

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

Deer Management Committee
Special Meeting
December 9, 2009
Minutes

Present: Wayne Ranhosky; Naomi Dempsey; Kim Young and David Lynch
Also Present: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs; Karen Padowicz, Administrative Secretary; Brian Fredericks; Scott Mac Quarrie; Judy Mabley; and Frank Mabley.

I. Call to Order

Kim Young called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Election of Officers

Ms. Sesto conveyed that Lars Cherichetti does not want to continue on as Chairman and has asked David Lynch to fill the position.

Kim Young MOTIONED to nominate David Lynch as Chairman, SECONDED by Wayne Ranhosky and carried 4-0-0.

Wayne Ranhosky MOTIONED to re-elect Kim Young as Vice Chairman, SECONDED by Naomi Dempsey and carried 4-0-0.

III. Approval of Minutes

David Lynch MOTIONED to approve the minutes of September 15, 2009, SECONDED by Kim Young and carried 4-0-0.

IV. Guest Speaker – David Streit, BeSafeRedding

Patricia Sesto introduced David Streit, guest speaker, and welcomed Brian Fredericks and Scott Mac Quarrie, stating that they have expressed an interest in becoming committee members.

Mr. Streit described his function as a volunteer citizen in Redding for the “Be Safe Redding” organization. He explained that the organization has a desire to reduce the population of deer in Redding as a means to control Lyme disease. He described the website that has been set up to unite hunters and private property owners to work towards the reduction of population to 10-12 deer per square mile. Mr. Streit passed out a flyer that had been distributed to Redding residents via the newspaper. Subsequently, there have been mostly supportive letters and articles in the paper.

This program is not a Town of Redding project, although Mr. Streit did speak with a number of town boards to see if they had any opposition which they did not. The town runs its own controlled hunt with the help of the deer warden. The warden is not in favor of the BeSafeRedding program, which, according to Mr. Streit is because of competition concerns. It was his position that Redding’s controlled hunt program did not have the goal of substantially reducing the deer herd, rather the program was running like a hunt club.

Mr. Streit explained that he meets with each hunter that has been referred to the program and that most referrals come from the DEP. One hundred properties have been signed up to date with very little opposition. DEP reports there have been no incidents reported in connection with “controlled hunts.”

Mr. Lynch agreed with Mr. Streit’s assertion that focusing on private property hunting should be the future for Wilton.

Mr. Streit said that some meat is donated to the local church, who then pass it on to a food distribution program in Bridgeport. BeSafeRedding requires that one in every five harvested be donated. The hunters butcher

the deer themselves and they receive a voucher that entitles them to discounts at 12 area restaurants.

To assist with other hunting expenses, the town of Redding has an account set up for donations to go towards supplies for the hunters and suggested that Wilton do the same. Town of Redding has 60 hunters in their controlled hunt program.

Mr. Lynch expressed his appreciation of Mr. Streit's efforts and thanked him for his time as a guest.

V. 2010 Meeting Calendar

Ms. Sesto stated that the suggested calendar distributed is simply a reflection of the previous year's schedule and it was a function of the committee's focus on the controlled hunt. Mr. Lynch stated that the controlled hunt is under performing and private property hunting should be the new focus going forward. With this goal in mind, more meetings than previously scheduled are warranted. Accordingly, the meeting calendar should show a meeting on the second Wednesday of each month for 2010.

Naomi Dempsey MOTIONED that 2010 schedule reflect a meeting on the second Wednesday of each month unless vacation or holidays fall on that day, then the meeting will be moved to the third Wednesday of the month, SECONDED by Kim Young and carried 3-0-1, with Dr. Ranhowsky opposing stating that a meeting every other month would be sufficient.

VI. Ongoing Business

a. Update on Alliance

Ms. Dempsey and Ms. Sesto updated the Committee on the activities of the Alliance.

b. Private Land Hunting

Previously discussed.

VII. New Business

a. Fall Controlled Hunt

Mr. Lynch stated that current controlled hunt is not sufficient.

Wayne Ranhosky stated the acorn abundance has affected the low number of deer harvested because the deer are not moving far from the acorns.

Mr. Lynch suggested more public awareness to attract property owners. The issue of how to manage the town's exposure in connecting hunters and property owners was raised. Other towns have overcome this obstacle and it was suggested the Alliance could help.

Naomi Dempsey suggested requesting donations to pay for the butchering.

Mr. Strait suggested coordinating speakers who have been affected by Lyme Disease speaking at the library and the committee should put their attention towards large landowners.

Ms. Sesto stated that many of Wilton's large landowners already allow hunters and the committee has encouraged them to follow up with their hunters to encourage a larger harvest. The additional deer can be donated to the hunters for the hungry-type program. She agreed that a donation fund for butchering to feed the hungry would be advantageous.

VIII. Meeting Summary

Mr. Lynch summarized the meeting by listing the following topics; election of officers, guest speaker, the Alliance update, future hunting on private property to reduce deer population to 10-12 per square mile.

Mr. Lynch requested Ms. Sesto set up a meeting with town counsel concerning private property hunting.

Kim Young offered to contact the Lyme Task force for funding and public awareness.

Ms. Dempsey suggested the funding be used for butchering to feed the hungry.

IX. Adjourn

David Lynch adjourned at 8:30 p.m., SECONDED by Naomi Dempsey and carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully,

Karen Padowicz, Recording Secretary