

SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 16, 2006

The Safety Committee meeting was held on May 16, 2006 at North Royalton City Hall, 13834 Ridge Road. The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Lisa Uffman-Kirsch at 6:31 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Lisa Uffman-Kirsch, Committee members Denise Bobulsky and Robert Stefanik; Fire Chief Mike Fabish, Police Chief Paul Bican; Residents: James Rymut, Alan Clapp, Gayle Clapp, David Blank, and Megan Rowe; Student Robert Turchanik.

Motion and second to approve the minutes of March 21, 2006. 3Ayes/nays0. Minutes approved.

Call for additional New Business on the agenda. None.

Call for Open Resident Discussion on items others than those on the agenda. None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Deer Hunting Permits:

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch gave a summary of where the issue was left—gathering information from other communities, started discussion of pros and cons of different options, interest in finding out more information on limiting the hunting to commercial properties whose livelihoods could be damaged (like nurseries, orchards) with a yet-to-be-determined acreage limitation, by professional hunters hired by landowner. Have since found out there is no such thing as a professional bow hunter.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch received an e-mail from a resident who liked that solution—commercial properties only and professional hunters only. She also received a second letter from a different resident, that being two now received in opposition to the hunting. The writer of the most recent letter had added a postscript that she would be starting a petition in opposition to the hunting.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked to hear what everyone's feelings were.

Mr. Clapp shared his reasons for opposing the hunting including: the well-known deer population rebound effect...when 20% to 30% of a herd is killed, birthrates go up, multiple births increase, and there is less death among the newborns...when deer are killed in a restricted area, there is more food and habitat so more deer migrate in...safety hazard for children and pets and potential of someone getting shot...frightened or injured deer can run up to 40 mph so potential for deer/car accidents as generally happens during hunting season...also potential for injured or frightened deer to run through plate glass door or window...bow hunting is inhumane because studies show cripple rate is greater than fifty percent; if they aren't killed immediately, they die a slow, painful death and if they don't die, they get infested with parasites and become diseased and crippled the rest of their lives...thinks it is a divisive issue which pits neighbors and residents against each other...brings a lot of unfavorable publicity. In conclusion he felt that we have an opportunity to demonstrate an understanding and tolerance to co-exist with the other animals that we are sharing our City with. He requested that we retain a no-hunting code with no exceptions to it.

Mr. Rymut felt that the hunting is not a safety issue. If so, he felt other sports like swimming, fishing, boating and all other sports should be banned because anything has risks. As for the animals being crippled or harmed or dying a slow death, there is the other side of them dying of starvation. He said that the problem is if we take away their environment, they crowd into small areas. If we are protecting them where there are no hunters or no predators, they are going to keep breeding and we get more and more. He passed out several newspaper articles including information on Solon which paid \$270,000 to have hunters come in and kill deer to keep the population down.

Mr. Rymut stated that he has a problem with the possibility of hunting being allowed only in commercial areas. He looks at this situation as vandalism by the deer, and asked how he could stop this. He said that planting something they don't like doesn't work, he can't grow anything in his yard, and he has large acreage and a lot of deer. And when the sharpshooters come into the parks, the deer know there is danger there and they run out of the park. He shared an article from Geauga County which mentioned there are no bushes or shrubs left and endangered species of plants are gone. He also shared an article from OSU Extension about plants disappearing and the makeup of the park system changing so that other animals can't survive because the deer have eaten

their habitat. He stated that the deer have a right to be here and he is not a hunter and he does not want to hunt. He lost forty apple trees last year worth about ten dollars each. He doesn't understand why he is being penalized because he is not a commercial grower. He would like ideas as to how he could get rid of a nuisance varmint. He would need an 8-foot high fence to keep the deer out, but we have ordinances here against fences eight feet high. Neighbors have put up cyclone fences around their gardens but the deer jump right over them and eat the gardens out. He said the \$200,000-\$300,000 that Solon spends each year to keep the deer herd down to a reasonable amount is now a regular line item in their budget. He stated that he thought we are here to see how we can control the deer herd.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch clarified that what we are here to decide is whether or not we want to allow deer hunting permits in North Royalton. She cannot guarantee whether or not we will end up with an answer as to how to control the deer. That is not our purpose and goal here. And as for the \$200,000 or \$300,000 that Solon spends, it might as well be twenty million because it's not in our budget and it's not going to happen here.

Dr. Blank stated that the issue started out with people having property damage and the desire to control certain deer. He thinks other communities may be looking at this more as a safety issue regarding deer-vehicle collisions. With property damage, he wasn't sure that it has been proven you eliminate property damage that much as compared to paying lip service to let people think the elimination of certain deer is dramatically reducing property damage. To eliminate all property damage from deer, you would have to eliminate all deer. Regarding safety, he feels there is a difference between someone of their own volition participating in a sport with a known risk as opposed to being subject to the risk incurred from hunting in which they may not be an active participant. He feels this community has had a no-hunting policy for years and he doesn't think people are clamoring to hunt. He feels that about everyone knows there is no hunting and no trapping, and once we start to publicize something like this, it starts pitting neighbor against neighbor. He thinks the easiest and best thing is to leave a no-hunt policy which is enforced and the ODNR not to issue hunting permits to people in North Royalton.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch clarified that one of reasons this came to committee was that there had been an increase of requests for deer culling permits through the mayor's office, and because it was getting to the point that the volume was increasing rapidly, she felt that it would be better for us to make a legislative decision here.

Mrs. Bobulsky shared that another reason that it came up was that most of those permits that were being requested and issued came from Ward 1 where there is a higher density of population and that is where the concern came from.

Chief Bican stated that starting really early in the spring, he would fence everything at his house, and it seems to work pretty well. He felt that if we were to allow any hunting, his preference at this time would be just the commercial properties because it would be easier to control. The Ward 1 situation spooks him a little bit, because there is so much housing. Hunting in areas like that concerns him.

Mr. Stefanik asked how many permits were requested this past season and how many were granted.

Chief Bican reported that we had ten requests in 2005, five in the north and five in the south.

Dr. Blank asked if there was a time frame on when we would resolve this issue, and if we were leaning toward allowing commercial property owners to get hunting permits, are there going to be certain stipulations, such as proof of damage and a limit to the number of deer.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that she hopes we can do it as soon as possible. She is going to be asking if there is additional information anyone feels we need to have before we can make a decision. If not, she felt that we just need to make a decision with the realization that whatever the decision is, we are going to make some people happy and some people not, but such is our job.

Mr. Stefanik asked if agricultural districts would be considered commercial. He does not think it is an income producer for those people and that most people do it just to get a reduction on their taxes.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that it has to be an income producer to be considered CAUV, Current Agricultural Use Valuation. Owners have to show "x" amount of dollars in income from the property in order to get that

designation and receive the property tax reduction. She stated that there are two different things; the CAUV, and the Agricultural District designation. They are really two different things, but they often go together.

Mr. Stefanik stated that we would have to decide whether those would be included also.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked the committee's druthers. She stated that if we decide not at all, then there are fewer decisions which need to be made. If we decide yes/limited, then there are other decisions that would have to be made underneath that. She asked the committee if there was any other additional information that we needed to gather.

Mrs. Bobulsky and Mr. Stefanik said no.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked the committee if they felt they were ready to make a decision on this today.

Mrs. Bobulsky felt that she was ready. She was in favor of limiting it to the commercial properties and could go along with agricultural, but thinks we should put an acreage stipulation on there as well.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch added that if we do that, she had a whole listing of questions and conditions from A to P that was passed out earlier including things like acreage requirements, contiguous property owners' approval, proof of state hunter safety courses, state hunting permit, and the archery proficiency test that other communities require. We would only be allowing bows, but what type of bows...longbow, crossbow, compound bow? She felt strongly that if we are going to allow this, there should be some notification that there is a hunt going on like boundary flags. She has residents who walk their dogs and ride their horses on their property, and arrows don't have any boundary limits. The concern is for those innocent bystanders going by. Some communities also say you have to shoot two or three doe before you shoot a buck only during state bow season. Some are ever more specific. They say within that season, no Sundays, no weekends, no days when kids are off school, specific times of the day. Some of them say not during school arrival and departure times. Others say only one hunter on the property at a time, proof of liability insurance for the permit holder, only from identified tree stands, signing and understanding of rules and hunting agreement, and that the Code should take precedence over the ODNR Division of Wildlife. She stated that her opinion is that besides the acreage issue, there are a lot of things that we need to look at and it's never as easy as it looks. We have to think of all the different angles, with all the possibilities, and all the different viewpoints. We're making decisions that affect a lot of people.

Mr. Rymut didn't think that flags would stop people from coming in. He also felt that arrows don't travel that far in a controlled shoot with the hunter in a stand shooting down. He feels bow hunting is the safest and has never heard of any bow hunting accident.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that she is hearing from the other committee members that they want to go with allowed hunting on the commercial properties and agricultural districts. She originally said she could live with the commercial and agricultural districts. Now that she is thinking about all the different things we would have to consider and how complicated it could become, she is leaning towards just saying no, period. However, the way we work is that majority rules in the Committee. We can start asking some of the questions on conditions and start addressing them.

Mrs. Bobulsky asked if by establishing all of these conditions, would it definitely restrict things even further.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that in order to meet all of these criteria, if we decided to go with all of them, this would not be a sport or a hobby. An applicant would have to be seriously motivated because they feel that it's going to make a difference.

Mrs. Bobulsky stated that they would have to feel that the deer are definitely going to make an impact on their livelihood. She thinks by establishing these conditions, it would certainly limit the amount of permits that would be sought.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch shared the input from one business that currently has a permit for hunting. He said it definitely helps but it is questionable as to how effective it is.

Mr. Rymut suggested that we make our decision easier by making it no hunting absolutely at all.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that was the way she was leaning.

Mr. Rymut stated that unless you open it up to a large area, there is no sense even having it. If you are only going to have one or two spots in the city to have hunting, it's a total waste of time.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that she doesn't think we have many large areas safe enough throughout the city in order to do this.

Ms. Rowe stated they have half an acre.

Mr. Rymut said that he can't understand how people from Ward 1 come to hunt on his property and he asks how they get permits and they say they just ask for them. But every time he asks for them, he is denied. That is why he is here. He talked to the ODNR guy who told him to go see the animal control warden here, which he did. He said he talked to the Police Chief who told him he could not get the permit.

Chief Bican said he thought Mr. Rymut asked at the same time this issue came forward, and it was decided no permits until it was straightened out and decided.

Mr. Rymut stated he was told the last two years that there is no hunting even though the State people said there is hunting allowed.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch clarified that he was actually given truthful answers in both of those cases. There is no hunting in the city of North Royalton, and the state can give special permits. The difference is that we have home rule here, which means that we can supersede what the state says. They can say yes, and if we say no, it's no.

Mr. Rymut stated that the Police Department has told him no hunting, and then he was told there are special conditions; so that's what he is here for. If there is absolutely no hunting, that is fine.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that she is hearing from the majority of the committee that they want to start pursuing and talking about these different criteria for commercial and ag. districts only.

Mr. Stefanik asked about legislation from other cities. He asked about Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch's list of 12 or 13 conditions and if other cities have those conditions.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch replied that Chief Bican has put together the information from some other communities and she reviewed legislation from different communities and that is where she pulled a lot of the criteria from.

Mr. Stefanik asked about the ODNR issuing the hunting permits.

Chief Bican stated that they won't if we tell them they can't be used here. He felt that if we start doing all of the stuff on the list, we will get much commotion and confusion...people wanting to know why we don't make it seven acres instead of ten acres...we would have to go through each issue with a different argument for each one. The Chief pointed out that he just found out yesterday that he is down by a fifth guy and he doesn't need more to enforce. Chief Bican also reminded that we have no control over the park district. They are their own governmental entity and can do their sharp shooting or whatever, and we can't stop them.

Mrs. Bobulsky asked how many commercial and agricultural properties we are talking about.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that if we are including agricultural properties plus commercial nurseries, etc. she would guess ten would be a high estimate.

Mr. Stefanik stated that he would like to keep it on just one more month to look at the other cities that have bow hunting and see what their ordinances look like.

Chief Bican commented that he gave him the information.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that as long as a committee member wants to keep it on, that's what we will do. She invited the residents to come to the next meeting on Tuesday, June 20 at 6:30pm, and stated that unless something changes, she is anticipating that at that meeting a decision probably would be made as it sounds like that is where we're going.

2. Traffic Light at Akins and Ridge:

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if the light has been removed.

Chief Bican reported that it has been removed.

Item removed from the agenda.

3. Lane Striping—Royalton Road at West 130th

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch reported that the stripes are in and she thinks that is going to be the extent of the work.

Chief Fabish commented that it's too bad Strongsville doesn't move the one sign back further.

Chief Bican informed that unlike in our City, Strongsville police don't do the striping and signing. Their Service Department does. We are unique in that way. He felt that what is actually needed is an overhead sign to steer everybody in the right direction.

Chief Fabish commented that one sign confuses the whole issue. When you read that sign, it is probably half a mile down the road before moving over, and people are moving over at the last minute.

Chief Bican commented that we have pointed that out.

Mr. Stefanik commented on the issue of line striping at the Route 82 intersections of State and Ridge. He doesn't think that after construction they did the center lines. He thought we should check with Skip (Service Director).

Chief Bican said that he had requested Clark (City Engineer) to look into it because he had the same complaint and wondered if there was some kind of a warranty because he thinks it was put down when it was too cold and it didn't stick. Clark was supposed to go back to the State or the construction company and check, but he doesn't know what the results were.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch said she also remembers that Clark was going to check for more information on it and asked the committee if we should remove this item as well.

It was agreed by the Committee, and this item was removed from the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS**1. Traffic Signal Timing**

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that a resident from another ward was at her ward meeting and wanted to talk about traffic signal timing. She told him she would put it on the Committee agenda. He said he could be here, but he is not. She said it seemed that he had a specific area of concern but then the specific area expanded. She asked if anyone else had anything to say about traffic signal timing.

Mr. Stefanik stated that the resident's initial concern was at Royalwood and Ridge, and then went throughout the city.

Chief Bican reported there are a few intersections with issues, like State/82 and State/Bunker, which will be corrected when the new lights are turned on. At State/Bunker, new loops were put in. The old loop is broken so the light continuously cycled if a car was sitting there. That will change once the new lights are activated. At 82/York the light went into its flash mode for no reason last night and someone had to go and manually reset it. That will correct itself once the new lights are turned on. Everything just has to get hooked up. He stated that by August, it will all be done.

Mrs. Bobulsky commented that she thinks the light at Sprague and York is acting up again, because traffic going eastbound is backing up again on Sprague at 3 or 4 o'clock. And Abbey and 82 is another one.

At 130th/Albion, there was also a problem at 7:00 am getting out of Albion onto West 130th, with no traffic on West 130th.

Chief Bican stated that sometimes when we see it, the computer is already paging the officer, and we check on it. But when we have a broken loop is when we usually have a backup.

Mrs. Bobulsky asked again about Abbey and 82, being stopped on 82 with no other traffic around. She asked if it could flash after 8pm.

Chief Bican commented that he will have to check the delay because sometimes a car pulls us from Abbey, it will sit there and then make the right turn onto 82 and when 82 traffic stops at the light, nobody is there because they are already gone. He also commented that it is not possible to have the light flash, they don't do that anymore.

Mr. Stefanik wanted to know how they work and asked if the light figures out that this person is turning left or right.

Chief Bican responded that there is a set number of seconds per car standing, and he will make sure the placement of the stop marks are in the right spots.

Mr. Stefanik stated that he will tell people that once these lights are up and activated and our computer control is activated, we won't have any problems.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked for a recap of all the different intersections for which traffic signal timing was going to be checked. The list included: 130th and Albion; Ridge and Royalwood; Abbey and 82. Sprague and York; State and Bunker.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. All in favor 3/0. Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.