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NOV 14 2016

City of Belvedere

November 12, 2016

Dear Ms. Neilan and Members of the City Council,

I read with interest a letter dated November 9, 2016 from Dr. Bishop regarding deer management in Belvedere. The letter was accompanied by a New York Times editorial from 2013 and a letter from a wildlife biologist supporting culling of deer in East Hampton, New York. Dr. Bishop goes on to say that “the editorial explains the need to control suburban deer, using as an example the circumstances in East Hampton, New York; it could just as well have used Belvedere, albeit on a smaller scale.” I beg to differ about the last statement, for the following reasons:

1) Any damage from deer to the vegetation and landscaping in Belvedere has been relatively minor. After Mr. Craig Stowers (Environmental Program Manager, Wildlife Branch - Game Management, State of California) toured Belvedere on October 26, 2016, I contacted him by e-mail with the question: “When you toured Belvedere, did you observe extensive damage from deer to warrant aggressive deer reduction measures? The reply I received was: “I saw a few areas with hedged bushes and it appears they are eating up some ivy - it looked to me like they were heavily foraging in a few areas/on some plants **but it didn't look anything like other areas I've been in where there was no doubt we had too many deer.**” [bold and underline is mine]. There is also no evidence that local ecology has been disrupted – that would be an issue that the Marin WildCare would be interested in and they have expressed no such concern.

2) Dr. Bishop's letter then goes on to say: “the risks that they pose to human health”, referring to the deer on Belvedere. I do not know what tangible health risks this statement refers to. The New York Times editorial appropriately speaks of Lyme disease concern in East Hampton, as it is a high risk endemic area for Lyme disease. The case is different in Belvedere as Belvedere residents learned at the October 10, 2016 City Council meeting from Ms. Angie Nakano, the scientific programs manager for the Marin Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District. Her presentation was well-summarized in THE ARK, November 2, 2016 issue. The title of that article tells the entire story: “**Fewer deer likely won't affect already-low Lyme disease rates.**” [bold and underline are mine].

3) The New York Times editorial also refers to patients in doctors' office as a result of deer collisions. Fortunately, deer car collisions in Belvedere are rare (as the Marin Humane Society has stated on several occasions) and should not result in bodily harm to humans if they observe the very low speed limit present throughout much of Belvedere.

Thus, based on the observations 1) – 3), the evidence suggests that drawing any parallels between the deer situation in Belvedere and that in East Hampton is equivalent to drawing parallels between electric tooth brushes and electric chairs.

4) While I am concerned that seeking aggressive deer reduction measures is a solution in search of a problem, i.e. entirely unnecessary, it would also be impossible to carry out should tranquilizer darting be a necessary part of the deer management program. Given Belvedere's hilly terrain and the steep steps and the knowledge that it takes about 10 minutes for darted

deer to be tranquilized, while they run scared under these hazardous conditions is enough of a concern. Retrieval of any tranquilized deer would be another challenge as private property rights extend to over 90% of Belvedere and many owners will declare their lands as off-limits "deer sanctuaries". In sum, deer darting in Belvedere sounds like a formula for disaster, or, as Mr. Craig Stowers wrote to me in his e-mail "**It would be challenging to say the least**". [bold and underline are mine]

5) Many of us opposed to aggressive deer management are focused on ethical treatment of animals. Should the deer of Belvedere be malnourished and suffering we would also be searching for (palatable) solutions. Fortunately, even during the recent drought conditions the deer no Belvedere appeared to be in good health.

Sincerely,

Peter Ganz, MD
111 Bayview Avenue
Belvedere, CA 94920

Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Greg Felton [mailto:GregoryRFelton@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, November 14, 2016 4:42 PM
To: Mary Neilan - City Manager
Cc: 'Marcia Felton'
Subject: Deer in Belvedere
Importance: High

City Manager Neilan,

This is "Home" but not "Home on the Range." Having effectively squeezed out the predators that would naturally control the deer population, we're left with an obligation to intervene "unnaturally." Inaction is not an option. The deer population in Belvedere is a real problem and I appreciate the City Council confronting it.

My concern is not just with the denuded hillsides (which are both unsightly and prone to erosion), or the potential for Lyme disease among residents and guests (something from which my Aunt suffered for years), or automobile accidents (which seem to always result in far more property damage and potential injury to humans than deer), or the resulting property value impacts of all of the above. I fear for the immediate safety and emotional well-being of all residents, especially my 86-year old parents.

My father, who spends countless hours walking Belvedere streets and lanes, and who previously was well aware of the impacts of deer on the aesthetics of our fine city but held no strong opinion about their impact on his health and well-being, was charged by one of these wild animals. The leash of a dog my father was walking became entangled and, as he leaned down to address the problem, a deer apparently viewed him as vulnerable, or a threat, or perhaps both. Deer are wild animals, not entirely innocent characters in Disney films with thoughts we can read. My father, before he realized it and certainly before he could do anything about it, found himself on the receiving end of an unprovoked attack with no time or mechanism to protect himself (or his dog). Long under doctors' care for his heart, the shock of this event surely could have been the end of him. Will Belvedere wait until a resident is severely injured or killed, and thereby set itself up to be on the receiving end of legal action, before charting a course to control the deer threat? I hope not.

I recall vividly a wet deer climbing Pagoda Lane in the early 70's, apparently have swum from Angel Island, because it was such an usual sight. Should anyone assert that deer have been longstanding residents in Belvedere, I can assure you this is not true. They are relative newcomers who have found a haven in which they can replicate unchecked to their own, and human's, detriment.

I have no preference for a specific course other than an affirmative and expedient one.

Sincerely,

Greg Felton

November 15, 2016

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City of Belvedere

Dear Mayor Campbell and members of the City Council,

As a long time local gardener, and a third generation resident of Belvedere, who spends the majority of the week outside in Belvedere, I have the following observations:

1. We did not have a problem with deer ten years ago. If one should stray up Golden Gate Avenue, it was an oddity.
2. The number of deer I presently see in the area is at an all time high. It is not unusual to see groups of six or more deer.
3. When there are doe and fawns present the deer are aggressive. The Marin Humane Society stated that their data is only **collected on their actions**. Over the years I have called the Human Society a couple times to help with deer injured or caught in fencing. I think it is the buzzard population that cleans up the carcass of the majority of dead deer.
4. The approved deer-fencing going up at such an alarming rate is, predictably, forcing the deer to forage in smaller and smaller areas, denuding banks and causing erosion with resulting drainage problems.
5. The remedies to discourage deer do not work:
 - Deer resistant plantings are successful for a time until the deer become desperate. A fawn will try any plant material.
 - The motion activated water blasts, do not work. I have tried this on several properties and have only been able to nail meter readers and survey teams. Deer walk through the spray blast.
 - The heavy gage fishing line does not work. Deer plow through, often catching it around antlers and legs. Fawns are cut and crippled by the strings.
 - The black netting draped over plants can be dangerous to the small deer and wrap around the antlers of the larger deer – a very negative result.
6. There are predators moving into the area. I have seen the coyotes and have been told of the bobcats. Predators will not discriminate between animal species wild or domestic.
7. The lanes have become deer runs. As I live adjacent to Woodland Lane, I hear frightened children when they encounter deer using the steps simultaneously.

Cruelly; we are corralling the ever-increasing deer population into an ever-decreasing area. The more forage denied the deer by more fencing, the more important it is to bring their population back in proportion to their food source.

You have a tough decision to make regarding the safety, wellbeing and aesthetics of Belvedere. You will not be able to please everyone. Perhaps putting this decision to a vote by the public will show you are acting on the direction of the majority of citizens. The collective mind is always stronger when focused on a means to and end and not individual agendas.

Most sincerely,

Joan Barth
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P. S. The presence of TV cameras in the council chambers is most uncomfortable. Not sure if it is just my preference, but we might be better served to limit the media to reporters and notebooks. They can access the audio off the City web site when available.