



**Deer Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2015**

In attendance: Chairman Mike Russnok, Loretta Foley, Scott MacQuarrie, Steve White, Kevin Clark

Also in attendance: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst; Tom Philippides

- I. Chairman Russnok called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
- II. Clark made a Motion to approve the minutes of September 8, 2015 as drafted, Seconded by MacQuarrie, and carried 5-0-0.
- III. Homeowner Match Update - Foley explained the background of the homeowner match program and handed out a spreadsheet of information for this year's program. She noted that 15 hunters are part of the program and 4 of them have been matched with interested landowners this year. Foley also explained if more homeowners are interested in inviting a hunter to hunt their land, the committee has interested hunters. A discussion about how hunters are vetted ensued. Russnok asked White to reach out to his friend, a participating homeowner, to obtain feedback on how this season is going.

Controlled Hunt Update – Russnok explained CT DEEP has not published any deer harvest numbers for 2015. He thinks the season is off to a slow start due to the heavy acorn crop from oak trees this year which has made the deer feeders less effective for luring deer to them. He stated firearms deer season opens tomorrow (November 18th) and early bow season reports suggest that hunters are harvesting deer in many different locations around town.

Russnok noted two incidents with hunters this year: One hunter found a bag of money that he thought was stolen but turned out to be a geocache prize and one hunter encountered a problem with a trespasser on SNEW land. Russnok also noted that coyotes and bobcats seem to be more prevalent than in previous years. Russnok addressed Tom Philippides who introduced himself and explained he was just observing the public meeting and did not have any specific questions.

- IV. 2016 Meeting Schedule – Clark made a Motion to approve the 2016 Meeting Schedule as drafted, Seconded by Foley, and carried 5-0-0.

2016 Committee Elections – MacQuarrie made a Motion to approve Russnok as Chairman for 2016, Seconded by Clark, and carried 5-0-0. White made a Motion to approve MacQuarrie as Vice Chairman for 2016, Seconded by Clark and carried 5-0-0.

Russnok explained the idea of installing permanent bow hunting signs on properties where bow hunting occurs as part of the controlled hunt. This would allow the properties to be used by the public during hunting season while the properties are actively being hunted. Conklin and Foley noted that the committee has not received complaints about the current hunted properties being closed. Conklin advised keeping the current temporary closure program and signage in place to minimize confusion between hunters and park users as well as eliminating the need to maintain permanent signs. Clark suggested the committee be more proactive about advertising which properties are closed by posting the list on Facebook (Wilton411) and updating the website. Clark explained a “hunter badge” program in Kent, Connecticut where hunters can flip a sign on a kiosk when they are hunting similar to an open/closed sign.

Russnok explained they still have a vacancy on the committee that needs to be filled. Conklin explained he has interviewed Ben Couch and the official Town process will be followed to fill the vacancy. Conklin also explained if current committee members have not read and signed the Code of Ethics book they should visit the Town Clerk’s office to complete that task.

V. The committee adjourned at 7:20 p.m.