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MEMORANDUM

To: Princeton Mayor and Council

From: Trishka Waterbury Cecil, Esq. 
Princeton Attorney

Date: September 5, 2025

Re: **2025-2026 Deer Management Program**

On your September 8, 2025 meeting agenda is a resolution endorsing Princeton's 2025-2026 deer management program.

The deer management program for 2025-2026 is proposed to consist of the following¹:

1. Traditional bow hunting on municipally-owned parks and open spaces, to be implemented through a goods and services agreement with John Zampini and Suburban Deer Management Associates.² This is the same organization Princeton has used with great success for the past several years. Mr. Zampini's organization typically operates from early September to late November/early December. No State permission is needed other than standard hunting permits.
2. Lethal deer removal services to be implemented by White Buffalo.³ As you know, Princeton has contracted with White Buffalo since 2000 to use what the State calls "alternate deer management control methods" to efficiently remove large numbers of deer in a two- to three-week time span. White Buffalo by special permission from the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife ("Division") and the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office employs non-traditional methods for which special exceptions from the State's hunting regulations are needed, including the ability to operate discretely at night. This requires a State-approved Community-Based Deer Management Plan ("CBDMP") and designation as a Special Deer Management Area. This aspect of the program will be the same as it has been for the past 20+ years. For further details, please see the attached proposal from White Buffalo dated July 28, 2025.

¹ The CBDMP application is still being worked on; however, it will remain essentially unchanged from last year's plan, as described below and in White Buffalo's attached proposal.

² The Council awarded a goods and services agreement on August 25, 2025 to John Zampini and Suburban Deer Management Associates for the bowhunting services (*see* Resolution R-25-303).

³ White Buffalo's deer management contract is scheduled for approval at the Council's September 23, 2025 meeting, together with a contract to conduct Princeton's standard biennial population survey.

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3. *Tentative: Non-lethal deer management services to be implemented by White Buffalo—specifically, surgical sterilization in those areas of the municipality where hunting is infeasible. *Please note that this aspect of the plan requires a Permit to Inhibit Wildlife Reproduction (“PIWR”) from the Division of Fish and Wildlife.* Princeton applied for this permit on June 21, 2025. The Division responded on August 12 with a series of questions and comments that strongly suggest the Division has no intention of issuing the requested permit, at least not in time to enable Princeton to incorporate sterilization in this year’s deer management program. (Copies of the PIWR application and the Division’s response are attached). The CBDMP therefore will not expressly seek authorization to use non-lethal means, as doing so would likely result in the Division denying the entirety of Princeton’s CBDMP. The plan will, however, make explicit reference to Princeton’s pending PIWR application and the municipality’s ongoing commitment to use sterilization as part of its overall deer management program. The purpose of this “bifurcation” is to enable Princeton to proceed with the lethal component of the deer management plan while it continues wrangling with the Division over the sterilization proposal.

Should you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (908) 528-4747 or trishka@mgplaw.com.

Encl.

cc: Dawn M. Mount, Clerk
Bernard HvozdoVIC, Administrator
Jeffrey Grosser, Deputy Administrator/Health Officer
Deanna Stockton, Deputy Administrator/Municipal Engineer
Sandra Webb, Chief Financial Officer
James Ferry, Animal Control Officer