DEER UPDATE

Info session on Yarmouth's deer population set

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A trio of deer in the Town of Yarmouth. **ZELAINA STRUG-ZELMER PHOTO**

Acknowledging there is strong public opinion on both sides of the issue, the Town of Yarmouth's Deer Management Working Group and DNRR are hosting a Nov. 21 public information session to share info and answer questions about the town's deer population and what to do about it.

"Members of the group, including representatives from the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR), will be in attendance to offer a variety of helpful information, and answer questions you may have," reads a town description about the session that will be held at the town hall from 5-7 p.m.

Information provided will include:

- deer management options
- information on deer resistance plants and other deterrent methods
- deer-vehicle collision statistics
- deer pellet group inventory and hunting statistics
- a map of the deer management area
- an update on work and progress made by the working group

The town says the session will not be a structured sit-down meeting with formal presentations. Instead, there will be a variety of 'booths' set up that people can visit on different topics.

A similar-type format was used in Truro, when that town was also sharing information with the public about its deer population issue.

The Town of Yarmouth says summary results from a survey conducted in the spring will also be made available at the session. Some of those survey questions included:

- Have you seen deer on your property and if so, how often?
- How many deer would you typically see on your property at a given time?
- Do you feel that the deer population is an issue requiring management from the town?

Town councillor Gil Dares, who chairs the working group, told council earlier this year one evening while driving around and saw deer in 22 locations within the town.

For countless years the town has talked about the deer population. Now it is exploring how to manage the population. No final decisions have been made. The working group's work continues.

The deer population has led to concerns including the destruction of gardens and landscaping, the potential for vehicular accidents, and the introduction of ticks and disease.

Still, while deer can be a nuisance and/or the cause of problems, not everyone objects to their presence in the town and want them left alone.

The town's working group is looking at all sides in the hopes of finding short and long-term solutions. The group is made up of two councillors, three members of the public, DNRR representatives, and town staff.

"We were aware at the outset that this was not an issue that would be resolved overnight. It evokes a lot of emotion on both sides, with many citizens not in favour of any reduction strategy, while others want immediate results," says Dares.

In Truro, there have been controlled deer culls. During the first managed hunt, 14 deer were harvested. In the second managed hunt, 39 deer were culled. The deer meat was donated to Feed Nova Scotia and also the Millbrook First Nation.

NO PLAN YET

What will take place in Yarmouth is yet to be determined.

"Any interaction with the animals must be sanctioned by the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables and we are in the process of collecting the necessary data," says Dares. "The pellet group inventory is part of that process and can only be done in the spring."

Asked about feedback he's heard from residents, Dares says, "There are strong opinions on both sides of the issue."

"I fully understand the frustration that gardeners are voicing. I also recognize that for others the deer are nothing more than a beautiful part of nature and should be left alone. We are hoping to be able to recommend to council the most appropriate action," he says.

"I do need to mention and offer our sincere gratitude on behalf of the town for the support that we have received from DNRR and the many hours that our volunteer committee members have dedicated in seeking a solution."

In January 2022, the town adopted a Feeding Wild Animals Bylaw, prohibiting people from feeding deer, raccoons or other wild animals in the town that "causes or may cause an unreasonable interference with another person's use and enjoyment of his or her property, or of a public place."

There is concern that by purposely feeding the deer they'll never leave. Any person contravening the bylaw could face a fine of up to $1,000.

Even so, the deer are eating anyway.

"One of the most common complaints is in regards to the destruction of gardens," says Dares.

"A list that we were provided some time ago may not be as accurate as we hoped. It seems deer don't eat certain plants until they do," he says. "We recently purchased a tree from a garden outlet with the assurance that deer won't touch it. Two days after planting it there was not a single leaf left."

Yarmouth
ON THE EDGE OF EVERYWHERE
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PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

The Town's **Deer Management Working Group** is hosting a public information session on Tuesday, November 21st. Members of the group, including representatives from the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR), will be in attendance to offer a variety of helpful information, and answer questions you may have around the deer population issue within the Town of Yarmouth. Information presented will include:

• Deer management options • Information on deer resistant plants and other deterrent methods • Deer vehicle collision statistics
• Deer pellet group inventory (PGI) and hunting statistics
• Map of the deer management area • An update on work and progress made by the working group

Please Join Us!
WHEN: Tuesday, November 21st, 5 - 7 pm
WHERE: Yarmouth Town Hall, 400 Main Street
WHO: Deer Management Working Group & DNRR

townofyarmouth.ca

Wendy's
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