

Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance

Meeting dated September 10, 2012

Wilton Town Hall

Minutes

In attendance:

David Streit, President, Redding

Erin McKenna, Stamford

Denise Savageau, Greenwich

Tom McGrath, Darien

Russell Cornelius, Brookfield

Dave Shugarts, Newtown

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Observers:

Peter Knight, Westport

Capt. Rick Cochrane, Stamford Police Department

Peter Hood, Fairfield

The meeting was opened at 10.35 a.m. by David Streit, President.

1. **Approval of Minutes.** The Minutes of the meeting of June 11, 2012, having been circulated previously, were approved unanimously.
2. **Welcome.** The President welcomed the representatives of the various towns who introduced themselves.
3. **Treasurer's report.** Pat Sesto was unable to attend but David Streit said that he believed there had been no significant change to the Alliance's finances.

Stamford - Captain Cochrane of the Stamford Police Department was introduced by Erin McKenna. He was attending to familiarize himself with some of the issues related to deer management. Stamford was considering some form of deer reduction program and there have been discussions with the town of Wilton in this regard. The maintenance of records of deer vehicle accidents had been very lax in recent years. An effort to improve this was initiated last May and the number of 56 was recorded for the previous 12 months. It was noted that, due to poor reporting State wide, this number was habitually increased by a factor of 5 or 6 by the DEEP. Capt. Cochrane noted that the number did not include deer killed on the Merritt Pkwy. or Route 95 that were the province of the State police.

(As an aside, Russ Cornelius and Dave Streit mentioned the "Hunt to Feed Dinner" that had taken place last week. About 180 had attended but this was down from about 250 in previous years. The dinner supported the collection of donations and paid for the processing of harvested deer whose meat was donated to the food banks. It was a significant source of protein for the recipients. The food banks provided 47,000 meals per annum. Howard Kilpatrick of the DEEP was unable to attend but Daniel Esty, Commissioner of the DEEP since April 2011, was present.)

Newtown - Dave Shugarts reported that the town Selectman continued to "kick the can" down the road. They were waiting for the DEEP's report for Redding that had been promised for last April but was still pending. They planned to split the approach into two - the control of Lyme disease and reduction of the deer population. They were also discussing a 4-poster tick reduction program that could cost from \$ 1.4 to \$ 2.4 million. Certified town employees would be needed to administer it. An infra red fly

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over survey to count deer numbers was under consideration but the cost was probably prohibitive.

Brookfield – Russ Cornelius described how Brookfield's hunters are divided into two groups – the local hunters and those affiliated with the White Tail Solutions group. The latter were very efficient and developed and communicated ideas to increase their effectiveness (e.g. minimize “hours up a tree”). There was a new individual in charge of conservation who, Russ felt, was well informed.

Greenwich – Denise Savageau, as the Town's Conservation Director, said that she worked primarily with the Landowners' Association but also the Audubon Society and the Water Company in her efforts to develop a deer management program. The Town conducted a cull or sharp shoot about 7 years ago that had been disrupted by animals rights activists with ploys such as tampering baiting traps, feigning injuries that kept them in the town property after the hour it should have been closed for the cull etc. The Town had received a Freedom of Information Act request, asking for details of police overtime incurred for the shoot – ironic because a significant part of the overtime cost resulted from the activists' disruptive tactics.

Denise was now trying to get the cost of the next sharp shoot into the budget process. Aquarion did hunt its substantial property and the Audubon was concerned about browsing and bird populations – the question arose: “Friends of Animals” – which animals were you a friend of? Also, she observed that, after deer reduction, flowers and plants came back but animal species were much slower to recover.

Dave Shugarts noted for those new to the issue it was important to differentiate between:

- “Recreational hunting” (properly licensed)
- “Controlled hunts”, that were recreational but with supervision, and
- “Cull” or, as he preferred, “sharp shooting” by professionals contracted and supervised by town authorities
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Redding – Dave Streit informed the meeting that Redding had received a \$300,000 grant from the CDC for 3 years to study Lyme disease that could be addressed by:

- Deer reduction with Sharpshooting
- Tick Sprays
- Do nothing and measure (control)

This would be conducted by Kirby Stafford of the Ct. Ag Station. Tony DeNicola, with people from Yale University, would participate.

Westport – Peter Knight reported on the progress of the Town's deer committee that had focused on 3 areas – public health (schools education program), a deer count (infrared fly over) and population control (Dr. Rutberg of Tufts University and his immunocontraceptive program using the PZP vaccine.) Hastings-on-Hudson, NY, had agreed recently to introduce the PZP program. Dave Shugarts noted that this program had been tested over the last 15 years and had been applied only in areas of huge deer

densities such as Fripp Island, SC, and Fire Island, NY.

5. **PR efforts.**

David Streit noted that he, Dave Shugarts and Dr. Mark Friedman of Westport had appeared recently on a public TV station to discuss deer and Lyme. Dave asked the Alliance members to contribute text for a press release. Dave Shugarts made the point that a press release should come from the Alliance but letters could be submitted by members to their local newspapers. Dave Shugarts would try to work on a Fall press release to be circulated by President Dave Streit.

6. **Next meeting**

The next and final meeting of the year would be held on December 10 at 10.30 a.m.

There being no further business, on motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.



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