

(For November, 2017)

Around the City with City Manager David Thayer

November 15th marks the beginning of two seasons; deer hunting and snow shoveling. I will talk about snow shoveling a little later. I receive many questions about hunting in the city throughout the year. The first thing to know is that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) rules and guidelines control over the city. If one is prohibited from doing something under those rules elsewhere then you cannot do that same thing within the city. However, local units of governments can impose stricter rules in their jurisdiction than what the DNR allows.

Specifically, one cannot discharge a firearm within the city to hunt deer or for any other purpose. However, it is lawful for any person to hunt with a bow and arrow within the city under the condition that the archer is on property owned by them and are at least 300 feet from any occupied dwelling at the time of releasing the arrow. The city defers to the DNR rules as to what is legal archery equipment.

There were several unintended consequences when the three communities consolidated into one city. One being, between the well developed areas, there are a lot of underdeveloped areas that are rural in nature and excellent habitat for deer. Some claim we are overrun with deer causing increased car collisions, eating our gardens and even attracting wolves to our area. Admittedly, I see more deer out my window than I see robins or even people walking down the street. What to do about the increasing deer population within the city is a conversation that we are going to have to have.

There are no easy answers. We have prohibited feeding/baiting deer of any nature. Allowing the use of shotguns is not an easy answer, because today's shotguns can have the same range as rifles. Providing for a professional hunt is a temporary solution because deer will just

mitigate to the excellent habitat without any predator pressure. A plan to hold a special limited hunt to reduce the herd must be approved by the DNR. I do not have the answer today.

However, I do recommend that we hold a series of public hearings to discuss the matter and come up with a plan. No matter what is proposed, there will be controversy.

The city amended its snow shoveling policy effective November 24th. There were not any substantial changes; rather clarifications. The previous ordinance stated one could not place snow within the street right of way. The new ordinance clarifies by stating one may not place snow in the street, on the sidewalk or on lands of another.

Anyone that has a sidewalk that runs past their property has the responsibility to keep it free of snow and ice. Businesses are required to have snow storage areas on their property, and when that area becomes over loaded, then haul it away.

There is special emphasis in the commercial districts in and around Genesee and Adams streets to keep the sidewalks free of ice and snow. I have made a pledge, one that I intend to keep, that we will keep the sidewalks along Genesee and Adams streets open for pedestrian passage. We do not want folks walking in those busy streets because the sidewalk is not passable. If those property owners fail to honor their responsibility, the city will honor it for them, and then bill them for our efforts.

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