

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL
Central Region Office
Robbinsville, New Jersey
September 21, 2016**

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

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chairman David Burke.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Chairman Burke read aloud the following notice: 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 on September 12, 2016 and delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press; published on September 16, 2016.

Roll call was taken.

In attendance were: Chairman David Burke
Councilwoman Cathy Blumig
Councilman Phillip Brodhecker (arrived at 9:12)
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Joe DeMartino
Councilman James DeStephano
Councilman Jeffery Link (arrived at 9:36)
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent:

Councilman Agust Gudmundsson

Division employees included: D. Chanda, L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, D. Golden, C. Stanko, D. Jenkins, L.A. Quirk, L. Barno and D. Ogonofski.

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilman DeMartino to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2016 meeting. Vote taken, six (6) in favor one (1) abstention, Councilwoman Blumig; motion carried.

Chairman Burke stated there is a joint meeting with Endangered Non-game Species Advisory Committee (ENSAC) at 11:00 and if the Fish and Game agenda is not completed before then, it will have to be completed at the end of the joint meeting. The Council will discuss and vote on the 2016 Quail Stocking Schedule, the Tentative 2017-18 Game Code Amendments, and a request for license restoration. Dr. Brummer has to attend the ENSAC Meeting at 10:00, so the Game Code consideration has been moved up on the agenda after the Director gives his comments.

Director of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, David Chanda, congratulated David Burke on officially becoming Chair of the Fish and Game Council. Director Chanda noted that last week was the annual session of the Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies. Due to the location being Philadelphia, several staff members were able to attend and participate in the committee work of the Association that we are a member of. Director Chanda stated it was a good meeting for him as he was the President of the Association over the last year. As President he was able to move along important initiatives. One of the issues handled through his presidency of the Association was he appointed a couple of taskforces to improve relations with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). One being the Endangered Species and how the USFWS go about listing a species. Often time USFWS does not communicate directly with the states to get the information they may have. The taskforce has formalized some strategies on how the USFWS will work more closely with state agencies across the country prior to the listing of any species. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) have been huge issues for a lot of states. We have two LCC's that affect New Jersey. It is almost impossible to have staff attend meetings talking about large regional conservation efforts. A work group was created to work with USFWS to recognize the role of the states and the importance of making sure the states have quite a bit of say and how to attend to that business. The final group is the Blue Ribbon Panel, which will be discussed later in the meeting, sustaining America's diverse fish and wildlife resources. It is nice to see the Panel is out of the gate and off and running. The Association recently hired a campaign manager.

As a result of not being around as much, there were things that was left up to the staff to operate. During the past month and a half and over the next month and a half, Director Chanda stated he has visited field offices, having small group meetings with staff to follow up with any issues they may have with the jobs they are doing or jobs they don't think they should be doing. Some have requested private meeting, which he has granted. Director Chanda stated he is 2/3 of the way through the agency. He has a series of ideas that staff has put forth on some issues that can be worked on from the ground up rather than the top down. The final effort, being scheduled now, is he will take the time to visit every county Federation starting in October. This will take about 4 – 5 months to complete as some meet on the same night of the month. Director Chanda has asked some Division reps and the Federation leaders to announce that he will be in attendance with the hopes of bringing more people out in order to find out their interests. Once the schedule is finalized, he will e-mail it to the Council so you will know which meeting he is visiting in case council wanted to show up. In attending the meeting, the Director will give a presentation on the state of the agency, status of the budget, opportunities for funding or challenges the Division may have and a question and answer session.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE, 2017-18 GAME CODE AMENDMENTS

Chief Carole Stanko noted comments from the stakeholders' meeting were distributed to the Council independently of the original comments. There will be time allotted for a discussion of the comments. Chairman Burke noted there will be a discussion on the proposal, have public comment and vote at the end.

Chief Stanko reviewed each proposal, explaining the details of the proposed changes. After a discussion/question and answer amongst the Council, Chairman Burke opened the floor to the public giving each person three minutes.

Public Comment

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ commented that the proposal go far above what is allowed by statutes and feels the New Jersey public was not allowed to give input, only hunting clubs were allowed. She also stated she feels the proposal is vile and destructive to the environment. The New Jersey public has to have input on any regulations. She also feel untrained hunters are being released on to the woodlands of New Jersey that taxpayers are paying to save.

Janet Pizar, Chatam NJ, stated she finds it very ambiguous in addressing apprentice hunters without the benefit of a hunters safety program. Ms. Pizar question what is a unit? She stated it needs to be clearly defined as to what constitutes supervision of an apprentice hunter.

Bob Whildin, East Creek Gun Club in Zone 34. Mr. Whildin read two letters from club member as they were not able to attend. Mr. Camp states he has never seen as many older class bucks since the Antler Point Restriction (APR) has been instated and asked that FW would reconsider taking away the APR's from Zone 34. Mr. Al Lorenzo letter also asked not to remove the APR from the southern zones as he has seen a positive impact.

Dave Bachinsky Vineland, Cumberland County, addressed proposal 27 to remove Zones 30, 31 and 34 from APR. Mr. Bachinsky made reference to the 2010 survey report to instate the APR asking the Council not to vote take away the APR without surveying the hunters once again.

Ken Whildin, president, Cumberland County Federation. Mr. Whildin talked about the lack of transparency between the Federation, Council and Stakeholders. He also cited a report on the quality of Zone 34 soil as being prime farmland from the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Whildin also discussed problem of hunter retention and asked that the APR not be removed.

Chairman Burke read and clarified each proposal and asked for discussion and comments from the Council.

Councilman Link made a motion to use the alternate proposal to authorize Council to eliminate requirements for earn a buck during the early fall bow season provided certain criteria is met and changes recommended by the Director, proposal 34, second by Councilwoman Blumig; **Vote taken, seven (7) in favor one (1) opposed, motion carried.**

Councilman DeStephano stated Proposal 27 is given too much pushback by hunters in Zone 3. They are not happy and would like to keep the APR in place. The hunters are seeing bigger bucks and like it.

Councilman Link made a motion that Proposal 27 be removed from the next game code, seconded by Councilman DeStephano. A Vote taken, Four (5) in favor, two (2) opposed, one (1) abstention; motion carried.

Chairman Burke asked for a motion to go forward with the proposals, so moved by Councilman DeStephano, seconded by Councilman DeMartino Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE, 2016 PHEASANT AND QUAIL STOCKING SCHEDULE

Chief Dave Golden, Bureau of Land Management, presented the 2016 Pheasant and Quail Stocking Schedule. Chief Golden explained the process of having regional stakeholders meetings, making revisions in order to get what is being presented today as the model. He also explained how the Bureau arrived at the formula being used today. Chief Golden noted that this model will allow the Bureau to understand how to add additional birds to new areas.

Director Chanda commented this has been a long time coming. The Division experienced similar controversy with trout stocking, but once people saw how it worked, things calmed down. Some things considered was putting the birds out two weeks earlier ahead of small game in order to save cost on feed, generate interest prior to clubs hunting and with the limited staff, when to stock has been considered. Director Chanda commended the staff on the job that was done.

Chairman Burke opened the floor for public comment with 1 minute per person.

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ stated she is opposed to the entire process.

Chairman Burke asked for a motion. Councilman Brodhecker made a motion to approve the new formula, seconded by Councilman Van Mater. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions; motion carried.

Chairman Burke asked for a motion to approve the calendar of stocking. Councilman Van Mater made a motion to approve the calendar, seconded by Councilwoman Blumig. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions; motion carried.

REQUEST FOR LICENSE REINSTATEMENT

Chairman Burke reviewed the process of hearing of petition for early license restoration.

- Bureau of Law Enforcement representative will read the violation
- The person or their attorney may present the case or Council will proceed with the written record

- A motion will be made to open up a discussion
- Discussion
- Council will vote
- The Director will send a follow up letter on the Council's decision

Captain L. Anne Quirk called for Adam C. McGill who was not present nor was there a representative for him. Captain Quirk represented the Bureau of Law Enforcement in reading the violation reports and letters of request to reinstate for the record. The Council performed their duties as outlined above. Mr. McGill's license was reinstated.

Council took a short break before combining with Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee.

Chairman Burke noted Assistant Commissioner Boornazian was present and asked Council and Committee members to introduce themselves around the table.

Director Chanda gave an overview of his 11 years as Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife. He spoke of his challenges of starting with a budget in a deficit and bringing it up to a surplus. He gave the state of staffing in the Division with one of the biggest challenges being successional planning. Director Chanda noted that some top level employees will be leaving Marine Fisheries over the next 14 months with no one to take their place and Wildlife Management will have four retirees. This fiscal year should finish with a surplus unless funding changes come about that the Division is unaware of at this point. He further explained to the Council and Committee that the Division pays close to \$5 million for fringe benefits.

Director Chanda explained the Division does not have the ability to regulate fees like other agencies in the Department. Fish and Wildlife fees are governed by the legislature. As an example, he explained one way the Division would change fees if they had the ability to regulate. *During the pheasant hunting season, there would be a weekly fee which would give a break to the person who only wanted to hunt one day versus the person who wanted to hunt for the whole 16 day season.* Conversations have been had with the Sportsmen Federation and the Outdoor Alliance to consider discussing with our legislature the ability to pass a bill which puts the authority back in the hands of the Fish and Game Council.

Director Chanda discussed goals of hunter and angler recruitment, retention and reactivation. He welcomed the Council the opportunity to sit in on training for the National Action Plan once a date is set.

Director Chanda explained the efforts of the Blue Room Panel. The Panel is comprised of six Fish and Wildlife directors, which he is one of, whose job is to look at how can to move the Teaming with Wildlife Program to the next level. There are two nationally known co-chairs, John Morris, Bass Pro Owner and Dave Freudenthal, Former Governor of Wyoming. Other panel committees have now been formed to continue the work. They are Communications, led by nationally known John Doerr; Business Outreach led by Connie Parker; Agency Relevancy Transformation Group co-chaired by Dr. Steven Keller and Dr. Steve Williams. Several states have put resolutions out supporting the work of the Blue Room Panel.

Director Chanda passed around a document he created from the resolutions of support asking the Council and Committee to help create a joint resolution from the group in supporting the Blue Room Panel and getting the funding to be signed by the Chair of each group. Director Chanda opened the floor for a question and answer session.

Chairman Burke offered Assistant Commissioner Rich Boornazian the opportunity to address the joint meeting members. He stated he has an open door to those who would like to meet with him. He also thanked the Council and Committee for the work they are doing recognizing that it is not easy all the time.

Lunch 12:30 - 1:00

There was a discussion on the ENSAC perspective on trap checking in the proposed 2017-18 Game Code Amendments of the timeframe in which trappers must check their traps. After a brief discussion, it was decided to leave as is and ENSAC would monitor how the new rule is works.

Jane Morton-Galetto made a motion that the Fish and Game Council and the ENSAC jointly support the resolution for Blue Ribbon Panel and give the Chairs the ability to make minor changes on what Director Chanda drafted, the motion was seconded. A vote was taken and all were in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Chief David Golden gave a presentation on the status of the Wildlife Management Area Survey. The survey's goal is to assess the willingness of people who may not have purchased licensed to contribute for the use of WMAs. The current regulations states that we can charge up to \$2.00 per vehicle and \$10.00 per bus, but has not been implemented.

The Bureau has contracted with Stockton University to conduct the surveys. Surveyors are trained on how to complete the survey as well as approaching individuals on the WMA. In addition to person to person survey, self-addressed postcards have been developed to leave on the windows of cars that may be there earlier than the surveyor. The survey began in May 2016 and will end April 2017. Surveys are done in 4 hour shift in the morning, lunch or evening times. The goal is to have 1,800 surveys. To date Stockton has conducted 887 surveys. The Stockton members were introduced to everyone present. Chief Golden will make another presentation after the survey is complete.

Chief Golden, Sharon Petzinger from the Endangered and Non-game Species Program and Bill Zipse of the New Jersey Forest Service gave a joint presentation on 20-year trends in habitat change on Wildlife Management Areas throughout the state. Examples of how these trends are guiding the Division's habitat management priorities were discussed and specific projects on Sparta Mountain WMA and Whiting WMA were presented.

Chairman Burke stated there will be a joint public comment period. He also announced it would be difficult for the Fish and Game Council to meet in October due to members and staff being absent since the meeting coincides with the bear hunt week and asked for a motion to cancel the October meeting.

Councilman Link made a motion to cancel the October meeting, second by Councilman Van Mater. A vote was taken and all were in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT (3MINUTES)

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ commented money grubbing is going on taking open space that the public tried to save for the last 30 years. New Jersey has the highest taxes in the nation. She stated trees know where they need to live, wildlife knows where they need to live and the golden warbler. Ms. Sachau also stated New Jersey is the most congested state in the nation. If the public tries to save acreage for the wildlife to live on, it should be peaceful for them, not a place to go and kill them.

There were no other comments.

A motion was made and seconded by to adjourn the meeting. Vote taken; all in favor, none opposed – motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:04 pm.