

Congratulations to John Hierholzer on his recent appointment to the GH City Council. Many appreciated his work on the cemetery board, particularly his rejection of shooting or killing of any kind taking place within/on those sacred grounds. Many, residents and non-residents alike, have loved ones buried at Lake Forest Cemetery.

The conflict with the deer in our area is a social tolerance issue - not one of biological carrying capacity. Sara Schaefer, the DNR Supervisor for SW MI has told me - and others many times, that there are not too many deer in GH. In fact, if left alone, the herd(s) will adjust to its environment and stabilize. When you begin culling deer, compensatory rebound is triggered. This is caused by fewer deer for the available food supply. This increase in food supply, versus the number of deer, triggers the doe to have more babies and to have them younger. Even as young as one year. That is the primary reason why once an area begins killing deer - it sets them up for the annual treadmill of turning our neighborhoods into residential hunting grounds, wasting the tax dollars of the many to please the few and polarizing the community in the process. Scientific studies also show that in areas the size of GH, any Lyme disease issues, if there were any, are only made worse as the White-Footed Deer mouse, who the tick was named after, will seek larger hosts and proliferate even more quickly on turkeys, raccoons, chipmunks, etc.

The people in our area are too smart and becoming too environmentally/Pure Michigan minded to make the same mistake they did in 2009 by bringing in hired guns to kill deer. The USDA shooters were documented stating they did not feel Mulligan's Hollow was a safe location to shoot guns as there are too many entrances, teens hang out there all night, homeless people seek shelter in the dunes, etc. The city ordered them to do it regardless. 21 of the 54 deer they killed that year were fawn with spots. Some only 40 pounds. This data is available on this site and was obtained via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Bullets travel for a mile - the Rod and Gun Club is a prime example of unintended results occurring when shooting occurs near homes.

In the last two years, the new council members, Bob Monetza, Denny Scott, along with Mike Fritz have recommitted to following the triggers created by the Urban Deer Task Force Committee. These triggers were developed by local citizens with input from the DNR, MSU and other wildlife specialists. The triggers were unanimously approved by the

previous council and then completely disregarded by current Mayor Geri McCaleb, Roger Bergman, Ed Nieuwenhuis and John Naser. A meeting in violation of the Open Meeting Act was held at the airport and Lisa Sutterfield, the Assistant City Manager was told to "Produce dead deer - somehow some way." The process was railroaded and all citizen input and semblance of science was rejected.

Mike Fritz, Bob Monetza and Denny Scott have brought sanity back to the issue and have had GVSU help them with spotlight surveys. It is great that they are trying to learn what the numbers are. We did speak to Professor Keenlance recently about deer who do not ordinarily live here, showing up after the early hunt in September and during the rut because we were concerned the numbers would be skewed. He reminded us that the surveys are not a census but just a snapshot for trend analysis. Ed Neiuwenhuis is categorically incorrect when he makes the statement that 47 deer per square mile is the same thing - as the 17 deer per square mile the DNR comes up with. Sam Jansen should not have stood there at the podium and let Mr. Nieuwenhuis make those misguided statements publicly. We understand Mr. Nieuwenhuis can be a bully, however, Mr. Jansen or at least his boss, Pat McGinnis, have a responsibility for communicating the correct information to the public. Numbers being used to serve science should not be twisted during public statements only to have the Tribune repeat them. Another example of Mr. Nieuwenhuis attempting to manipulate and falsify statements regarding data is his illogical statement "90% of the people want deer dead." That is an absurd statement and recklessly irresponsible when made from the chamber floor.

All of the above said.....the issue in GH, like many areas, is deer browse - not the number of deer. Even one deer left alive will eat a tulip. We CAN have vibrant gardens **and** wildlife. Shane VanOosterhout from the MSU Extension office is more than willing to help. There are successful deer trial gardens in our deer traffic areas. People have to be willing to learn the behavior and habits of the animal and adjust from year to year. The deer will adapt - we need to also. You cannot choose to live in the wooded dunes and think you can grow Hostas. That is not practical and the 10,000+ citizens of the city should not have to foot the tax bill for the 54 people who call in over and over again from 5 Mile Hill, Highland Park, etc., to demand they kill the deer. Those people are living in the only area left for wildlife and wildlife is one of GH's great beauties and a true tourism draw. Phone records show that Kaye

Nedderman still calls in regarding the deer despite that for years her husband endangered not just the lives of wildlife, which is a natural resource that belongs to ALL people in MI, but many lives of those enjoying the cemetery.

Petitions signed by 300 residents and 1,700 people in total were submitted to protest the killing of the deer, particularly in the cemetery. Many believe Pat McGinnis attempted to keep those quiet and a later email revealed that as well. These are the types of games and nasty politics that have been played so the few people who choose to live on the edge of the woods can have deer shot for a tulip. This type of politics triggered another group to be created - The Citizens for a Better Grand Haven. They created a series of Youtube videos depicting our city leaders as buffoons with regard to the deer.

This issue does not need to be polarizing even though it is viewed by many that Geri McCaleb has already fired a shot across the bow. The DUW email and phones are ringing with people ready to start the push back again if necessary. We are hoping we can all continue to peacefully coexist - with the deer as well as each other. There are so many ways to garden and so many alternatives. We can meet with you at any time to share with you what works - and what may not. We also need to reconsider fencing options for people who want to protect their property in that way. Many beautiful areas allow fencing (Hilton Head Island) - fences don't have to equate to "ugly."

Recently DPW's Julie Beaton took the time to meet with us regarding wildlife signage ideas. Ferrysburg has been very progressive and creative with their resources, taking blinking lights off of their road construction barrels and placing them on top of Deer Crossing signs. For only \$50.00, they created solar powered signs that blink during the dusk and dawn hours during the deer migratory and hunting seasons. Ferrysburg officials are also committed to educating their residents how to live peacefully with their wildlife. We appreciate their efforts.