

September 10, 2015

Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Ave
New York, NY, 10065

Re: Deer Task Force White Paper

Dear Commissioner Silver:

I hope this letter finds you well.

In a response from your agency to an inquiry I made in March of this year, I was told the Deer Task Force would have a draft report on the deer overpopulation problem in May, and a final report in June. To date, no report has been produced.

Indeed, I have recently learned that the Deer Task Force has now decided – after months of inactivity – to forestall work on the report. This is quite disheartening, but also in some ways consistent and expected. Whatever reason they give for suspending work on the report is not good enough, especially considering that it should have been completed months ago.

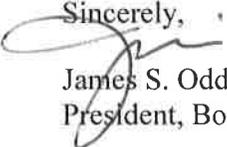
I understand fully the need to get it right, and that a comprehensive report such as this will invariably run into delays. However, we must recognize that Staten Island, the most rural of the boroughs and with the Arthur Kill as a direct vector for deer migration, already has a deer population that far exceeds the ability of our wooded areas to sustain it. Left unchecked, it is inevitable that:

- a) Our parkland will be denuded;
- b) Incidences of tick-borne diseases will increase;
- c) Incursions onto streets and into populated areas will increase, and most importantly:
- d) The likelihood of a deer/motor vehicle accident that causes a human fatality will rise to unacceptable levels, if it hasn't already.

I would respectfully ask that you investigate the cause of the delay in the finalization of the report; do whatever is possible to expedite its completion; and convey to the Deer Task Force a sufficient sense of urgency as befits the severity of the problem. They are treating this as if we have all the time in the world, and I would ask if they think they will have a good enough excuse for dragging their feet when someone's husband, wife or child dies because of government inaction.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I look forward to a continued cooperative effort between your agency and Borough Hall for the betterment of the people of Staten Island.

Sincerely,


James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

