

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

**Deer Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2014**

In attendance: Mike Russnok, Scott MacQuarrie, Loretta Foley, Steve White, Donna Merrill, and Kevin Clark

I. Chairman Russnok called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes from August 12, 2014

Kevin Clark made a MOTION to approve the minutes as drafted, Seconded by Scott MacQuarrie, and carried 6-0-0.

III. Ongoing Business

Chairman Russnok noted archery season begins Monday, September 15th. Hunter orientation went smoothly with strong attendance. Further, hunters who were not able to attend were responsible in communicating this. The first order of 40 bags of corn was received and distributed.

Properties to be hunted, beginning Monday, need to be posted. Members requested five signs for Vista Road Property, one for "leaving Quarry Head," seven for Slaughter Field, and one for Culhane. Cherry Lane, Wild Duck, and Bradley do not begin until November 1st and will be posted later. Belknap/Gregg begins October 1st.

Donna Merrill presented a list of places where posters are to be hung. She noted some locations, including grocery stores, where the posters need to be re-hung periodically. Members took posters and selected places to visit.

IV. New Business

- a. Patricia Sesto alerted the committee to correspondence and a voicemail left by a neighbor of the Gregg Preserve, Rick Thomas. The emails conveyed very strong disapproval of the length of time the properties are closed. He was also disgruntled the parks were closed seven days a week, stating there is

“...annual expansion of hunting hours, days, and periods...” Mr. Thomas plainly stated he, other adults and children will disregard the park-closed signs and will continue to use the property until the end of October and all of Thanksgiving week. A letter was faxed to the committee just prior to the meeting stating the times which the neighbors request hunting be excluded and had a list of signatures from six households under the affiliation Friends of the Gregg/Belknap Preserve, Inc.

Discussion ensued regarding the threats made by Mr. Thomas and the reckless inclusion of children in that threat. Chairman Russnok disputed the assertion the time consumed by hunting is ever increasing. 2014 is no different than 2013. The 2013 plan was based on recommendations by the CT DEEP to maximize efficiency. Russnok conveyed the previous experience of the hunters who said they saw no deer after the public was allowed to use the property over Thanksgiving weekend.

It was the consensus of the committee to write to each of the signatories inviting them to a meeting to discuss their requests and the reasoning behind the committee’s decisions. With better common understanding perhaps some compromise and a more realistic plan will be acceptable to the Friends. It would be best to conduct this meeting at one of the neighbor’s home. Sesto will draft this letter. Russnok and hunter coordinator Tim Fridinger will also attend.

The letters to the neighborhoods adjacent to the properties that will be hunted for the first time were sent out. Not only did the letters explain the hunt, but also invited interested people to a meeting on October 1st. One neighbor of Cherry Lane Park, Tricia Rosen, called the office and was adamantly opposed to the hunting. Sesto shared her experiences regarding other parks when they were first hunted. Aside from Mr. Thomas’ intended disregard of the park closure, the response has been consistent past years.

- b. Members reviewed the procedure for landowners who contact the office and what supporting documents they receive. Previously, the office would respond and include the Hunter Interview guidelines. Loretta Foley would follow up and assign a hunter, giving the homeowner the FAQ’s handout. It was decided the office should send the FAQ’s and Foley will send the interview guidelines. Sesto will revise the guidelines to exclude the listing of the different licenses.

V. The Deer Committee adjourned at 7:28 p.m.