



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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Attachments: 1. Esquimalt Deer Survey 2017 Report

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REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

DATE: February 14, 2018 Report No. CSS-18-003
TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: Blair McDonald, Director, Community Safety Services

SUBJECT:
Deer Count Results and Deer Management

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

After reviewing the Deer Count Report, does Council wish to see any further steps taken in relation to Deer Management?

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee of the Whole receive Staff Report No. CSS-18-003 for information.

BACKGROUND:

At the February 10th, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council considered the topic of Deer Management in Esquimalt and directed staff to work with the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society (UWSS) to conduct a random survey of Township residents to determine their attitudes relating to Urban Deer. A consultant, Brian Nyberg of Nyberg Wildland Consulting was contracted to develop and conduct the Survey. The Survey was carried out in the fall of 2016.

As a result of the information contained within the Deer Survey, Council directed staff to embark on a public education strategy and also to have a deer count conducted for the Township, and if possible

to conduct the count in conjunction with deer counts being undertaken by DND.

In the fall of 2017, a deer count was conducted within the Township by Megan Sakuma at the same time as a separate count occurred on DND lands. The resulting Deer Count Report for the Township of Esquimalt is attached (Attachment #1).

DND has conducted deer counts for the past three years. DND is currently studying the possibility of managing deer population through a contraception program. Township staff have been working closely with DND on the deer management issue and have discussed the possibility of working with DND should they decide to conduct any contraception research. At this point, DND has not decided which direction they will be going in relation to managing their deer population.

ISSUES:

At present, staff is continuing with Public Education and is planning to have another deer count conducted in the fall of 2018. Annual Deer Counts are necessary to determine any trends in the deer population and are essential to informing any decisions relating to a deer management strategy. Best practice would suggest that a minimum of three years of deer counts be conducted to determine trends and help to determine if a reduction strategy is required. Should a deer reduction strategy be implemented, annual deer counts would be essential in determining the efficacy of that strategy.

As DND considers the potential use of contraception to manage their deer population, Council should consider whether they wish staff to enter into discussions with DND to participate in any deer control program they may choose to implement.

Urban Deer are a polarizing issue. As demonstrated by the previously conducted Deer Survey, there are many people in favour of a deer reduction strategy, and many people who favour leaving the deer population to manage itself naturally.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That the Committee of the Whole receive Staff Report No. CSS-18-003 for information.
2. That the COTW provide additional direction to staff.
3. That the COTW request further information from staff.