

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
April 12, 2011

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:09 pm by Acting Chairman Burke.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

The following was read aloud by Acting Chairman Burke: 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 and send to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on March 17, 2011.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman Dave Burke
Councilman Phillip Brodhecker
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman Jeffrey Link
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Robert Puskas

Division employees included Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Lisa Barno, Mark Chicketano, Tony Petrongolo, Ted Nichols, Carole Kandoth, Jodi Powers and Joe Leskie.

Members of the public included representatives of the Farm Bureau, the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and others.

Minutes of the March 8, 2011 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll seconded by Councilman Van Mater to approve the minutes.** One date change was noted by Councilman Messeroll, and **a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed to approve the minutes as corrected.**

Noting a full agenda for today, Acting Chairman Burke advised that there might be a change in order on the agenda.

Acting Chairman Burke noted an article in the NRA magazine *American Hunter* which had incorrect information on the 150' safety zone bill. He sent a letter to them with the correct information, and his letter has been published.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that a girl from New Jersey was now the Junior Girls Record holder for striped bass.

Also noted was that the July 20 Joint Council Meeting will be replacing the regularly scheduled July meeting, and would be discussed again under new business.

(Councilman Brodhecker arrived at 1:14 pm)

Director Chanda addressed the Council. He advised that he would be leaving to meet with the Commissioner on marine fisheries, staffing and financial issues this afternoon.

Director Chanda commented on the opening day of trout season and the Pequest Open House. Several thousand visitors attended the Open House, including the Lieutenant Governor who presented the awards to the essay contest winners.

Council members were reminded of the chick hatches that will be starting at the Rockport Game Farm in the next several weeks for those who wished to attend.

Acting Chairman Burke opened the public comment period on the two listed agenda items, review of the results of the 2010 deer season and review and vote on proposed amendments to the 2012 / 2013 Fish Code. There were no requests to make public comment.

Committee reports began. Councilman Brodhecker reported for the Agriculture Committee. He noted that poultry, livestock and bee keepers are all reporting issues with black bears. He has asked them to call when an incident is occurring, noting that he has been told by some of the callers that Fish and Wildlife would not do anything unless they had fencing in place. After some additional discussion on the situation, Assistant Director Herrighty advised that bears breaking into chicken coops would be considered as Category One and a live trap would be offered to the caller. Director Chanda also noted that callers may not be speaking directly to staff, due calls going through the Trenton dispatch office.

Councilman Link reported that he had attended the South Jersey Agriculture Caucus in Mays Landing where the State Board of Agriculture spoke about a Federal program for geese control. This matter was further discussed, and Assistant Director Herrighty noted that information was available on the Division's website, and explained that by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the Department of Agriculture was handling these calls for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Councilman Messeroll and Farm Bureau Representative Thompson had further information, and there was some additional discussion on this program.

Councilman Link also attended the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture meeting this past month.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. Preparations are being made for their Convention. Various trap shoots and fishing events are also being scheduled. It was noted that the Union County Federation continues to grow, with 22 participants attending last month's meeting. There was also discussion on the possibility of a Cape May chapter being formed.

Councilman Gudmundsson attended the Morris County venison dinner, and noted the large turnout of people at their event. Acting Chairman Burke added that Atlantic and Camden Counties also hold dinners.

Acting Chairman Burke reported that the Finance Committee would be meeting in May, and there was no report today.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Fisheries Committee, who had met this morning to discuss the Fish Code and public proposals for changes.

Acting Chairman Burke reported that the Game Committee has not met, and there was no report today.

Councilman Messeroll asked Legislative Liaison Nelson to brief the Council on Legislative activity. She noted that there were no new bills to report. Senate bill S 221, which addresses pots off the artificial reefs has passed the Senate and needs to be heard by the Assembly.

There was no report for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Advisory Committee.

Councilman Messeroll reported that the Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee would be meeting this evening. Agenda items included discussion on the purchase of two pieces of property.

Division reports began. Principal Biologist Nichols was in attendance to review the suggestions for changes to the migratory bird season hunting dates, noting that a vote would be asked for at a later meeting. Assistant Director Herrightly added that Council's recommendations go to the Fish and Wildlife Service to be published in the Federal Register for public comment, and are not part of the Game Code process. A handout was given to the Council, and reviewed by Principal Biologist Nichols during a power point presentation.

Next to address the Council was Chief Barno from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries to review and ask for a vote on proposal changes to the 2012-2013 Fish Code. Information had been sent to members of the Council in advance of today's meeting, and was reviewed for them today. Topics included new additions to trout stocked waters, deletions of trout stocked waters, changes for size limit and possession limit for trout taken at the Round Valley Reservoir, and administrative change to replace the term foul hooking with snagging, making Alloway Lake in Salem County a catch and release only area, increasing the rod limit on the Delaware River to be consistent with Pennsylvania's regulation, specific information regarding bow fishing on the Delaware River, as well as several other topics. Other public requests that the Committee did not recommend on were also reviewed. One proposal, made by Trout Unlimited, with regard to making a Trout Conservation Area (TCA) on the Flatbrook was recommended to be tabled for

now by the Committee. Councilman Messeroll advised that the Committee recommends accepting these proposals, and table the item for the Flatbrook TCA as noted. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to accept these tentative Fish Code adoption changes as noted. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Chief Barno gave a brief report on the Bureau's monthly activities. Approval was received to fill five full-time vacant positions, four at the Hackettstown Hatchery and one night watchman position at the Pequest Trout Hatchery. The positions were filled from the existing pool of seasonal employees, who started their full time positions yesterday.

The opening day of trout season had good weather, but fishing was slow. Angler counts were conducted on 30 water bodies, and final numbers are still coming in.

Councilman Messeroll thanked Chief Barno and her staff for their work on the Fish Code. It was noted that they are aiming for an August publication in the Register, followed by a public hearing, final vote, and hope to have the completed document through the system near the end of December.

The Bureau of Wildlife Management was next to present the 2010 Deer Harvest Summary. Information was distributed to each of the members, and reviewed by Supervising Biologist Kandoth in a power point presentation. The overall harvest was up by 5%. Some of the information reviewed included the growing popularity of bow hunting, the increase in Sunday hunting activity, and review of each of the seasons and harvest totals by weapon type.

Also noted by the Bureau of Wildlife Management was that the Game Code amendment proposals are to be published in the May 2, 2011 Register, followed by the public hearing on May 17, 2011. The final vote for the Council on the Game Code will be on July 20, 2011 prior to the Joint Meeting of all the Council's at the Eco Center.

Chief Petrongolo from the Bureau of Land Management was next to report. He noted a Green Acres event for next Monday at the former Princeton Nurseries property. This is a joint acquisition between Green Acres and the Department of Agriculture, and accounts for approximately 1,500 acres of property. He added that the Fish and Wildlife portion of this acquisition will be a nice addition to the wildlife management area system.

Work continues on the Memorandum of Agreement for the forest stewardship program in the Pinelands.

The demolition project at the Ponder Lodge property is moving along faster than anticipated, and Chief Petrongolo gave an update of the work in progress.

Chief Petrongolo reported that an abandoned cabin on the Cohansey River WMA was destroyed by fire. This structure had been previously listed on the Division's demolition list.

A golf course near the Cohansey River WMA has recently been listed for sale, and Green Acres is looking into this property as a possible acquisition. Restoration work also has been done at an old golf course on the Thundergut Pond WMA near Alloway, and Chief Petrongolo gave a brief review of this project.

Acting Chairman Burke asked Chief Petrongolo for an update on boat ramp accesses. The Oyster Creek WMA ramp, done in cooperation with Ocean Township, is operating. Chief Petrongolo noted what a nice facility it is. He added that the Hansey Creek WMA ramp is also a very nice facility. The Salem Canal WMA access was discussed, and Chief Petrongolo noted staff are working with Dupont to acquire a small parcel of land to complete the project. A new project at the Split Rock Reservoir was also noted.

Acting Chief Chicketano reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He gave a brief review of some of the Bureau's highlights from this past month. Acting Chief Chicketano also updated the Council on the case he mentioned last month involving a deli in Rahway.

Assistant Director Herrighty requested members of the Game Committee to stay for a brief meeting at the end of today's meeting.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that some of the regular Council meetings may be able to be eliminated if there was no pressing business. The May 10, 2011 meeting will involve a vote on the proposed waterfowl season dates, and will stay as scheduled. The Finance Committee will meet prior to the May meeting as well.

At this time, the public comment period was opened. Janet Pizar from Essex County addressed the Council. She asked why the Law Enforcement violation information was not carried in the media so that the public could assist with reporting violations, and felt that there was not enough media involvement. She also commented on past information given on Community Based Deer Management permits and what is required by applicants. Ms. Pizar also expressed her thoughts on the use of Gonacon for those municipalities that wished to use it, farmers with bear problems and the black bear feeding ban law.

Councilman Gudmundsson noted that he had read about the Law Enforcement report on the case in Rahway as reported last month in three different newspapers. Assistant Director Herrighty advised that the Deputy Attorney General's Office has recommending not publishing violations until the case is judicated, and while some papers may pick up on stories that happen locally, Department press releases are generally not done for Fish & Wildlife. There was some additional discussion on this, and a member of the audience (Billy Cooper) noted Ms. Pizar's comments, adding that each local municipality could release the police blotter items that happen in their town.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that sometimes when questions that come up during the public comment period they may be able to be answered at the next meeting. With no other business today, **a motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Link to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor.** Meeting adjourned at 3:28 pm.