game Council, possible regulation violations she feels may be occurring at public meetings, an article on activities at Heron Glen, and her thoughts on penalties for poachers.

Ron Diehll, President of the New Jersey Fur Harvester's was next to address the Council. He noted their meeting and auction on March 20 (distributed information) and invited members of the Council to attend.

Janet Pizar from Millburn was the last person requesting to address the Council. She thanked Assistant Director Herrighty for recognizing her as a stakeholder on wildlife issues, and asked to be recognized as such for future meetings. She also commented on the bobcat presentation and the design of deer exclosures, feeling that other species may be excluded. (Assistant Director

Herrighty explained that they are designed to allow other species to get in them and the Council further discussed this matter).

There was no one else wishing to address the Council.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted to the Council that the Division had been sued by a private individual who requested a stay of the CBDMP for Essex County that was approved last month. The courts sided with the Division on this matter, and the individual in question sent a copy of a letter that an appeal had been filed, but no paperwork on this appeal has been received.

There was no additional business to discuss today. **A motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilwoman Brummer to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor.** Meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.