

## December 9<sup>th</sup> Work Session –

The Manistee News Advocate took two extra days to publish a fairly one-sided view of the City Council Work Session, and completely ignored a significant issue raised during the session concerning Council Guidelines Policy. Both the issue of Deer Management within the City of Manistee and the Guideline Policy will be on the agenda for the regular City Council Session on December 15<sup>th</sup>. The agenda is attached as a PDF.

## Deer Management –

The Ad Hoc Committee on Deer management gave their report at the work session. It was a pretty comprehensive report, with the majority of committee members supporting action to reduce the number of deer in the City of Manistee. I have a printed copy if anyone would like to borrow it for review and will post a PDF on this site also.

My objection to the previous “Deer Cull” was the use of City of Manistee Police to reduce the number of deer in the City. Council (before my election) increased the tax millage to the maximum level allowed by law to hire an additional officer for a need to provide public safety and I did not feel the best use of that officer (and other officers) to shoot deer was the best use of officer time. It also place liability on the City of Manistee for the process. At the same time, I have the greatest respect and confidence in our professional Police Department and the service they provide to the community. I have had the pleasure of riding with our officers and observing their interaction with the public and contribution to public safety.

The committee identified a professional service that provides sound suppressed and mostly night time (night vision) management to communities throughout Michigan on an hourly basis. They are insured, have a near flawless safety record, and have been exceptionally effective with their service. I’ve recommended an allocation of up to \$5,000 for this service for the December 15<sup>th</sup> City Council Agenda.

The deer in the City are not considered a Public Safety or Public Health issue. It is an issue of ever increasing numbers, with abundant food sources (landscaping) and the safety of no hunting or natural predator pressure. City Council passed an ordinance to ban feeding – but this will take time and the willingness of neighbors to file complaints against offenders to have any effectiveness long term on the number of animals presently in the City. I’m sensitive to both sides of the issue – the expense of replacing landscaping, deer droppings in private and public areas, and the belief that Lyme disease is spread by the deer due the Black Leg ticks that hosts on the deer (and other animals). The deer numbers need to be reduced and it can be done safely. It is not a “one time” event and will require monitoring and future action to be effective.

## Council Guidelines Policy –

This subject was completely unreported by the MNA from the work session. A lengthy discussion took place about Standing Committees appointed by the Mayor and their activities. The Audit Committee for the past year consisted of Mayor Kenney and Councilmen Goodspeed and Cote. This committee is responsible for review of City expenses (refer to the posted Guidelines). Mayor Kenney was asked if the committee had information on City expenses that was not provided to other councilmembers and stated they did not – this was refuted by the City Clerk, who indicated the committee members received a greater level of detail than other councilmembers. The Audit Committee did not meet during the past

year to discharge their duties as outlined in the Council Guidelines Policy. The committee chair is required to provide public notice of the date, location, and time of the meetings so other council members, staff, and citizens can be present and observe the process. Minutes are to be taken and made available. **No meetings and no minutes for the past year.**

Various committee and commission vacancies (long term) were discussed – as well as possible function consolidations to fill seats. The Mayor was concerned about councilmembers applying for and serving on various committees and commissions – and taking away from citizen opportunities. Most of council felt vacancies should be filled and that councilmembers (also citizens) could be effective committee members and fill vacancies that were difficult to fill with our general population. This will be discussed further in the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Meet and Greet –

Discussion took place about possible periodic “meet and greet” events where all commission and committee functions could be present to promote their functions to attract interest. Council members could also be present to interact with citizens. There was concern about how the rent and refreshments would be paid for (not budgeted). I’d be more than willing to contribute to the expense so it would not be taxpayer funded and feel it would be quite beneficial to the community.

As always – thank you for your continued comments and expressing your concerns about the operation of the City. Jim