

BOARD FOCUS

“A fence would be a very important tool,” Sibio said, “because it changes the way that the state looks at us. You have to prove that hunting is not effective.”

What a perimeter fence would do for Hemlock Farms is create a wildlife propagation area through the Pennsylvania Game Commission. This could lead to tighter controls on the number of deer and the possible reduction of the herd through removing deer to the outside of the fence, birth control alternatives and systematical killing of deer.

The perimeter fence is not a new concept. Last year, the Environmental Committee suggested that a perimeter fence be studied and that bids be gathered as to the cost. One bid was received this month and was appreciatively higher than anticipated. The Board moved to rebid after the scope of the project is redefined. One portion of the cost, which included the surveying of residents on their reactions to deer killing, will be removed from the fence bid and reassigned as part of the visioning process.

“Having a perimeter fence,” Keegan said, “would mean that we could be more innovative about the alternatives.” She related that Fox Chapel Borough hired trained professional hunters and acquired permission from individual landowners to shoot deer on their property. Buck Hill Falls drives

deer from the residential areas and the golf course into the green spaces in the community where professional bow hunters are hired to shoot the deer.

“With or without this fence,” Keegan said, “we are going to see some of our deer population die.”

In a related topic, the Board heard Keegan explain that the community has been recommended for the Pennsylvania Firewise Community Program. This program calls for the creation of an Emergency Action Plan, which identifies roles and responsibilities of key emergency response agencies and serves as a guidance document in the event of a forest fire. Keegan said that it may be possible to reach an agreement with the Delaware State Forest to create a 10-foot buffer between Hemlock Farms’ property and the forest. This would serve as a firebreak and conceivably be helpful to the construction of the perimeter fence.

“There are a lot of recreational opportunities as well,” Sibio said. He mentioned cross-country skiing, hiking and biking.

“If there was a forest fire, firefighters would have key access to the blaze using the clear swath, leaving the roads open for evacuation,” Keegan concluded.

For information about the Pennsylvania deer conference, turn to page 53.

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