

Minutes of the Ad Hoc Tick Borne Disease Committee meeting, held September 16, 2009, at the C. H. Booth Library, Newtown, CT

Committee members present: Mark Alexander, Kirk Blanchard, Pat Boily, Neil Chaudhary, David Delia, Dr. Robert Grossman, Kim Harrison, Dr. Peter Licht, Dr. Michele McLeod, George Miller, Mary Gaudet-Wilson

Also present: First selectman J. Borst, D. Shugarts, and several members of the public

Dr. R. Grossman, temporary Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:05pm.

Public comments:

- One citizen (name not recorded) expressed her opposition to a deer cull and asked the committee to consider all possible solutions to the Lyme disease problem.
 - Dr. Grossman replied that the committee has not discussed anything yet and that the committee will examine every option.
- One citizen (name not recorded) inquired about the reason why Mr. Shugarts was recorded in the minutes of the Sept. 10 meeting as having being sworn in as a committee member.
 - Dr. Grossman replied that this was a mistake in the minutes, and that this would be corrected when the minutes are approved.

Elections

- Dr. Grossman and Dr. McLeod were nominated for the position of Chairperson. Dr. Grossman was elected by a majority vote
- Dr. McLeod was elected to the position of Vice Chairperson by unanimity
- Mr. Boily will serve as secretary for this meeting only; the committee will seek the services of a secretary from the Town.

Discussion

Dr. Grossman proposed that the committee should meet once a week, at least initially, so that rapid progress can be made, and that that subcommittees be formed to divide the work and take advantage of the expertise of the committee members.

The committee discussed what subjects were to be studied, how the committee should proceed, and who should be invited to present information to the group:

- Dr. Licht suggested that the expertise of the committee members be used and that the committee proceed by following three major goals
 - Defining the problem
 - Education
 - Prevention and control
- Several suggestions for invited speakers were offered and discussed
- Several ideas about how the committee should proceed were discussed
- Mr. Delia suggested that all committee members should carefully read the "Tick management handbook", written by K. Safford

- Mr. Blanchard suggested that we should divide responsibilities very soon to address the goals of the charge of the committee
 - Mrs. Gaudet-Wilson volunteered to start compiling information about what has been done in other towns in Fairfield county
- Ms. Harrison suggested that committee members should view the movie “Under our skin”
- Mr. Blanchard ask if Mr. Shugarts could provide an index of the information that he has available
 - Mr. Shugarts replied that he has hundreds of documents, and that he will assist the committee in providing information
- Mr. Boily expressed concerns about the inconsistency between the number of cases of Lyme diseases reported by the state DHP and recent surveys
 - Dr. Licht explain that actual cases of Lyme disease are far greater than the officially reported cases, and that it is not unusual for the actual cases to be 10 times higher than the number of cases reported to the state.
 - Mr. Alexander expressed concerns that the absence of a reliable index of the incidence of Lyme disease makes it very difficult to asses the success or failure of any measures taken to reduce Lyme disease

Dr. Grossman requested that, in preparation for the next meeting, all committee members prepare a prioritized list of subjects to be addressed and of potential experts to be invited. Dr. Grossman also requested that suggestions for the next meeting’s agenda be sent to him as soon as possible.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45PM

Respectfully submitted

Pat Boily