

LETTERS

Deer plan unsafe

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During the first five public meetings of the Cayuga Heights deer committee, proponents of a bait-and-shoot program spent more time discussing the risks associated with contact with deer feces (which the Health Department doesn't even recognize as a public health issue) than they did disclosing the very real dangers posed by discharging firearms year after year in our densely populated community.

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The ammunition Chief Thomas Boyce specified he will use can easily penetrate auto and home windows, where fragmentation creates a deadly cloud of debris — the manufacturer warns, “collateral damage is a serious threat.” Accidental discharges, target misidentification and shots that impact somewhere other than where intended are all serious risks, as is the possibility of panicked animals running into nearby roadways. Deer-vehicle collisions have been documented to go up 300-400 percent in some communities during the first days of hunting season. In our community, the proximity and high density of roadways would likely increase this risk.

In a Dec. 10 radio interview, Cayuga Heights Mayor Gilmore once again confirmed that he will not be revealing locations where the shooting will take place. If such basic details are not disclosed, how can area residents adequately evaluate the risks? How can we make decisions about how to protect our families if we aren't allowed to know when and where silenced rifles are going to be repeatedly discharged within range of our homes and roadways? These plans should be made open for public scrutiny. Isn't informed consent a basic principle of our democracy?

James LaVeck Ithaca