



DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

Deer Management Committee

March 10, 2010

Minutes

In attendance: David Lynch, Chairman, Scott MacQuarrie, Brian Fredricks, Frank Mabley, Lars Cherichetti, and Kim Young

Also in attendance: Judy Mabley, Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs

I. Call to Order

Chairman Lynch called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Lars Cherichetti made a motion to approved the minutes of the last meeting, Seconded by Kim Young, and carried 6-0-0

III. Ongoing Business

a. Update on Alliance

Ms. Sesto reviewed the activities of the Fairfield Co. Municipal Deer Management Alliance. She stated that she has stepped down as the chairman after several years and announced that David Streit of Redding was the new chairman. Mr. Streit will likely direct the group towards adopting an approach similar to BeSafeRedding.

b. Summary of 2009 Controlled Hunt

Ms. Sesto recounted the totals from the 2009 season. The numbers were substantially lower than previous years. Forty one deer were taken, 28 of those were from SNEW properties. Of all the harvested deer, 60% were does. This ratio is inconsistent with previous years and is not as productive for herd reduction. Reasons for the low harvest numbers included hunter fatigue, gaps in field management, robust acorn crop, hunters spending time in other towns, and the effects of the past years of hunting, leaving behind the “smart deer”.

She reviewed the amount of time that is necessary to conduct the controlled hunt and the balance needed to justify closing off town parks for the duration of the hunt. With a harvest of 41 deer, the workload and park closures are not justified.

c. Private Land Hunting – working session

Chairman Lynch cited the results of the controlled hunt as reason to pursue hunting on private properties. This would require engaging the public’s interest and ultimately gaining their willingness to permit hunting on their properties. Discussion ensued regarding the hurdles such as the legalities of a town committee putting forward a list of hunters, what qualifications should a hunter have to be included on the list, how to convince the public that their participation is needed, how to increase their comfort level, and what role would the committee play.

i. Formulate public outreach campaign

1. Message

Ms. Sesto reported that town counsel has reviewed our proposal to develop a list of hunters, preferably with a background check and proficiency test as qualifying conditions for inclusion, for use by our residents. She believes such a list is possible. General discussion ensued regarding the observations that the public may be inclined to allow hunting, but lack the knowledge or comfort level to proceed. A hunter questionnaire already exists with the purpose of helping property owners understand what sorts of questions they should be asking and reminding them that they can set additional rules for the hunters to abide by.

The message needs to include the fact that as has always been known, the town’s controlled hunts are not enough; access to private land is needed. Also, landowners need to pay attention to be sure the hunters are actually showing up, not just hunting now and again.

2. Distribution Mediums

Methods to educate and encourage private property owners included the Conservation Commission newsletter, a newspaper insert, letters to the editor, the town's website. The flyer prepared by the BeSafeRedding program was referenced and was found to be generally agreeable.

Members will go to the BeSafeRedding website to review their message and program.

3. Tasks

- a. Chairman Lynch will contact the Wilton PD
- b. Scott MacQuarrie will prepare a letter to the editor
- c. Ms. Sesto will get a BeSafeRedding flyer and work with Ms. Young to alter the flyer to emphasize how private property owners can find a hunter.
- d. Ms. Sesto will write up the annual report for review at the next meeting. If approved it will be submitted to the Conservation Commission for their May meeting, with a goal of getting the plan to the Board of Selectmen for their early June meeting.

IV. New Business

No new business was brought forward.

V. Meeting Summary

Chairman Lynch reviewed the list of tasks and asked members to visit the BeSafeRedding website before the next meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2010.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.