

## **Shelburne Working Group on Human-Wildlife Interactions Meeting Minutes – April 27, 2022**

**Present:** Don Rendall, Jim White, Jon Cocina, Persis Worrall

**Also attending:** Mike Ashooh

**Facilitator:** Don Rendall

**Minutes:** Don

1. Motions to approve agenda and previous meeting minutes of Jan 27, Feb 24, and Mar 30 approved.
2. Discussion of policy draft:

The recent modifications suggested by Persis was agreed upon as the focus document on which to make final changes. Refinements need to ensure the policy is practical, implementable, enforceable, and clearly states best policy. We have great amounts of material which amplifies ways to activate the policy but where/how to make it accessible? Should be able to easily find a link on the Town web site to get to it but the website itself is not capable of containing it. This is an implementation question TBD.

Our “Authority” section needs refinement. What is truly the Town’s authority to control how coexistence with wildlife? Does the State authorize the Town to do this? Do animals, particularly wildlife, have rights? Law has evolved to the current state based on property rights. We will take out references to animal rights to avoid the legal debate.

Our statement of principles is critical. This is the section which is clear to the Town how to begin implementation of the Policy.

Getting into specifics of implementation is trickier. What are the procedures to be followed? Who are the people specifically tasked to perform those procedures? The ACO? An Animal Coexistence Coordinator? Monies are scarce so no more than a part time position could be possible. What are the tasks and should we flowchart them to determine interrelationships between Town departments? The Town’s Animal Control Ordinance stipulates some activities of the Animal Control Officer. We should look at drafting a job description of this position as a suggestion to the Town Manager. However there is not the desire to redraft the Ordinance or consider an Animal Cruelty Ordinance at this time. Data collection needs to be performed and reported perhaps on an annual basis. Who are the outside organizations the Town should work with and what will be the incidents to trigger outsourcing response to those organizations?

Where the Animal Control Ordinance has shortcomings describing humane treatment issues then needs to be addressed clearly in this policy. The Animal Control Ordinance while describing duties of the Animal Control Officer, states all police officers are animal control. What is the policing function to be? Can some of the duties be offloaded? Mention was made of the Heart Wildlife organization which is contracted in South Burlington and Essex.

How is implementation of the Policy to be done? Be careful calling for training as it has legal ramifications. Can contractors hired by the Town be required to comply? We want the policy to be communicated.