

Berks County Operations Minutes
August 16, 2022
9:30 a.m.

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, August 16, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 13th floor of the Berks County Services Center, and via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach called the meeting to order with Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt and Commissioner Michael S. Rivera in attendance. Also present were Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor, Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Administrative Officer, and Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes of August 2, 2022, were approved as presented.

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Discussion on the Antietam Lake Park Deer Management program – Cathy Wegener, Director Berks Co Parks & Recreation - Information on how the program is operated, why, and decision on moving forward with the program.

Giuseppe Sohn, Wyomissing, voiced concerns about the Antietam Lake Park Deer Management hunter selection process. He believes the process is unfair, and it does not allow a large number of hunters to participate in the program. He indicated that Hunter's selection should be like that of the Nolde Forrest hunt group. He is asking for a fair hunting process for all hunters.

Cathy Wagener, Director of Parks & Recreation, clarified that Deer Hunting at Antietam Lake is a deer management program to reduce the deer population, and it is not a club. There is a small number of hunters in the program to hunt at Antietam Lake. In 2022 the program was expanded, and now there is a total of 23 hunters selected for the program.

Jason Wood, USDA Key Supervisor, explained why we could not set up a program like that of Nolde Forrest or any others. This is a deer management program and not a state gain program. The program is to depopulate the deer and manage the species. This is a controlled hunting program to prevent damage to wildlife in the park.

Commissioner Barnhardt inquired whether USDA is working with the City of Reading on their interest in the deer management program. Mr. Wood indicated that they are working with the city, and the city is currently watching the program.

Brendan Lederer, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, explained the program was created to allow hunting at Antietam Lake on County property. The program is limited to a certain number of hunters to allow for the rules and regulations to be governed. The hunters selected for the program are vetted, and they must be dedicated hunters that will meet the program's quota. He indicated that the County application process is open all year round, and hunters are put on the waitlist based on the date application is received.

Commissioner Leinbach indicated that he likes where we are with the program and that the right approach is being taken. He supports the continuation of the program.

Commissioner Rivera inquired into the length of the hunting program. Mr. Lederer indicated that the program is being monitored on the deer's impact at the park. We do not have enough study material to determine how long the program will continue. The program will be reevaluated to determine if it is successful and whether it should be continued.

Commissioner Barnhardt stated that he supports the project and its continuation.

Public Comments

No comments.

There being no further business, Commissioner Leinbach adjourned the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk