

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

**Deer Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2014**

In attendance: Mike Russnok, Chairman, Kevin Clark, Donna Merrill, Frank Mabley, Steve White, Scott MacQuarrie

Also in attendance: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs

- I. Chairman Russnok called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.
- II. No minutes were available for review.
- III. Ongoing business

Chairman Russnok provided an overview of the hunting season thus far. Game cameras have been showing little deer activity. Should this continue, the harvest for the season will likely be low.

The harvest data from the state that was updated daily is no longer available. The person who previously managed that information has retired and there is no one to take on the task. This information was helpful to compare what was happening in Wilton to other towns.

Patricia Sesto recapped her meeting with the neighbors of the Gregg and Belknap Preserves. Lead by Rick Thomas, neighbors lodged complaints regarding the "hard close" status of the property and the duration of this. Sesto asked Mayapple resident, Gail Hanney to host the neighbors for a meeting. There were 5 households represented at the October 14th meeting. In summary, the neighbors support the hunt, but were displeased that access to the preserves was so tightly restricted. Sesto explained to them the Deer Committee was working on the professional guidance provided by the wildlife division of CT DEEP, which in part

stated human intrusion on hunted properties should be kept at a minimum to effectively pattern the deer.

The outcome of the meeting was to assure the neighbors the committee would be looking at this year's harvest and compare it to previous years that did not include the hard close, the potential of closing just one of the two preserves, and rotating the preserves out every so often. Some neighbors were open to the idea of incorporating their own properties into the hunted area in order to have land available for them to hike.

As an outcome of the meeting, neighbors asked to have a the harvest information for all properties hunted. Sesto provided this to the neighbors and distributed copies to the committee members. She cautioned against drawing narrow conclusions based on these numbers alone. There are too many variables not represented that have distinctly influenced the number of deer taken year over year and from property to property. The table has value for sighting trends.

A meeting was also held here at town hall for the neighbors of Cherry Lane, Bradley, and Wild Duck Parks. Russnok described the meeting. Five Wilton residents attended and all but one was there to get more information. One Wild Duck resident was against the hunt, claiming there was only one deer in the neighborhood. She felt the committee should have had studies conducted to justify the hunt and believed it was illegal to proceed without them. Sesto offered to walk the park with her to point out the evidence of deer over browsing.

IV. New Business

a. The 2014 hunt is proceeding smoothly. Twenty Five deer have been checked through town hall and a few others are known to have been checked in out of town. Having hunters post the properties was mildly problematic. This will have to be tightened up next year.

b. Nineteen new or returning properties have been assigned hunters. The posters put up around town tend to disappear fairly quickly. It was determined the effort isn't worth outcome.

Sesto stated she has recently been contacted with complaints about the website. She would concur the site is sparse and needs to be beefed up. Members were asked to visit the site and think about ways to improve it.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.