

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
November 19, 2013

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:13 a.m. by Acting Chairman Burke.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Acting Chairman Burke read aloud the following notice: 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 delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on October 18, 2013.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman Dave Burke
Councilwoman Blumig
Councilman Brodhecker (arrived at 10:24 a.m.)
Councilwoman Brummer
Councilman DeMartino
Councilman Gudmundsson
Councilman Link
Councilman Puskas

Absent: Councilman Van Mater

Division employees included Director Chanda, Assistant Director Herrightly, L. Barno, M. Chicketano, T. Petrongolo, D. Golden and A. Paul.

There were several members of the public in attendance.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that several members of the Council needed to leave early today, and that the review and vote on the amendments to the Fish Code would be done early in the meeting.

Roll call was taken.

Minutes of the October 8, 2013 meeting were reviewed. One minor change was noted, and **a motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Puskas to approve the minutes as corrected. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed, and one abstention from Councilwoman Brummer.**

Acting Chairman Burke commented that hunters were enjoying the recent weather and various hunting opportunities. He noted that the Youth Deer Hunt would be occurring this coming Saturday.

Director Chanda addressed the Council, announcing the appointment of D. Golden as Chief of the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He briefly reviewed the timeline of Chief Golden's work experience within the Division.

Yesterday, Director Chanda attended the Farm Bureau meeting, and spoke on various Division programs that would be of interest to them. He added that Commissioner Martin was the keynote speaker.

Director Chanda recently attended a meeting of the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Directors. He commented on the program where all Northeast states have pooled 3% of their state wildlife grant monies, and that this has worked well and allowed for some good projects. Directors from the Southeast Region are contemplating using this type of program as well. Director Chanda also noted that this type of program may allow for better dispersal of Federal funds if Congress can be convinced to allocate monies on a regional rather than national basis.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies held their Fall meeting. Issues discussed included the re-authorization of the Farm Bill and moving the state wildlife grants from a Congressional appropriation to a more stabilized funding source.

Acting Chairman Burke opened the public comment period regarding the proposed amendments to the Fish Code.

Barbara Sauchau addressed the Council. She stated that she is opposed to the Fish Code, and shared additional comments on items she would like to see included in the Code.

There were no other commenters.

Council reports began. Councilman Puskas reported for the Agriculture Committee, noting that the Fall harvest is almost done and Winter wheat is being planted. Canada geese continue to be a cause of concern to the farmers in his area.

Councilman Puskas commented on deer hunting in areas where there was an unlimited bag limit, and the mandatory requirements for checking in deer. He noted that there are missed opportunities when a bow hunter has multiple deer come in at a time, but mandatory harvest check in prohibits the amount of deer one can take at one time depending on the season. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that the phone in system would allow you to check deer in without coming out of the woods, but Councilman Puskas noted this still prohibits harvesting multiple deer if there is a limit on how many can be taken at once. It was noted that this matter can be considered further by the Game Committee.

(Councilman Brodhecker arrived at 10:24 a.m.)

Councilman Puskas also commented on the use of night vision, and added that this also needs to be talked about.

Lastly, Councilman Puskas commended Conservation Officer Martiak, who came across a stolen tractor while investigating a tip he received regarding illegal trapping. Councilman Puskas reviewed the situation, and noted that Officer Martiak went above and beyond the call of duty regarding this matter.

Councilman Brodhecker noted bear activity in the Branchville area, where they had caused problems for residents who had chickens and for another with a rabbit. A trap had been set, but the sow and her cubs had only been on top of and not in the trap.

Councilman Link noted an exceptional harvest season for crops in his area, but added that the nursery industry has been watering their plant material because it has been so dry. He noted information from the Farm Bureau meeting regarding crop fund predictions. Councilman Link also noted that coyotes continue to be active in his area.

Acting Chairman Burke noted he has been hearing comments on the feral pigs again. Councilman Link has heard this mentioned, but was not sure if it was becoming a problem.

Councilman DeMartino reported for the Federation. He noted that the Mercer County Federation is sponsoring a bus trip to the outdoor show in Harrisburg. He also commented on a recent meeting of the New Jersey Waterfowlers, who will be sending a letter of support for the purchase of the Holly Farm property to the Commissioner.

Councilwoman Blumig noted that representatives from the White House were at the Wyckoff Christmas Tree farm regarding the tree that will be sent there this year.

Councilwoman Blumig attended the State Federation meeting last Friday, where they discussed the Convention scheduled for June, 2014. She also noted the Federation was pleased for Chief Golden in his new assignment, but will miss his working with the Bureau of Land Management.

Councilman Gudmundsson commented on concerns that were raised regarding the water levels on the rivers. Also, the National representative for the Wounded Warrior Program recently attended the Trout Unlimited state meeting. Councilman Gudmundsson shared additional comments on the Coordinator's visit to New Jersey, including fishing at the Ken Lockwood Gorge.

Acting Chairman Burke attended the Atlantic County meeting. He noted that they are involved with the deer hunt at the Pomona Technical Center.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Finance Committee, noting that they had met earlier today. The budget situation for the Division is tight, with additional funds going to cover the cost of fringe benefits. Director Chanda is working on receiving some relief for these costs.

There was no report from the Game Committee, but it was noted that they should plan to meet in January. A date will be selected later today.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Legislative Committee. Two new bills on were noted on the handout prepared by Assistant Director Nelson.

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| S 2369 | Prohibits feeding of black bears and requires use of bear-resistant containers, dumpsters, or food boxes in certain areas located in bear habitat and under certain circumstances, including garbage collection. |
| S 3049 | Prohibits sale and possession of shark fins; and allows in NJ the Processing or sale of wild striped bass caught outside of N.J. |

Councilwoman Brummer reported for the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee. They will be meeting again tomorrow and topics on their agenda include work on Delphi process for reptiles and amphibians, as well as lepidoptera. They will also be reviewing the proposed Federal species listing of the red knot.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee. They last met in October, but there were no properties to discuss. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 14, 2014.

Councilman Brodhecker reported for the Wildlife Rehabilitator's Advisory Committee, who last met in October. The Committee worked on classifications for permits, and also are working to make the applications and permits more simplified and the forms more standardized.

Updates on training classes for rehabilitators regarding wildlife transport were given.

Information letters to veterinarians on the holding and treatment of wildlife were updated.

The next meeting of the Wildlife Rehabilitator's Advisory Committee is scheduled for February 26, 2014.

Chief Barno from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries addressed the Council to review the comments received on the proposed amendments to the Fish Code. A total of 549 were received, most of which were regarding the Ken Lockwood Gorge and the Flatbrook. Chief Barno briefed the Council on the comments that were received and a handout of this information was distributed. Each proposed amendment change was then reviewed and voted on, as listed below:

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Proposal</u> |
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| Big Flat Brook | Catch and release only, artificial lures and flies only |
| A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman DeMartino to approve this proposal. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed. | |
| Ken Lockwood Gorge | Catch and release only |
| A motion was made by Councilman Brodhecker, seconded by Councilwoman Blumig to approve this proposal. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed. | |
| Lake Audrey | Trophy Bass Regulations |
| A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to remove this proposal. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed. | |
| Trout Stocking Locations | Various areas and proposals |
| A motion was made by Councilman Brodhecker, seconded by Councilman Puskas to approve the proposals for these trout stocking locations as listed. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed. | |

A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Puskas to approve this proposal. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed, and two abstentions from Councilmen DeMartino and Link.

(there was additional discussion after this vote resulting in the suggestion that the Acting Chairman send a letter to the Marine Fisheries Council Chairman on this matter, which he will do)

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| Landlocked Creel | Increase |
| Migratory River Herring | Closure |
| American shad | Closure |
| Ice Fishing | Regulation |

A motion was made to accept these changes, as well as a general acceptance of the Fish Code by Councilman Gudmundsson, and seconded by Councilman Puskas. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.

Chief Barno next gave the monthly report for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. She updated the Council on the Furunculosis problems at the Pequest Hatchery, and suggested that the Freshwater Fisheries Committee schedule a meeting in January to discuss this matter and how it may affect trout stocking in the future. The Committee will meet on January 14, 2014 at 11 a.m., before the regular Fish and Game Council meeting at 1 p.m.

A Fisheries Forum will be held on December 7, 2013 at the Hackettstown Hatchery. Pathologist J. Lovy will be presenting information on fish health at that time. Chief Barno commented that staff are considering combining the December forum and February trout meeting into one session for 2015.

Chief Barno noted that Winter trout stocking will start next week.

The nets were put out at the Round Valley Reservoir for lake trout collection. Chief Barno noted that a white sucker weighing 6.72 pounds was caught there last week, and described this if an IFA world record. The fish was released back into the reservoir.

The gates at Lake Hopatcong will be closed on December 1 instead of December 15, due to concerns on the refill of the lake. There was additional discussion on this matter, and Chief Barno also suggested to the residents there that a trout task force meeting be considered. There was additional discussion on this and other areas that do drawdowns of water levels.

Principal Biologist Ivany reported for the Office of Information and Education. The Hunter Education Unit continues to see an increase in the amount of students taking various courses. Last year participation dropped after Hurricane Sandy, but now classes seeing a 100% plus show rate of scheduled and walk-in students.

After Hurricane Sandy, no overnight programs were able to be held at the Sedge Island WMA Education Facility. With assistance from the Offices of Resource Development and Land Management, the power systems are back on and they hope to go back to a normal schedule next Spring.

Events at Pequest are winding down for the season. Principal Biologist Ivany noted that schools are experiencing difficulty in providing transportation due to budget limitations. He added that after the 2014 Open House, the Pequest facility will be opening on weekends through October.

The Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) program is still coming together, and Senior Public Information Assistant L. Jackson has been purchasing needed equipment. Additional information on ideas for continued support of this program in the future was also noted.

Preparations are being made for the Winter outdoor sports shows. The Garden State Outdoor Sports Show and White-tailed Deer Classic are scheduled for January 9th through 12, 2014, and the Suffern New York show will be in February.

Results of the license packing survey are in, and are currently being reviewed by staff.

Director Chanda noted that he may have an update on the Pequest Education Building and the archery park for the Council at the meeting in January.

Director Chanda also commented that staff from the Bureau of Information and Education had a display at the Farm Bureau meeting.

With several members needing to leave early today, Acting Chairman Burke noted a change in agenda to discuss the need for a December meeting. Assistant Director Herrightly advised that there were a few Community Based Deer Management Permits to review, but those could wait until the January meeting. With no other pressing business, Acting Chairman Burke recommended that the meeting be cancelled. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to cancel the December 10, 2013 Fish and Game Council meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He, along with Southern Region Superintendent (now Bureau Chief) D. Golden and Federation Representative F. Virgilio met with a representative of the National Rifle Association this past weekend to review some of the shooting ranges on various WMAs in the Southern Region. They met again on Monday with Central Region Superintendent R. Porutski at the Stafford Forge WMA. Possible range improvements were discussed.

Chief Petrongolo reported that the boat ramp project at the Split Rock Reservoir is on hold indefinitely due to reported historic issues. The Division is hoping to acquire additional property at this area, as agreed upon previously with Jersey City, by the end of the calendar year.

Yesterday, Chief Petrongolo toured the Great Bay Boulevard WMA access. He reviewed the completed rehabilitation work to the boat ramp and shoreline fishing/crabbing access at the former Draper's Marina on Seven Bridges Road.

The boat ramp project at Reiglesville to allow access to the Delaware River is almost completed.

At the Belvidere Access, several buildings are scheduled to be demolished to allow more parking and better access to the boat ramp. Chief Petrongolo noted that the Division is also working with the town of Belvidere on a possible land swap that has been approved by the State House Commission.

A proposed forestry project at the Sparta Mountain WMA was reviewed. Work is due to begin in January 2014.

Chief Petrongolo noted issues at the Weldon Brook WMA concerning rare plants and Indiana bats.

Approval has been received for a forest stewardship plan at the Whiting WMA in Ocean County.

In the Southern Region, staff disposed of surplus equipment which resulted in an \$8,000.00 credit to the Division.

Acting Chairman Burke commented that this year's stocking program seemed to be going well, and noted the quality of the birds being released.

Councilwoman Brummer inquired as to the status of the Holly Farms property. The Director and Assistant Commissioner have both noted to the Commissioner that the Division is extremely interested in this acquisition, and the Commissioner met with representatives from Millville last Friday on this and other topics. No update has been received, and Chief Petrongolo further reviewed past information on this area. Acting Chairman Burke noted that he did send a letter from the Council recommending this acquisition.

Lt. A. Paul reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. She reviewed several highlights from the monthly report for the Council.

Lt. Paul noted a special detail that the Bureau conducted at the Colliers Mills WMA on the opening day of the pheasant hunting season November 9th. Officers were there to address past concerns, and spoke with the occupants of 215 vehicles who were entering the area. A total of 66 hunter inspections were made, resulting in one violation written for no hunter orange, and one for the harvest of quail during the closed season. Assistant Director Herrightly summarized additional information regarding this special detail.

Several other recent incidents were reviewed. In the Central Region the investigation of .00 buckshot that was fired into the Jackson Day School was determined to be criminal mischief and not hunting related, and was turned over to the Jackson Township Police Department. In Rumson, a report was received of an arrow shot in to a home, which when investigated, turned out to be the result of a neighbor who had been shooting for target practice.

In the Northern Region, there was a report of .00 buckshot into a house, which was the result of a neighbor trying to scare deer out of their yard. Other incidents that were noted were damage to the windshield of a vehicle as a result of shooting at a goose, a house struck by a crossbow bolt that was shot at a squirrel, and juvenile hunting with their father who received minor injuries from being struck by bird shot from a shot fired by another member of their hunting party (it was noted that this was not on a wildlife management area).

In the Southern Region, someone received non-life threatening injuries while rabbit hunting on the Tuckahoe WMA after being struck by a pellet in the neck.

Councilman DeMartino inquired about recent news reports of a deer with an arrow through its mouth. Assistant Director Herrighty reviewed this matter, noting that the arrow had been removed and no sign of infection was noted. He added that this story received world-wide coverage.

Acting Chairman Burke commented on the opening day of pheasant season at the Tuckahoe WMA. The waterfowl season was also open in that area, and shots from waterfowl hunters caused small game hunters to begin shooting early, before the opening day start time of 8 a.m. He added that this is something that may need to be addressed in the next Game Code.

Bureau Chief Golden reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He commented on the pheasant hunting season, noting that most hunters are generally pleased with the quality of the birds being stocked. The numbers of birds available at the Rockport Game Farm are up, and this may allow for additional birds to be stocked above the anticipated 52,000 that the Division had planned for.

The Rockport Game Farm open house was attended by 650 visitors. All those in attendance seemed to enjoy the day, and were impressed with the upgrades to the facility as well as the birds that were raised.

Chief Golden noted some propaganda that had been posted at wildlife management areas regarding the number of pheasants being stocked Statewide. He added that the current opening day car counts at each area support the stocking distribution numbers. This matter is being looked into, and he will provide any additional information that may come available.

The Bureaus of Land Management, Wildlife Management and the Endangered and Nongame Species Program have been working together to develop habitat and a quail management area in the Southeastern part of the state. Chief Golden noted that this plan is in the early stages, and briefly reviewed program ideas for the Council. Staff are mostly concentrating on some of the larger WMAs in Cumberland County.

The results of the Fall bow hunting season were noted with 15,144 harvested, similar to the 2012 season harvest of 15,049. Assistant Director Herrighty advised he would forward updated information to the Council.

The public comment period was opened, with speakers reminded that they would each have three minutes to address the Council.

Barbara Sauchau addressed the Council, commenting that if a meeting will not be held for two months, the minutes from the previous meeting should be made available. Ms. Sauchau also commented on the amount of time spent reviewing comments to the Fish Code, deer hunting, a report of lead in the soil in the Arizona forests, the bear hunting season, and the annoyance to neighbors from a shotgun range in their area (she stated did not have the specific area information available).

Janet Pizar also addressed the Council, commenting on a bear trap in the Branchville area that was noted earlier today. She stated that residents should be advised install electric wire to protect their pets where attractants to bears might be found. Councilman Brodhecker noted to Ms. Pizar that while the use of electric fence can be encouraged, it cannot be forced to be used.

There were no additional public comments today.

Acting Chairman Burke asked to schedule a Game Committee meeting. The meeting was scheduled for January 28, 2014.

With no other business for today, **a motion was made by Councilman Link, seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.