

Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance

Meeting dated March 10, 2014

Wilton Town Hall

Minutes

In attendance:

David Streit, Redding

Patricia Sesto, Wilton

David Shugarts, Newtown

Observers:

Peter Knight, Westport

Peter Hood, Fairfield

RECEIVED

2014 MAR 13 A 9 33

**TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK**

Welcome. David Streit presided and opened the meeting at 10.40 a.m. He asked Peter Knight to take the Minutes.

-

Approval of Minutes. The Minutes of the December 9, 2013 meeting, having been circulated previously, were approved.

-

Treasurer's report Pat Sesto reported that, after payment of \$74 for the PO Box rental, the Alliance's funds balance stood at \$5,767.95.

Town reports

Redding. Dave Streit noted that the DEEP had undertaken a census flyover with 2 observers in a helicopter as part of the ongoing Ag Station study. The area covered only 4-6 square miles. The previous DEEP counts over Fairfield County had been done by one aircraft and one observer. Dave Shugarts made the point that the greatest value of the counts, when trying to establish trends, was to compare one year with another, provided the same technique was used.

Hunters had tried to oppose the activities of White Buffalo that had been contracted to carry out a cull in a very small area for the study.

Dave mentioned that he had seen an article that estimated the annual investment in hunting in the State was \$12 million. This divided into the number of deer taken worked out at approximately \$900 per deer.

Wilton. Pat Sesto said that the Town deer committee had not met since the last Alliance meeting and therefore she had no tallies to provide to DEEP for the year. Mechanical baiting had been disappointing despite the training session provided by DEEP and \$2,000 worth of corn provided by the Town. Baiting was not considered appropriate by some old line hunters and this exemplified the difference in the approaches to wildlife management on the one hand and sport hunting on the other.

Newtown. The BeSafeNewtown.org. program was doing well. Dave Shugarts felt the harvest this year was about the same as last. On a side note, he commented on yet another form of tick-borne disease – Lyme carditis. This had been identified from an autopsy and the cause of death traced to heart blockage caused by Lyme derived from infected tissue transplanted from an organ bank.

Public comment

Westport. Peter Knight re-affirmed his interest in finding a way in which Westport could participate in the deer management process that was currently blocked by the Town's no hunting ordinance. To get this changed, a clear expression of the town residents' feelings would have to be established and some form of survey would be useful in this regard. Pat Sesto said that was the approach taken by Wilton. The result of their survey showed a) a need to control the population and b) a preference for a contraception program, the effectiveness of which, in a suburban environment, was debatable. This preference made clear the need to educate citizens about the safety issue as well as the social issues surrounding hunting as one form of wildlife management. Peter said that the Westport gardening club remained very concerned about the damage caused by deer to plants and gardens and David Streit said he would be pleased to address the club if this would be useful. Peter also mentioned that the Audubon Society recently spoken to the Y's Men of Westport and reiterated the need to educate the public on the deer issue; the Society permits and encourages hunting on its property.

Other. None.

Future activity.

David Streit reminded the meeting that it was the Alliance's 10th anniversary. Pat Sesto said that if town representatives or those that had been involved with the Alliance over the years, would like to send in observations or landmark achievements, she would be pleased to compile these.

The dates set for meetings for the remainder of the year were:

June 9

September 8

December 8

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11.30 a.m..

Peter Knight