

DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

Deer Management Committee

July 12, 2011

Minutes

In attendance: Kim Young, Vice Chair; Steve White; Scott MacQuarrie; Mike Russnok

Also in attendance: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs

I. Call to Order

Kim Young called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Kim Young made a Motion to approve the minutes of November 10, 2010 as written, Seconded by Scott MacQuarrie, and approved 2-0-2.

III. Ongoing Business

Members reviewed last year's hunt program with Ms. Sesto. The program focused on matching homeowners with hunters and no controlled hunting took place. The total number of deer harvested in Wilton was similar to previous years, however since the hunters can check deer on-line as opposed to needing to check them through Town Hall, there was no way of knowing for certain how many of the harvested deer were a result of the Deer Committee's efforts.

Ms. Sesto reviewed the logistics of what has been termed a "controlled hunt". There is no official definition; it simply connotes that conditions above and beyond the traditional hunting regulations are imposed on hunters who participate with the town. No such

conditions are part of the homeowner/hunter match effort. That would be up to the homeowner to decide.

Contrary to expectation, the controlled hunts did not result in a proportionate increase in the deer harvest as compared to the years before the controlled hunts. The assumption is that hunters previously on private land left those properties to work on the town lands. While this doesn't benefit the town as a whole, there is an ecological benefit to the open spaces hunted.

Members asked Ms. Sesto to try to ascertain how many different hunters harvested deer in Wilton for the 2010 season.

After further background information was provided, the members came to a consensus that it was worthy to pursue both hunting strategies. Ms. Sesto noted that due to a heavy workload with other town projects, she will not be able to take the lead on managing the hunts and committee members will need to take this on. Hunter proficiency testing took place last August with the help of Tim Fridinger, Wilton P.D. Wilton P.D will also conduct the background check.

Discussion ensued regarding the surveys of homeowners and hunters members agreed to conduct. Not all members completed the work and the new members agreed to finish this. Hunters that did not call members back to complete the survey or those who reportedly did not hunt their assigned property will not be eligible to participate in the town's program. For this year, hunters will be given an information sheet clearly spelling out the committee's expectations regarding minimal hunting and feedback, among other things.

In order to preserve strides made towards ecological recovery, controlled hunting will take place on lands previously found to be productive. Those properties are Sackett/Richards/Marble/Van Haelewyn, SNEW's City Lake reservoir and SNEW's Comstock Brook.

Committee members will undertake public outreach to encourage landowners to allow hunting. Articles and letters to the editor will be written.

Sesto raised the spectrum of culling the deer, noting recreational hunting will not bring the deer densities down low enough to meet the tick, accidents, and ecological goals of the committee. Discussion ensued regarding the laws associated with sharp shooting, DEP's offer to help craft a work plan to achieve 10-12 deer per square mile (Wilton's current density is approximately 70/sq.mi.), and the potential cost of the program vs. what Wiltonians collectively spend to manage their health, fix their cars, and protect their property. This will take a strong public outreach effort to overcome financial concerns and residents' sensitivity to this type of harvesting.

IV. New Business

None

V. Meeting Summary

Vice Chairman Young summarized the members' intent to hold both types of hunt programs this coming year. Sesto will draft a work plan for 2011 based on the committee's discussions.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.