

DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
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TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**Deer Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2013**

In attendance: Mike Russnok, Chairman; Frank Mabley; Donna Merrill, Loretta Foley, Scott MacQuarrie

- I. Chairman Russnok called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.
- II. Minutes: Loretta Foley made a Motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2012, Seconded by Donna Merrill, and carried 5-0-0.
- III. Ongoing Business
 - a. Russnok reported the DEP's unofficial tally for the 2012 season was 160 deer, falling well short of the committee's goal of 300. Many hunters reported seeing fewer deer this season and speculated the habits of the deer may be more nocturnal. Other explanations included disruptions to the patterns of deer movement resulting from Hurricane Sandy's damage to the woods. Sesto decried such an explanation, stating every year there seems to be an excuse, ranging from too many/few acorns, temperature variations, and storm events. This year's harvest is not out of line with previous harvests. Members asked Sesto to ask the state for harvest numbers in other towns across the state to gauge our results.

Given the extraordinary effort put into this year's hunt and the fact that no further accommodations to the hunters are available, the committee again debated the ability of recreational hunters to meet the town's deer density goals. To this end, members directed Sesto to invite Howard Kilpatrick of the CT DEEP to the April meeting to discuss options and recommendations. Foley asked for past season harvest total, which she will chart for comparison.
 - b. Russnok questioned if the homeowner match program is worth the effort. Until the hunter surveys are returned, it can't be known how many of the deer harvested came from private property vs. controlled hunt parcels. Sesto's check station numbers do not reflect all deer taken in town as hunters utilized other check stations as well. Sharp

shooting may be appropriate to supplement the controlled hunting and the committee would forego the land owner match effort.

Sesto was asked to work with the state to see if the harvest numbers can be broken out by day of the week for the purpose of determining the value of having added Saturdays to the schedule.

Foley provided a map to depict the distribution of hunters known to be hunting in town. The distribution is fairly uniform, with gaps up the route 7 corridor, around Mountain Road, and west of City Lake. Discussion ensued regarding the value:effort ratio of the homeowner surveys. The return rate was poor last year despite reminders from the committee and the surveys did not yield any action items.

- c. Members deferred end of season action or planning for next season until more data on this year's harvest is available.

IV. Mike Russnok made a Motion to adjourn at 7:25 p.m., Seconded by Frank Mabley, and carried 5-0-0.