

DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
Telephone (203) 563-0180  
Fax (203) 563-0284



TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**Deer Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 8, 2015**

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

Also in attendance: Environmental Analyst Mike Conklin, Ben Couch, Gerry Carozza

- I. Chairman Russnok called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.
- II. Mr. MacQuarrie made a Motion to approve the minutes of June 9, 2015 as drafted, Seconded by Ms. Merrill, and carried 4-0-1 with Ms. Foley abstaining due to absence in June.
- III. Russnok explained that this year the commission is being more passive with advertising the homeowner match program. He stated three (3) homeowners have signed up and there are fifteen (15) hunters that are part of the match program.

Foley asked if the Wilton Land Trust has given hunters permission to hunt the parcel of land near her house off of Thayer Pond. Russnok explained that Bruce Beebe of the Wilton Land Trust will be in contact with the hunters directly because he has some questions before signing the permission slips.

MacQuarrie asked if landowner surveys will be completed this year. Russnok confirmed that the data will be collected as was done in previous years.

Russnok explained there has been a typical amount of feedback from residents about this year's hunt with very few people providing feedback. He noted that the Friends of Gregg Preserve were emailed the dates when Gregg Preserve will be hunted this year and the window that property will be hunted is shorter than in past years to accommodate the group's concerns.

- IV. Russnok explained the background of the Deer Committee and the controlled hunt to Ms. Carozza because she had attended the meeting to learn more about the program and about hunting. Russnok explained the procedure for the hunter background and safety checks and Conklin explained the Connecticut bow hunter safety course that is required to be completed prior to someone being issued a hunting license. Russnok also explained that the harvested deer is processed and the venison is eaten by the hunter or donated to a program where the meat is distributed to soup kitchens. Russnok further explained that the hunters in the

controlled hunt are mandated to hunt from tree stands.

Ms. Carozza asked if deer run around with arrows sticking out of them. Russnok commented that with a well placed shot the deer typically will run approximately 100 yards before they die. He has heard of people seeing a deer with an arrow sticking out of it but that is extremely uncommon.

Ms. Carozza asked if we need to hunt deer. Russnok commented that the hunt is currently keeping the deer population in a stable state and stopping the hunt would allow the deer population to grow exponentially. MacQuarrie commented that the high deer population is having a negative impact on wildlife habitat and our forest ecosystems. Merrill further explained that the forest understory has been stripped from our forests from deer over-browsing. The over population of deer can be directly attributed to people creating the perfect edge habitat in our suburban ecosystem and the lack of natural predators.

Ms. Carozza asked how the deer population is determined. Russnok explained the CT DEEP deer population counting study.

MacQuarrie also noted that most hunters are ethical and environmental stewards.

Russnok questioned whether an October meeting is necessary and the group determined that they will cancel the October meeting.

Conklin gave an update on filling the vacancy on the Deer Committee. Russnok asked Ben Couch to explain a little about himself and his interest in serving on the Deer Committee. Couch explained that he is a hunter himself and stressed the importance of ethical hunting and environmental stewardship.

V. The committee adjourned at 7:25 p.m.