

Minutes of the 11-18--09 Meeting Of The New Canaan Deer Committee

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 PM by Ruth Smithers the Committee Chairperson.

Rick Stecher, Bill Knoblock, Maryann Kleinschmitt, John Erdmann, David Harvey and Russ Kinne were present. Charles Bryk , George Russell, Richard Rose were absent.

The minutes of the last meeting were not reviewed. Dave Harvey will bring them in to the next meeting for approval.

Maryann Kleinschmitt presented an update on the number of deer killed by motor vehicle in New Canaan through 11-16 of this year. She reported that there have been 27 deer killed year to date due to motor vehicle accidents. She also reported that 55 deer have been taken through controlled hunts at various locations in New Canaan. She is maintaining records on what is being taken, on what properties, and by which hunters. Fifteen deer have been taken from the SNEW Reservoir property and two from the Transfer Station property.

Maryann had attended an informative lecture on the deer problem at the High Stead Arboretum in Redding, CT. She conveyed much of what she had learned to the Committee.

A discussion about the spread of invasive plants brought on by excessive deer populations followed. Apparently deer spread the seeds of invasive species in their droppings much the same as birds do. This contributes to the spread of Barberry throughout the woodland areas choking out indigenous understory species, which in turn contributes to the expansion of Deer Tick numbers. The ticks gather under the canopy of the Barberry bushes due to the higher humidity present and protection from predation they provide

The discussion continued; Deer populations have “flat lined” indicating that the State-wide effort to reduce their numbers have not been effective. Their numbers indicate that they are reproducing as rapidly as they are being taken by motor vehicle accidents, controlled hunts, and predation by coyotes. Recreational hunting isn’t working; perhaps commercialization of the hunt to allow harvested deer meat to be sold to restaurants and other food preparation entities would begin to make a dent in the deer population.

Charles Bryk has not been feeling well. The Deer Committee members extend their best wishes and hope that he feels better and gets back on his feet soon. Charles has been collecting magazine and newspaper articles about deer problems. He has been sending them into Ruth. She asked Rick Stecher to review and consolidate them. He will report back to the Committee once he has done so.

Ruth raised the issue of attracting new membership to the Committee. She mentioned that several potential younger individuals and couples should be approached to see if they might have an interest in joining the Deer Committee.

Ruth is hoping to attend the upcoming NCNC Board of Directors Meeting in hopes of addressing them directly. Russ Kinne volunteered to take a copy of an earlier written letter (addressed to the NCNC Board) to Laura Heckman the NCNC Exec. Director. He was also going to discuss the benefits of the “exclosure project” with her and other staff members of the Nature Center. An invitation to their board members to attend an upcoming Deer Committee meeting will be extended as well.

Rick Stecher mentioned that the Deer Committee can further support the educational value of an exclosure demonstration project by offering to do follow-up presentations / lectures at the Nature Center.

Dave Harvey suggested that Committee members should visit the “New Canaan Patch” web site and review an article posted there. He suggested that George Russell check it out and prepare a responding letter to their Editor. Ruth will discuss the suggestion with George once she has an opportunity to track him down.

Ruth adjourned the meeting at 7:08 PM

Next Meeting: December 16 @ 5:30 PM

Respectfully Submitted by Rick Stecher
Secretary