

**TOWN OF CENTRAL  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
MONDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2009 7:00 PM  
1067 WEST MAIN STREET, CENTRAL, SC 29630**

Present: Mayor Mac Martin; Council Members Tony Craig, David Donald, Harry Holladay, and Gary White, Administrator Phillip Mishoe; Phil Merck, Frank Dyar, Dean Finley, Benji Cumbie, Frances Chamberlain, Bertha Phillips, Paige Bowers, Police Chief Kerry Avery, Fire Chief Edward Reynolds, Amy Buckman, Alex Buckman, Terry Cregar, Vandy Patterson, James Tobul, and Deputy Town Clerk Susan Brewer.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mac Martin.

The invocation was given at the beginning of Public Hearing by Gary White.

1. PUBLIC HEARING:

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss the problem of deer population. This was brought to the Council last month and became a very popular subject. Tom Swayngahm from the Department of Natural Resources came to discuss options of how to control the problem.

A. Tom Swayngahm - DNR

Mr. Swayngahm stated that it is not an uncommon problem.

The first thing he wanted us to be aware of is when deer are healthy they are at a high reproductive rate. Second they are vegetable eaters. They only eat plants and really like fertilized plants. The only way to take care of the problem is to lower the population of the deer. Mr. Swayngahm said to trap and release the deer to a different location is not an option because no one wants to take the deer. It also is very expensive and is not as humane as people believe it would be. The only way to take care of it is to have public hunting. It can be done safely in some rural areas but when you get around people the safety issue rises. Mr. Swayngahm said as long as the people hunting knew what they were doing and not in close proximity of housing it could be very safe. Public hunting is free and does not cost the town any money. If property owners with large areas of land could open their private property and allow hunters to come in to hunt, it would help with reducing the population of the deer. Property owners could charge for individuals to hunt their property and make a little money too. Mr. Swayngahm recommends property owners to allow their property to be opened up for deer hunting. The property owners that do not have large lots of property can use deer repellent, electric fencing or regular fencing. This will only work if the deer are not very hungry. In the case where the deer are extremely hungry nothing will stop them except for a 10 foot fence. If the problem is not addressed it will get worse. Mayor Martin asked if feeding the deer on private property would help the situation. Mr. Swayngahm said that it would only make matters worse. If we were feeding the animals and not lowering the population it was going making the deer healthier and they would reproduce more. He said that the only way to solve the problem is to lower the population. Feeding the deer is just going to make the problem worse on down the road. The only economical way to solve the problem is to lethally remove the deer. The Administrator, Phillip Mishoe wanted to know an estimate of how many deer would be on a thousand acre lot. Mr. Swayngahm said that approximately one deer per twenty five acres. He said that at least forty percent of those need to be removed every year. Mr. Holladay asks when the deer season was. Mr. Swayngahm said deer season was from October 1 until January 1 for gun season. Changing the hunting dates is not the problem; the problem is the unavailability to hunt the property. Mayor Mac Martin asks if it was an option to hunt in the town. Mr. Swayngahm said that it is according to how populated the town limits are. If there are large lots or forestry it would definitely be beneficial. Close houses is not a safe option for gun hunting. Archery may be an option but still can be dangerous. Mr. Swayngahm does not recommend gun hunting

inside city limits. He said that cross bow hunting could be safe on 5 to 10 acres but not on residential lots of one half to one acre.

- B. Vandy Patterson- 143 Sourwood Drive  
Vandy Patterson was there to represent Lewis Patterson that owns a thousand acres. He is open to food plots on his property and has a hunt club there now with limited amount of hunters to hunt. There are no food plots on the property now but is interested in possible doing that and wants to know if there is any type of funding from the city help with that.
- C. Dean Finley - 616 Brock street  
He stated he had six deer in his yard tonight. He said that is not a problem for him. He enjoys watching them. He is aware that they will eat his flowers and they will eat his garden but he had learned to fix a fence around it and use deer repellent. He stated he has learned to habitat with the deer nicely. Mr. Finley said that he had a church breakfast of 20 men. They were very upset thinking bow hunting was going to be opened up in city limits of Central. He said that the people in this group think it is not something that should be even opened up for discussion. Mr. Finley said several years back a neighbor shot a deer out of his yard and left it in the ditch. He stated that everyone that he has talked to in the town is against bow hunting in city limits. They are aware there is a problem. We need to learn to live with them. We have been living with them for hundreds of years.
- D. Phillip Merck – 494 Maw Bridge Road  
He stated that he did not have property inside city limits but he had 17 acres that joined the city limits. The last meeting channel 7 news was talking about Central being invaded by deer. The families of deer reported moving through Central consuming everything in front of them. He said he is around every street in Central every day. He said he may see a deer occasionally. One gets run over occasionally but he felt that it was due to speeding and not paying attention. People should be aware of their locations and watch for deer. He felt the news did not help with the problem. He stated that people protect their house and cars by locking the doors. He thinks that if you have nice flowers beds and personal property in the yard you might could put a little something around that to protect it the same way you do a house or car. Deer travel to different locations. The same deer seen at one location may be the same ones seen at another place.
- E. Frank Dyar- 224 Maw Bridge Rd  
He stated he puts up an electric fence around his garden and it keeps all the deer out. He is concerned with the safety of the kids in the neighborhood catching the bus in the morning. His main concern is the children in the neighborhood.
- F. Frances Chamberlain - 408 Gassaway Street  
She has been living in Central since March of 1995. She does have deer crossing her property. The deer do eat her flowers and even ate her geraniums, the year of the drought. She said she is aware of the the population can get out of hand. Deer do carry diseases and ticks. She does not want to endanger any of the neighborhood's safety. She doesn't feel there is any safe way to hunt the deer in the neighborhoods. The deer taunt her dogs that she has on a leader. She says she would really like to address the squirrel population rather than the deer. Her main concern is the safety of citizens.
- G. Bertha Phillips - 337 Gassaway Street  
She stated that she was the one who spoke last week and saw 13 deer cross the road near her driveway. She stated that she had researched and several small towns with the same problem that allowed bow hunting. The issue is controlling the deer. It seems like it has got to be the big issue is bow hunting. She said

she had done further studies and did present the information to the Administrator. Ms. Phillips said she thought deer were beautiful but they are a wild animal. Ms. Phillips said she wasn't aware that news 7 was going to show up in her yard. She said she did talk with them. She said their interest seemed to be her flowers but that is not the issue. Controlling the deer is the issue. She said that with deer crossing Highway 93 there was going to be problems. She felt we needed a way to control the deer population without anyone getting hurt.

H. Tom Swayngahm.

He stated that if anyone needs help controlling hunters on personal property to call. He stated they couldn't catch everyone but they would do what they could. They would help with advice as much as they could. It will primarily be left up to the people of Central. His recommendation is to increase the deer hunting around the town outside of city limits the problem will solve itself.

Mayor stated that maybe they could talk to land owners outside of city limits and impress them to allow hunting. The town can not regulate outside city limits. Phillip Merck returned with the question of "What is a professional hunter?" He said that if you turn it over to professional hunters everybody will turn into a professional hunter. Mayor said that it was people that are hired by companies that have special equipment. Phillip Merck stated that he thought by allowing hunting inside city limits is going to create a worse problem than the deer. Mayor had the item added to the work session for next month. Ms. Phillips asked about catching them and moving them to a reserve. Mr. Mishoe said that he had never heard of that working. He said that capture and releasing is not a viable option. Mr. Mishoe said he tries not to get involved in these things because he is the administrator but he wanted to ask if you eliminate the deer that are taking the same path daily, would that help the problem. Mr. Swayngahm said that would help the problem. Mr. Finley said they were his deer. They were coming from his property over to Gassaway. He knows the same ones come to his house daily. Mr. Swayngahm said it would help temporarily time but as long as there is a food source the deer will show up again. Mr. Swayngahm said to solve the problem would be to lower the deer population.

Chair, Mayor Martin called for adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan A. Brewer  
Deputy Town Clerk

Approved by Council: 11/09/2009