Below is a summary of the discussion we had today (9/27/17 meeting) along with the latest draft documents, including the heat map file.

Opening Remarks – read the emails from S. Sanzotta, L. Fig, and B. McGee (cc’d) regarding their reasons for not attending this meeting.  Those present were L. Abrams, N. Hanke, B. Benet, K. Sonen, D. Delacourt (staff) & myself.  After reviewing their reasons for not attending, I shared the following observations:

* Dr. DeNicola has indicated that in order to achieve the objectives identified, private property will need to be utilized (reference later discussion about the attached heat map).
* The present efforts are assessing feasibility of access so a protocol around using private property is still being discussed.
* The question of “when culling will end” cannot be answered at this time because sterilization is not permitted in Michigan – the City is temporarily able to do with via the existing Research permit.  The method of impacting the deer population is ultimately a State MDNR decision via the permit.  City staff has vigorously pushed the State to keep and potentially permit the expansion of sterilization where culling does not work.  After the research is completed, the State will have scientific support/or not for allowing sterilization.
* Point out Dr. DeNicola was unable to attend due to him being out of the country.  Will schedule him at next meeting.

Objectives (see attached):

* Long-Term Plan section – First Sentence.  There was disagreement on how to handle the edits so staff ultimately made the determination with the wording included in the attached.
* Measures of Success (Overall Program) – 4th Bullet Point about Browse Damage in Natural Areas – Disagreement around the range including the 30% as the upper boundary.  Accommodated partially by including “sustainable” in the objective to make it more clear.

Outstanding Topics:

* MDNR Urban Deer Management Plan – No update from Chad Stewart.
* MDNR committee meeting schedule – provided via email after the last meeting.
* Fencing Ordinance – included in FY18 goals.
* Trimming issues in select locations – Temporary by County next to County Farm Park. Triangle area at Stadium/Wash. Split is being looked at.  Huron Parkway median area that’s has native plantings, Delacourt will raise with appropriate staff/parties to point out the issue and see what possibilities there are to reduce the height but keep native/natural plantings.
* Does sterilization eliminate deer – Dr. DeNicola indicated no, but we deferred conversation until he’s available by phone.
* Survey Measure for Enjoyment – L. Abrams will share existing language and bring back requested language.

Reviewed Maps/Discussed Draft Plan:

* Attached are two files with maps which were reviewed.  One has just a heat map, which represents the raw counts from the flyover on Feb. 1.  The second file includes several layers of data, along with a heat map adjusted by Dr. DeNicola for accuracy based on his camera counts after the flyover.  Extensive discussion on how to interpret the info.  We noted that the heat map with raw counts reflects counts prior to the culling activities at Cedar Bend Nature Area.
* Voluntary 450 foot zone – after consulting with Dr. DeNicola and MDNR, they both indicated that the origins of this was for untrained hunting.  Professional culling is very different.  Much more relevant issues like terrain, height, clearance, etc. improve safety over a set distance.  An example is implementing something like this would prevent a professional from standing on a porch and shooting straight down which is much safer than a horizontal distance.  Staff pointed out that requiring 450 feet could eliminate some safe sites like above in lieu of more risky sights.  At this time, staff is not seeing the wisdom in mandating a measure which could drive the professionals into less safe locations.
* Use of Private Property – in considering prior comments/concerns about notice on where private parcels would be used for culling, the City indicated a willingness to notify all abutting property owners.  This means permission from a private property plus notice (not permission) from abutting owners.  Conversation on this topic is on-going.
* Dr. DeNicola indicated that in order to achieve the objectives, he’d estimate 250-350 deer would need to be removed (culled) this year.  If this level is done, future efforts would be reduced.  Doing less than this would result in an on-going higher level of need for removal.  Culling 250-350 deer would not eliminate the deer population in Wards 1 & 2.  He will be available at the next meeting for further discussion.