



Resolution Number 2024-03

Introduced 07/08/2024

Adopted 07/08/2024

Effective 07/08/2024

Resolution Authorizing Deer Management Bow Hunting Sessions in East and West Woods Preserves

WHEREAS, the Town Council affirms the following:

- (1) the Forest Stewardship Plan prepared by Bill Bond, a Maryland registered forester, for the 83 wooded acres of the East Woods and West Woods of the Town of Washington Grove provided a comprehensive analysis of the forests, their current health, and made management recommendations to address specific concerns, including control of non-native invasive plants and the impact of deer, and which Plan was approved by the Town Council in December 2015; and
- (2) the continuing overpopulation of white tail deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) has raised public health and safety concerns over increased deer-vehicle accidents and the increased risk of deer tick-borne disease; and ongoing concern over damage to private property and landscaping from foraging; and
- (3) the habitat loss due to depletion of native forest understory has led to pervasive replacement by non-native invasive species and an unhealthy reduction in new growth trees, all of which threatens the long-term health of our forests; and
- (4) the Town seeks to better manage the white tail deer population within the Town's corporate boundaries to respond to these concerns; and
- (5) the State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Montgomery County have established safety regulations for bow hunting of deer within the County, and the Montgomery County Department of Parks has a program for authorizing established groups of qualified individuals for managed bow deer hunting in County parks; and
- (6) Town representatives have met with County officials and with County-authorized groups of State-licensed archery hunters to explore Town-authorized bow hunting deer management during the 2024-2025 White-Tailed Deer Archery Season in the East Woods and West Woods, and
- (7) the Town also continues to explore other methods for managing the impacts of deer in the East and West Woods, including exclosures to protect limited or sensitive areas, protective barriers for individual plantings, and other proposals to reduce deer browsing within these Town-owned properties; and
- (8) Article I, Section 12(b) of the Washington Grove Code of Ordinances provides for deer management bow hunting sessions on Town-owned property, with Town

authorization provided by Resolution adopted by the Town Council in an open meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council also notes the following:

- (9) the State of Maryland has established September 6, 2024 through January 31, 2025 as dates for the 2024-2025 White-Tailed Deer Archery Season for the portion of the State that includes Montgomery County; and
- (10) the Montgomery County Department of Parks has established Managed Deer Hunting Program Regulations, Group Leader Expectations, and Archery Participant Expectations and Procedures.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Town Council, in accordance with Article I of the Code of Ordinances, hereby approve and authorize the following:

- (11) bow hunting deer management sessions conducted only within the Town-owned East and West Woods. All sessions are to be in accordance with the Maryland Hunting Regulations for the 2024-2025 White-Tailed Deer Archery Season specific for Montgomery County (Region B) starting September 6, 2024; and
- (12) the Town-authorized bow hunting will be limited to a Town-selected volunteer group of Maryland DNR-licensed and Maryland DNR/Montgomery County Parks-qualified bow hunters such as the Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland (BHFFMD); and
- (13) the Mayor will provide the volunteer archery hunting group with evidence of Town authorization for bow hunting within the Town-owned East and West Woods properties using an official town letter and an executed copy of the official Maryland DNR "Permission to Hunt and/or Trap on Private Land" Form; and
- (14) the Town-authorized bow hunting must be conducted in accordance with all applicable Maryland State and Montgomery County rules and regulations; and
- (15) where possible, deer harvested during bow hunting sessions will be processed and the meat donated to food banks, food pantries, and/or soup kitchens to feed the hungry; and
- (16) the Town-authorized bow hunting shall comply with the applicable provisions of the Montgomery County Department of Parks Managed Deer Hunting Program Regulations, Group Leader Expectations, and Archery Participant Expectations and Procedures, as amended.

And **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and Town Council specify the following:

- (17) the town-selected and authorized volunteer bow hunting group to provide evidence of possession of group Liability Insurance policy (minimum \$1,000,000 per occurrence with Town of Washington Grove named "Additional Insured") prior to the first date of hunting session; and
- (18) each participating town-selected and authorized volunteer bow hunting group to provide a text message notification to the "Town Contact" (Mayor or other person as designated by the Mayor) upon arrival in and departure from the Town's East and West Woods. The Town Contact will subsequently notify the Town Office/Town Clerk; and

- (19) hunting to occur from portable tree-stands to meet the elevated height requirement (minimum platform height of 10 feet from the ground); and
- (20) mandatory reporting of deer harvest and other general observational data on a weekly basis of hunting activity; any citizen interactions or other urgent incidents will be reported promptly within 24 hours by the bow hunter via text message or email to the Town Contact; and
- (21) the Town Contact will ensure all records of arrivals and departures, reports of harvest, observational data, citizen interactions, any incidents, and summary reports are maintained in an organized and secure manner to support this deer management program; and
- (22) the Mayor and Town Council reserve the right to take corrective action if needed, including adjustment or termination of this deer management program.

Adopted and effective this day, July 8, 2024.

Approved by Mayor and Town Council:



Mayor

Attest: _____/s/
Town Clerk