
WEST SENECA DEER TASK FORCE

INITIAL SURVEY COMMENT REVIEW

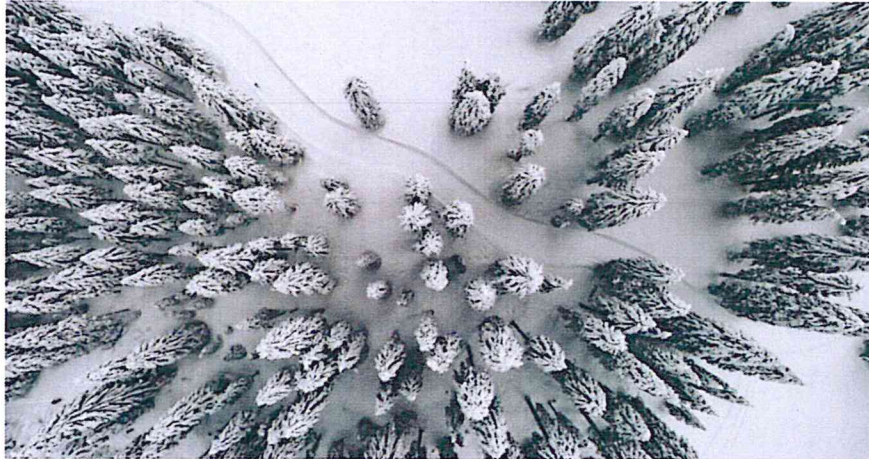
Presented by Amanda Escobar

For the task force meeting on 7/20/2021



AGENDA

1. Premise / introduction
2. Process of reviewing public comments
3. Findings
 1. Key concerns
 2. Suggested solutions and ideas
 3. Taxpayer interest
 4. Opinions on culling & lethal methods
4. Location supplement*
5. Conclusions and next steps



INTRODUCTION

An initial survey was conducted by the Town to evaluate public opinion on whether deer control is needed in West Seneca (WS).

It should be noted that the survey was non-scientific and was only conducted online. During the survey, respondents were allowed to answer more than once and no controls were in place for participants to prove residency.

The survey was not intended to be a full representation of public opinion for the approximately 45,000 residents living in the Town of WS but only to assess a need for additional steps to be taken to research the issue. This is the reason the Deer Task Force exists.

The following presentation is an analysis of the open-comments submitted by survey participants. Each of the 646 comments submitted were read and accounted for in this presentation. Some comments were determined to be duplicates and were removed, resulting in 642 total survey comments. It should still be taken into account that unknown duplicates may have been included.

This analysis is not intended to be a final data set regarding public opinion but is a useful tool in helping the Deer Task Force identify and address specific public concerns and suggestions raised regarding deer control methods and to take those under consideration for the next steps.

INITIAL DEER CONTROL SURVEY

Conducted on March 2, 2021 – Closed March 9, 2021

Total survey respondents: 1,466

Total self-identified residents: 1,374

QUESTION RESULTS:

642 agreed that “Deer are a serious nuisance that require action to reduce the herds”.

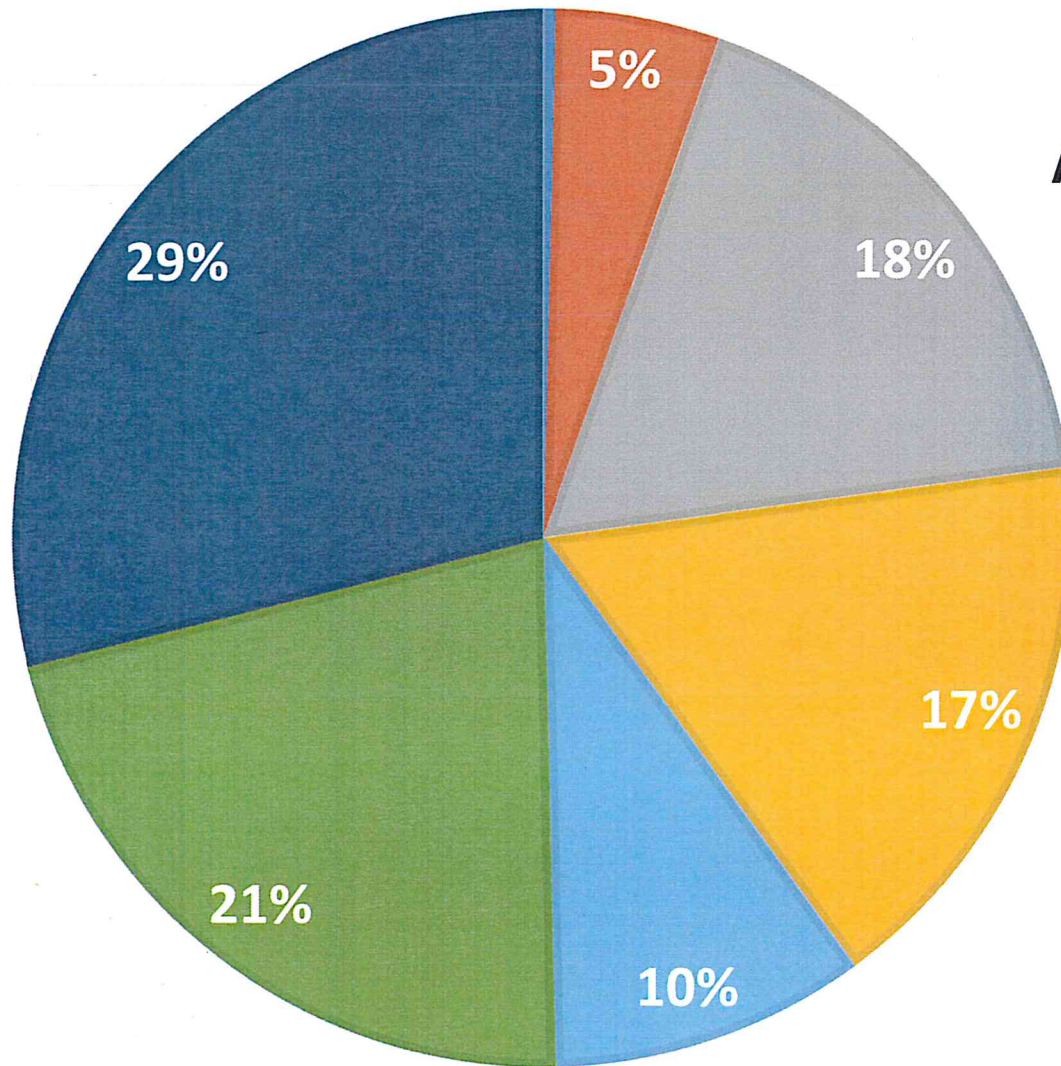
664 agreed that “Deer are a part of the natural world and should be left alone”.

543 agreed that “There should be a deer control program in WS, even if it involved culling 50-100 deer per year at taxpayer expense”.

KEY CONCERNS



AREAS OF CONCERN



- other
- safety
- causal concerns
- auto related
- disease
- landscaping
- loss of natural habitat

AREAS OF CONCERN, CONT'D: POSSIBLE CAUSES

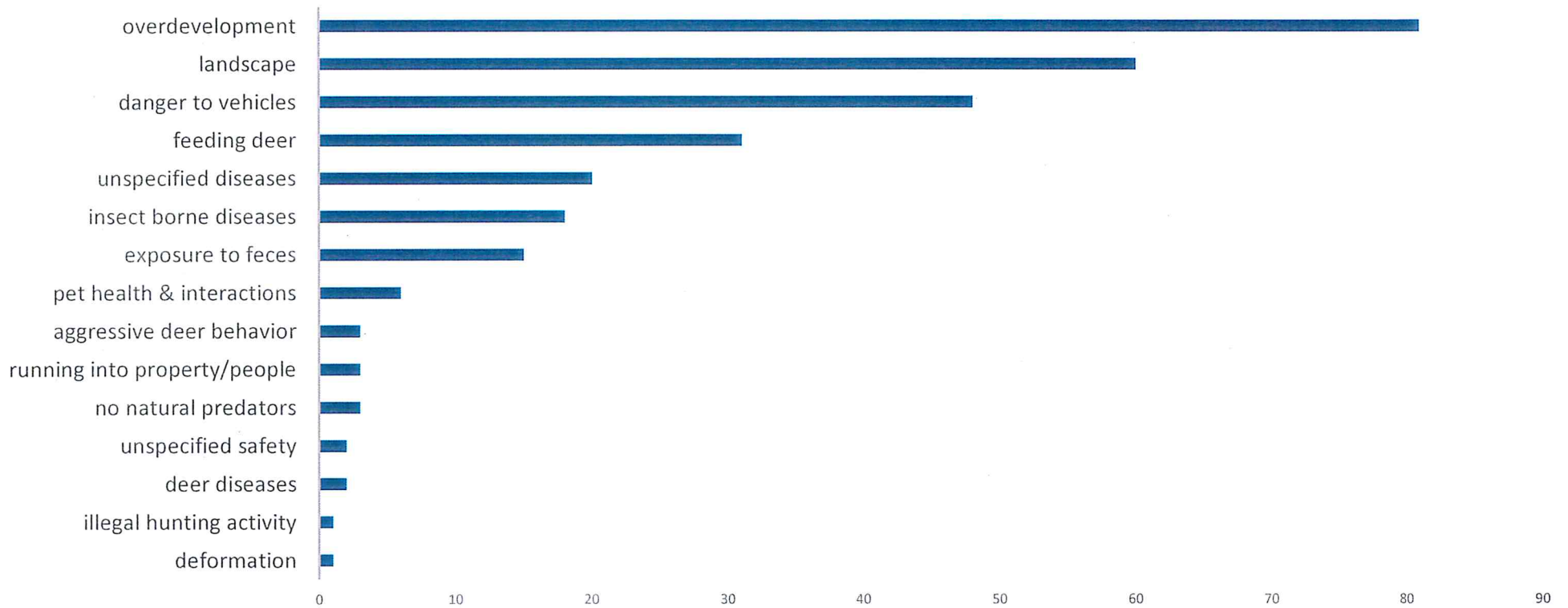
| | |
|--|---|
| OVERDEVELOPMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• destroying or encroaching on natural habitats• unnecessary development• lack of conservation sites |
| FEEDING DEER (intentionally or unintentionally) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• many residents openly feed deer• people visit neighborhoods they don't live in to feed deer (Lein Rd)• fines not enforced• complaints to the town are treated dismissively• resident complaints stated that birdseed gets eaten by deer (public education?) |
| LACK OF NATURAL PREDATORS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• killing off of natural predators (i.e. coyotes, wolves etc.)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• some residents questioned this is an issue based on the deceased deer and fawns they find• deceased deer a result of starvation? |
| CULLING | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• may cause population explosion |

AREAS OF CONCERN, CONT'D: CONCERNS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| LANDSCAPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• damage to landscape (deer eating plants/trampling lawns)• expensive to repair or replace damaged plants• inability to operate small businesses that rely on the land (ex. farms)• poor curb appeal• unable to use yard due to deer waste |
| DISEASE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• insect borne illness (i.e. ticks, Lyme etc.)• Deer diseases from overpopulation (i.e. chronic wasting, blue tongue etc.)• deformation• exposure to deer feces |
| AUTO | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• auto crashes (human safety)• cost of repairs, increased insurance cost after deer-related damage• general road safety for walkers, bikers, and kids at play• deer carcass laying in the road• cost of cleanup after deer are hit |
| SAFETY | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• specific risk to kids and pets at play |
| OTHER | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• illegal hunting of deer near residential areas• comments alluded to both hearing gun shots and also that "no one would know" if they hunted on their land |

CONCERNS IN THE COMMENTS

(CONCERN COUNT: 294)



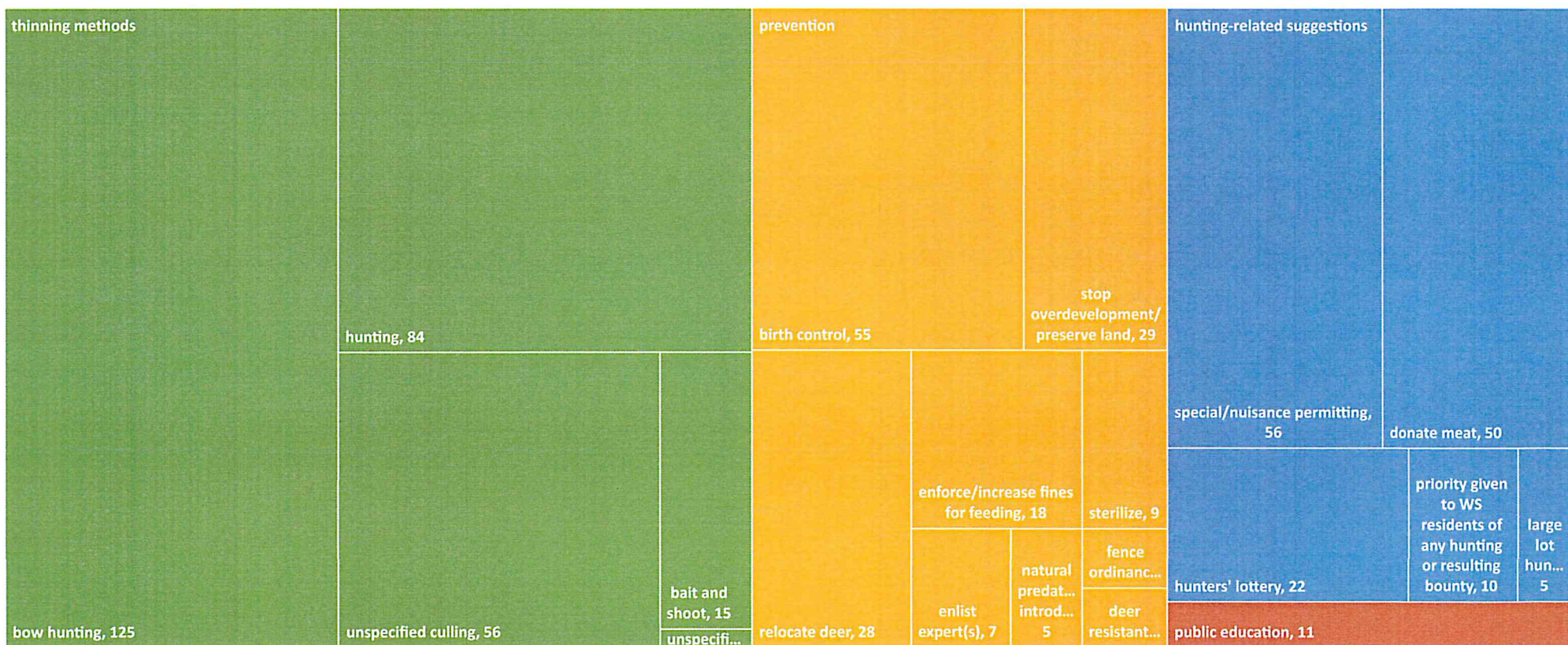
SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS



SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS

("MENTIONS" COUNTER, NOT COMMENTER COUNTER)

■ hunting-related suggestions ■ other ■ prevention ■ thinning methods



SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS, CONT'D

PREVENTATIVE

- stop overdevelopment
 - review legislation on land preservation
- birth control/sterilization
- stop feeding deer
- allow increased height, fences/ordinance
- use deer resistant gardening techniques and deer repellent

HUNTING

- bow
- bow and cross-bow
- Gun (least popular)

CULLING

- hire outside professionals or specialist org
- by WS law enforcement
- option for putting animals "to sleep" via chemical/medication drop?
- bait and shoot

RELOCATE

- bait to another area
- tranquilize and move

COMBO

- initial cull and then maintenance another way (i.e. hunting, birth control, sterilization etc.)

OTHER

- contact experts and/or work with experts
- see what has been successful in other towns and implement similar plan
- reintroduce natural predators
- spraying areas of WS for pest control
- public education needed to inform residents why deer management is needed

SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS, CONT'D: HUNTING

HUNTING

during hunting season OR extended season

by special "nuisance" permit

by lottery

by property owners on their land, large acreage properties only

on town land at set time/location

set restrictions on distance from residential areas/buildings

BENEFITS

reduce costs to taxpayers

generate revenue by charging for license/special permit

taxes cover administration and deer processing fees where hunters don't get to keep meat

WS resident hunters benefit from natural resources

donate meat to food-insecure families (some commenters thought meat should first go to WS residents in need and then to Food Bank)

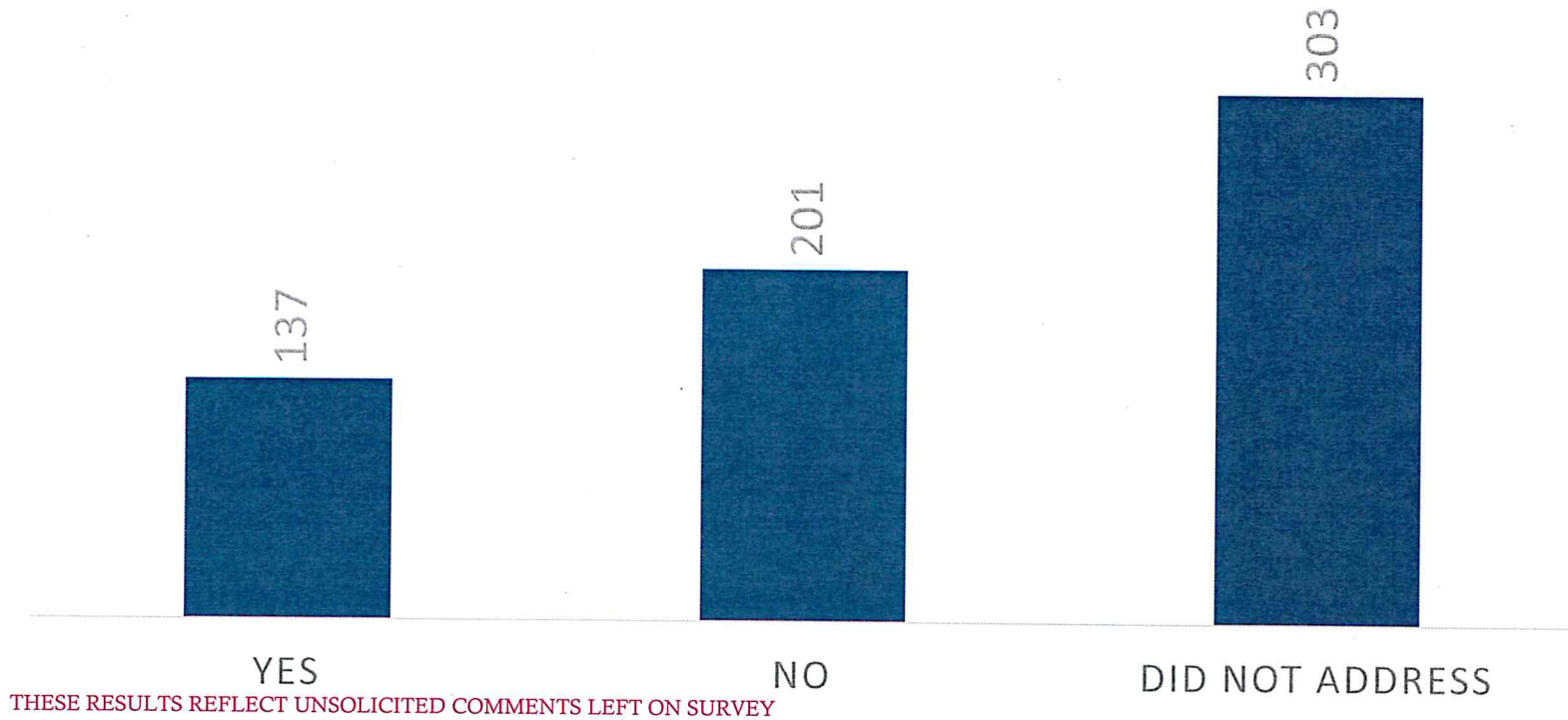
FOR HUNTERS

by special permit must take certain number of does before allowed a buck

must have meat sustainably processed and/or donate what they don't use for their own family

must have proven track record of achievement to be renewed the following year

OPPOSED TO LETHAL THINNING METHODS? (YES = OPPOSED, NO = NOT OPPOSED)

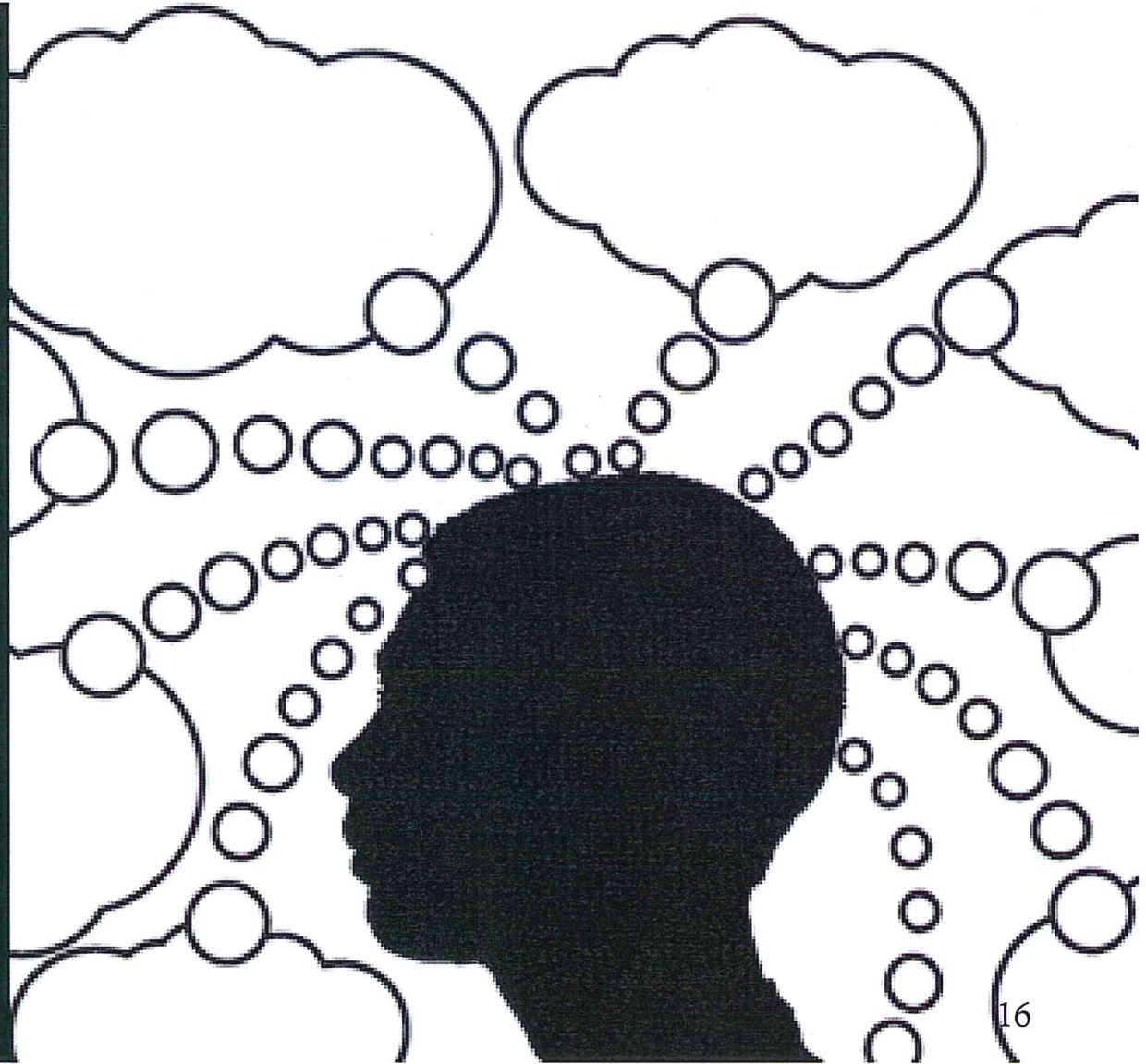


SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS, CONT'D

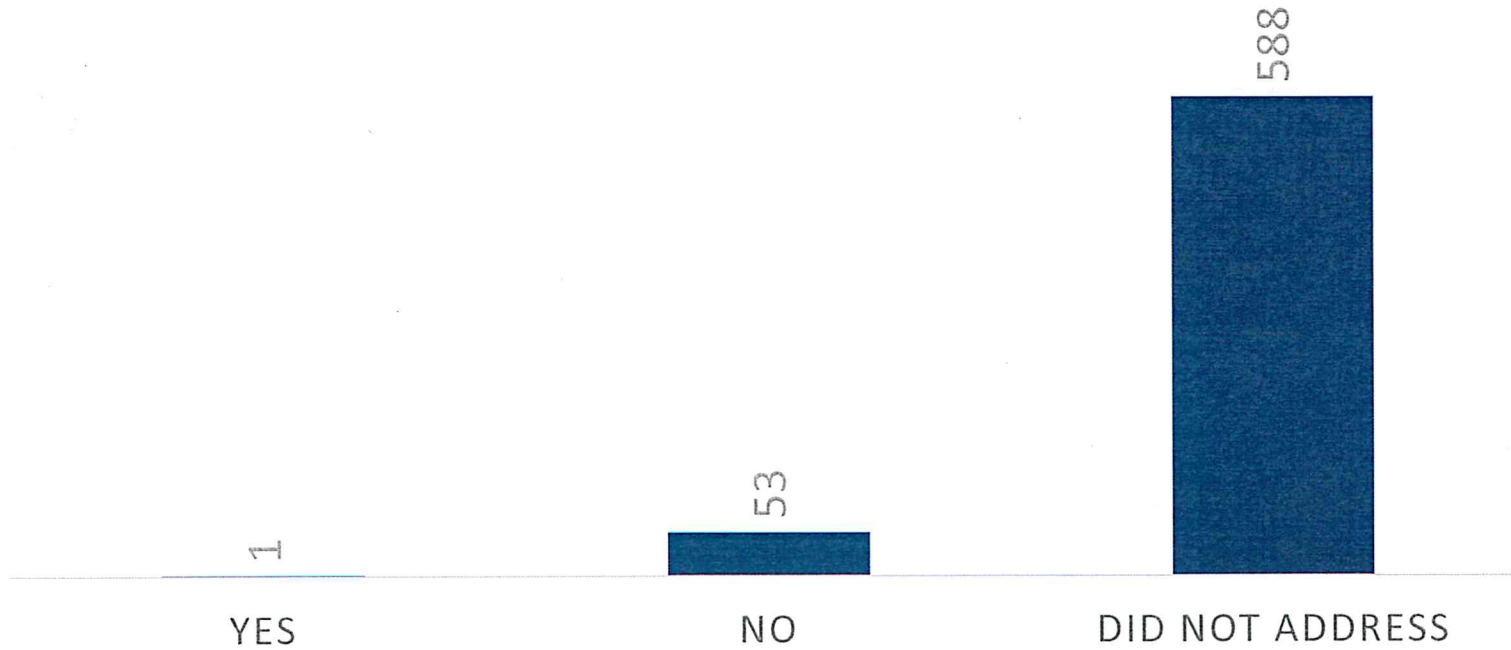
REASONS TO LEAVE DEER ALONE

- we have destroyed their natural habitat and need to focus on being better stewards of the land and nature
- they are innocent
- they are a beautiful part of nature and were here first
- many residents love the deer; they are the reason people choose to live in WS
- damage to landscape isn't a reason to kill deer
- people should exercise more caution when driving
- opposed to lethal animal control methods

OPINION ON TAXPAYER INTEREST



SHOULD ANY ACTION OR ONGOING MANAGEMENT BE PAID FOR WITH TAXPAYER DOLLARS?



THESE RESULTS ONLY REFLECT COMMENTS WRITTEN IN THE "COMMENTS" SECTION OF THE SURVEY

THOUGHTS PERTAINING TO TAX DOLLARS AND DEER CONTROL

- Tax dollars would be better spent on other improvements
(town drainage, increasing recycling again, use it to help with management of rats or geese etc.)
- Tax dollars shouldn't be spend on something residents have had no input in
(i.e. new development destroying natural habitat etc.)
- Taxes are already excessive should not be increased

LOCATIONS
SUPPLEMENT



LOCATIONS SUPPLEMENT

Abbott Road

Almont Ave

Berg Road by Heritage Farms

Borden

Center Road

Chancellor Drive

Cheektowaga/French and Towers

Clinton

Commerce Drive

Covington

East and West Rd, Development Center

Tampa, Tudor streets

Elmsford drive

Fisher Road

Former Morin Post

Indian Church; off Seneca near creek

Iris Ave

Lein Road

Lena Court

Leydecker Road

Lind Road

Mill Road Park

North America behind Bison foods

Milton

Old French

Pinewood Drive

Princeton Estates

Reserve Road

Seneca Creek

Seneca Street

Sunset Creek

Union Road

Orchard Park Road

Willowdale drive

WS Soccer Complex

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

Further community engagement

- Enhanced survey
- Public events
- Public education (for the website?)

Review town and surrounding conservation sites

- Locations?
- Mapping?

Review legislation

- Fencing
- Hunting (bow?)
- Development
- Preservation of land



THANK YOU

QUESTIONS

West Seneca Deer Task Force | <http://www.westseneca.net/government/deer-task-force#gsc.tab=0>