

Citizen Advisory Committee Wildlife Management Unit 5C Final Report

March 27, 2007



**Pennsylvania Game
Commission**

**Governor's Office of
Administration**



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Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee: WMU 5C

Introduction and Overview

An objective in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's (PGC) deer management plan was the use of local stakeholder groups to recommend a Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) specific deer population goal. Through a local Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), comprised of representatives of stakeholder groups within WMU 5C, participants communicated population goal recommendations based on input actively solicited and obtained from individuals within each representative's stakeholder group. This is not the easiest of tasks as attested to by the CAC members.

After recruiting stakeholder representatives from individuals recommended by PGC field staff and other outside organizations, Bureau of Management Consulting (BMC) staff convened and facilitated an introductory and educational meeting on February 7, 2007. BMC staff asked CAC members to attempt to communicate with at least 10 representatives from each of their respective stakeholder groups. BMC facilitated a subsequent meeting on March 13, 2007, for the purpose of representatives providing stakeholder feedback, collectively discussing summaries of stakeholder perspectives, and reaching consensus, if possible, regarding a deer population goal recommendation for WMU 5C. CAC membership and attendance at both meetings is shown in Exhibit 1. Nine different stakeholder groups were represented. CAC members collected input from 488 people. Where possible, two members were selected per stakeholder group. In the case of 5C, this resulted in 16 CAC members. Primary members were identified for each stakeholder group and were responsible for coordinating their results with their counterpart. Only the primary members attended the second meeting.

The following is documentation relative to this process. It includes meeting agendas, information requested of and provided by PGC staff, stakeholder representative findings, the context of various perspectives, and the resulting consensus that led to the CAC recommendation of a deer population goal for WMU 5C over the next five years:

Seven of eight attending CAC primary members agreed with a decrease of 40 percent in the WMU 5C deer herd. An additional primary member, who did not attend the second meeting, provided their summary in advance of the meeting, and was in favor of a decrease of 34 percent. This information was presented at the meeting by BMC staff and was used in the decision making process.

First Meeting Summary

The purpose of the first meeting was to provide information to the members about the CAC process as well as background on deer management, both statewide, and within WMU 5C. BMC staff also polled members on their initial thoughts on the deer population in WMU 5C. This is presented as part of Table 1 on pages 8 and 9, which includes the complete voting history. The first meetings agenda is shown in Exhibit 2.

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Exhibit 1 List of CAC Stakeholder Groups/Representatives and Attendance at Meetings

Stakeholder Group	Representative (* Primary member)	February 7	March 13
1. Agriculture	Rick Scholosberg*	✓	✓
2. Agriculture	John Yeager	✓	
3. Business (direct impact)	William Zern*	✓	✓
4. Business (direct impact)	Edward Stoltzfus	✓	
5. Conservation/Wildlife Recreation	Bill Car*	✓	Presented by BMC ¹
6. Conservation/Wildlife Recreation	Kevin Fryberger		
7. Forest Industry	Kurt Eshleham*	✓	✓
8. Highway Safety	Larry Creami*	✓	✓
9. Highway Safety	Fred Ziegler	✓	
10. Homeowner	Joseph Silvaggio*	✓	✓
11. Homeowner	Loren Hulber	✓	
12. Motorist	Larry Henck*	✓	✓
13. Motorist	Tom Marsh	✓	
14. Rural non-farm landowner	Dave Ehrig*	✓	✓
15. Sportsman-resident	Ted Wills*	✓	✓
16. Sportsman-resident	Jay Smith	✓	

Exhibit 2 Citizen Advisory Committee Public Input for Deer Management Goals in Pennsylvania Meeting Agenda, February 7, 2007

<p>I. Introduction A. Stakeholder introductions</p> <p>II. Overview of the process A. Purpose B. Objectives C. Process/Consensus D. Role of participants i. Primary versus secondary E. Meeting ground rules F. Questions</p> <p>III. Present Tabulation of Initial Thoughts</p>	<p>IV. PGC Presentations A. PGC responsibilities and mission B. History of deer management in Pennsylvania C. Deer resource information and management system D. Consequences of biological and social management at different deer population levels E. Questions</p> <p>V. Preparation Work for Second Meeting A. Consensus B. Stakeholder Opinion Worksheet C. Presentation Template for Stakeholder Summaries D. Agenda for second meeting E. Primary and secondary designation</p> <p>VI. Questions and Comments</p>
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¹ The Conservation/Wildlife Recreation primary representative could not attend the second meeting. Both representatives worked with BMC staff to prepare a summary report of their results which was presented by BMC at the second meeting.

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Prior to the first meeting, members received a document entitled “Pennsylvania Game Commission Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Pilot Study, Objectives and Process Overview,” which explained each of the items under the second area covered in the agenda and the worksheet and template listed in the fifth area of the agenda. Highlights from the first meeting included reviewing the following information.

- PGC Deer Management Program Goals:*
1. Maintain a healthy deer herd.
 2. Maintain healthy forest habitat for the deer herd.
 3. Reduce deer and human conflict.

- Objectives of CAC’s:*
1. They provide an opportunity for the Game Commission to understand stakeholder values regarding deer management.
 2. They provide an opportunity for stakeholders to interact with one another, facilitate communication among, and increase understanding of different stakeholder values and concerns.
 3. They provide an opportunity for stakeholders to have direct input concerning deer population goals that ultimately affect all Pennsylvanians.
 4. They provide an opportunity to inform stakeholders on the mission of the Game Commission, complexities of deer management, and the importance of proper management.

- Outcome of CAC proceedings:*
1. The goal is to build consensus among the committee and agree on a recommendation to increase, decrease, or stabilize the deer population in their WMU.
 2. *Definition of consensus: Consensus is reached if all but one member agrees with the other members.*
 3. If a consensus has been reached, the committee will present the recommendation to the Game Commission in a written format that explains how each stakeholder group’s concerns were considered in the decision.
 4. If a consensus cannot be reached among committee members, a recommendation will be made following the guidelines given in the first meeting.

PGC staff grounded the process in an overview of the mission and history of the Commission, as well as details about the deer management program in conjunction with the goals of maintaining a healthy deer herd and a forest healthy habitat. Especially effective was the historical perspective on how deer management has been an emotional and controversial issue going back to the origins of the Commission. Specific deer and habitat data for WMU 5C was presented.

Members were provided with forms to collect opinions from other people within their stakeholder area as well as summarize the results into an overall report. For each stakeholder group, the goal was to speak with at least 10 other people. The meeting ended with questions, comments, and decisions as shown in Exhibits 3 and 4.

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Exhibit 3

Questions, Answers, and Comments Following PGC Presentation on February 7, 2007

1. Q. – How current is the information in the land use designation slides.
A. – The land use maps are based on an aerial survey's conducted sometime in the mid to late 1990's.
2. Q. – How are special hunting regulations used by PGC?
A. – Special hunting regulations are still defined by the county, not PGC.
3. Q. – What is the current status of baiting regulations?
A. – Regulations were finalized this past June. PGC staff has initial recommendations regarding its effectiveness.
4. CAC member request: A member requested a copy of the PGC presentation.
5. Q. – What is the status of Sunday hunting proposals?
A. – Sunday hunting is currently in the discussion stage with the legislature.
6. Q. – Is infrared technology used to assess the deer population?
A. – Yes, it is by individual landowners, but not at the WMU level. , but not in the 5C wildlife management unit. It is not regarded as a cost effective method. Other methods are both cost effective and provide a reliable estimate of the deer population, such as the methodology described in the evening's presentation (see also question 12).
7. Q. – What programs exist to help address crop damage by deer?
A. – The PGC has in place the red tag program which provides for farmers to take deer from their land. The other program discussed by CAC members pertain to a state statute not part of the purview of the PGC (allows for members of a farmers family as well as those working for them to take deer).
BMC comment: BMC staff stated they will gather information on both programs and report back to the CAC members at the second meeting.
8. CAC member comment: They are annually taking approximately 40 deer from their farm. This has been the trend over the past several years.
9. CAC member comment: Within the unit, there are many sanctuaries for deer herds due to development, the extensive amount of private land, and safety issues in the more densely populated areas. Hunters in the southern parts of the WMU with significant might travel to the northern end of the unit or other areas of the state to hunt.
10. Q. – What states are noted as having best practices for addressing urban deer issues?
A. – Missouri is widely recognized as being a leader, due in large part to their having “urban” biologists on staff. In addition, the PGC is moving forward with directly addressing urban deer challenges with the recently approved urban deer plan.
11. Q. – What is the confidence level for the deer harvest data?
A. – PGC staff is very confident of their methods for estimating the deer population. There are extensive details on the PGC website. Approximately 40 percent of hunters file deer harvest report post cards. PGC mobilizes 10 percent of their work force to conduct an exhaustive review of over 28,000 deer at deer processors throughout the state. Hunting license numbers are recorded from the deer tags and compared to the list of hunter license numbers who file their report cards.
12. CAC member comment: Other states use check stations, such as West Virginia.
Response – PGC follows these programs. They have been found to have their own compliance issues.
13. Q. – How many cases has the PGC prosecuted for not filing a deer harvest report card?
A. -- None.

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Exhibit 3

Questions, Answers, and Comments Following PGC Presentation on February 7, 2007

14. Q. – Are there any plans for a phone in program?
A. – Yes, possibly within two years. The harvest report card method will also remain in place.
15. CAC member comment: PGC fines do little to offset the cost of enforcement.
16. Q. – What is the 5C WMU deer population?
A. – Specific populations are not presented as they were in the past. Deer densities are a secondary measure and used for monitoring population trends. For 5C the deer density is estimated to be approximately 30 deer per square mile.
17. CAC member comment: Development pressures across the 5C WMU are having a significant impact on the deer populations and resulting issues and problems.
18. Q. – How can the PGC manage the units given the lack of uniformity of size and range? Specific examples cited were 2G as well as the length of 5C.
A. – The WMU's were established based on uniformity of habitat and natural and logical boundaries, such as highways and rivers. The WMU's have been in place almost five years and will be reassessed for possible change. It is very important to PGC deer management staff to have consistent unit boundaries over time to enable long term trend analysis and evaluation.
19. PGC comment: You have to keep in mind when thinking about wildlife management that there is a high percent of land that is privately held.
20. CAC member comments: There were differing opinions on what the experience is within the 5C WMU. Some feel there is a wide difference in deer density between the south (very high) and the north (very low). Other members felt it is high across the unit.
21. CAC member comment: It was mentioned some townships hire wildlife consultants to address deer issues.
Response -- PGC noted townships can apply to the PGC to take out deer, but this has cost and liability issues.
22. CAC member comment: A common problem for much of the 5C WMU is the lack of access to land to hunt.
23. Q. – Does the PGC maintain a list of sportsman clubs?
A. – PGC will check with their Southeast Regional Office staff. BMC will also do research.

Exhibit 4

Information Regarding the Second CAC Meeting, March 13, 2007

The following stakeholder groups decided primary/secondary membership on the CAC as follows (for those groups with two members):

Stakeholder Group	Primary member	Secondary member
Agriculture	Rick Scholosberg	John Yeager
Business (direct impact)	William Zern	Edward Stoltzfus
Conservation/Wildlife Recreation	Bill Car	Kevin Fryberger
Highway Safety	Larry Creami	Fred Ziegler
Homeowner	Joseph Silvaggio	Loren Hulber
Motorist	Larry Henck	Tom Marsh
Sportsman-resident	Ted Wills	Jay Smith

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Second Meeting Summary

The purpose of the second meeting was for the members to present their findings, ask questions of one another, and attempt to move towards consensus. The agenda is shown in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5 Citizen Advisory Committee Public Input for Deer Management Goals in Pennsylvania Meeting Agenda, March 13, 2006	
I. Quick review A. Review of CAC handout document B. Process for this meeting II. Interest Group Presentations A. Presentations B. Clarification C. Initial tally of interest group positions Break III. Discussion/Consensus	IV. Next Steps A. BMC completes summary of proceedings B. Summary is sent to CAC members and Game Commission staff C. PGC staff incorporates the recommendation into the deer management plan presented to the Commissioners V. Questions and Comments VI. Evaluation of the Process

For each stakeholder group, four questions were posed for the members to answer. In addition, members were asked to collect comments to answer why those among their stakeholder group feels the way they do. The individual stakeholder reports are included as Appendix A.

The questions are as follows:

- A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?
- B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) too high, too low, or about right?
- C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?
- D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

At the beginning of this discussion, BMC tabulated the results of stakeholder sentiment reported at March 13 meeting (based on responses from 8 individuals) and displayed it on a table that was subsequently compared to the results of CAC member sentiment (based on responses from 15 individuals) that they provided at the beginning of the February 7 meeting. As indicated in Table 1, some results were unchanged and some demonstrated variance.

The individual reports resulted in a continued view that the deer herd was currently increasing and that the deer herd needed to decrease. While there was generally agreement for decreasing the deer herd over the next 5 years, a moderation in the relative decrease was agreeable to all but one CAC member who advocated for an increase in the herd particular to an area within 5C. The facilitators presented the amounts of increase and decrease and arithmetically accounted for the

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differences (using the lower value for the Forestry Industry), coming to a general decrease of 40 percent over the next 5 years (rounded down from 41.8 percent).

The discussion on this matter was forthright and cordial amongst members. Viewpoints were listened to and common ground was sought. Important points agreed to by the participants are included in Appendix B.

After much thought and consideration, the following consensus was reached:

Seven of eight attending CAC primary members agreed with a decrease of 40 percent in the WMU 5C deer herd. An additional primary member, who did not attend the second meeting, provided their summary in advance of the meeting, and was in favor of a decrease of 34 percent. This information was presented at the meeting by BMC staff and was used in the decision making process.

**Table 1
CAC Voting Summary for WMU 5C Deer Herd Questions and Consensus Decision**

Question	February 7, 2007	March 13, 2007	March 13, 2007
	Initial Vote	Presentation Results	Consensus Decision
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU5C increasing, decreasing, or stable?			
o Increasing	8	6	
o Decreasing	5	3	
o Stable	2	0	
o Do Not Know	0	0	
In your opinion, is the deer herd in WMU5C too high, too low, or about right?			
o Too High	9	5	
o Too Low	2	4	
o About Right	4	0	
o Do Not Know	0	0	
Over the next five years, do you think the deer herd in WMU 5C should increase, decrease, or remain the same?			
o Increase	3	2	
o Decrease	11	5	X
o Remain The Same	1	0	
o Do Not Know	0	2 ²	
Increase by approximately how much (percent)?	10, 30, 50	62.5, 44.5	
Decrease by approximately how much (percent)?	10 (2), 25, 30 (2), 50 (4), 80, One ?	30 to 35, 34, 45, 50 (2)	40
Number of present CAC members	16	8 ³	
Number of stakeholder feedback collected by CAC members	Not Applicable	488	

² Summary information for Business-direct impact and Sportsman-Resident were uncertain based on the information presented at the meeting. Please see the individual stakeholder reports in Appendix A.

³ Results include the Conservation/Wildlife Recreation group presentation information.

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APPENDIX A: Individual Stakeholder Reports

1. Conservation/Wildlife Recreation – Presented by BMC (12 responses, stated as being from stakeholders from across the wildlife unit)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 9 Decreasing = 1 Stable = 1 Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 12 Too Low = 0 About Right = 0 Do Not Know = 0

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 0 Decrease = 12 Remain Same = 0 Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = Percent Decrease = 34

Whys

- By reducing the overall number of deer in WMU 5C, our stakeholder group believes that the overall health of our environment will improve dramatically.
- The term environment reflects not only to deer heard health but wildflower, shrub, tree, epiphytes, soil (invasive earthworms), groundwater, and human aspects as well.

Benefits

- Regeneration of habitat and less crop damage.
- Healthier deer herd. Lower incidence of Lyme Disease.
- Lower risk of the impacts of chronic wasting disease once it appears in 5C.
- Less automobile collisions with deer.

Consequences

- The understory would continue to be destroyed.
- Wildflowers are being eaten before they have the opportunity to flower.
- With the over browsing, there is a negative affect on songbird and other wildlife populations.

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- Continued high deer densities.

2. Sportsmen – Resident – Ted Wills (128 responses, stated as being from across the wildlife unit)

Note: Data for the answers to C (increase, decrease) and D were obtained after the second meeting by correspondence sent to BMC dated March 14, 2007. This data is italicized and bolded below.

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 30 Decreasing = 53 Stable = 34 Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 17 Too Low = 43 About Right = 55 Do Not Know = 4

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = **38** Decrease = **29** Remain Same = 39 Do Not Know =

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = **29** Percent Decrease = **27**

Whys

- Not enough incentive for future young hunters.
- More deer will cause more conflict.

Benefits

- Healthy and plentiful herd.

Consequences

- Inbreeding is a problem in some areas.

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D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase =

Percent Decrease = 45

Whys

- Damage to property, crops, and the forest.
- Lyme Disease.
- Car collisions.

Benefits

- Less damage to shrubs and crops.
- Less car collisions.

5. Forest Industry – Kurt Eshleham (6 responses stated as large and small sawmills and forestry consultants, all related to 5C)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 4

Decreasing = 1

Stable = 0

Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 6

Too Low = 0

About Right = 0

Do Not Know = 0

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 0

Decrease = 6

Remain Same = 0

Do Not Know = 0

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase =

Percent Decrease = 30 to 35

Whys

- The decrease is needed for forest regeneration, particularly oaks.

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Consequences

- Current impacts include farmers experiencing from 10 percent to 40 percent crop damage and farmers being limited in what crops they can grow.
- Farmers are purposefully not growing certain crops because of excessive deer crop damage.

7. Highway Safety – Larry Creami (27 responses, stated as mostly police chiefs and senior patrol officers)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 6 Decreasing = 12 Stable = 8 Do Not Know = 1

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 6 Too Low = 9 About Right = 9 Do Not Know = 3

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 10 Decrease = 5 Remain Same = 9 Do Not Know = 1

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 44.5 Percent Decrease = 20

Whys

- Car crashes.
- Deer around schools.
- Property damage.
- Like seeing deer.

8. Rural Non-Farm Landowner– Dave Ehrig (55 responses, stated as being mostly from the northern end of 5C and including also including hunters)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 0 Decreasing = 52 Stable = 3 Do Not Know = 0

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B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 0 Too Low = 52 About Right = 3 Do Not Know = 0

C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = 52 Decrease = 0 Remain Same = 3 Do Not Know =

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = 62.5 Percent Decrease =

Whys

- The northern end of the wildlife management unit has been adversely affected by over hunting resulting in low deer densities at odds with the rest of the unit.
- This has been amplified by easier access to areas to hunt as compared to the rest of the unit along with the special regulations allowing for an extended season.

Benefits

- Increased opportunities for young hunters.
- Older hunter retention.
- Increased license sales for the Game Commission.

Consequences

- Hunters being pushed to wrong areas of the unit.
- Damage to private property owners from increased hunting pressure in the northern areas.
- Pressure to limit the use of repeating rifles.

9. Business - Direct – William Zern (146 responses)

Answers to Questions

A. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increasing, decreasing, or stable?

Increasing = 54 Decreasing = 48 Stable = 35 Do Not Know = 9

B. In your opinion, is the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) too high, too low, or About right?

Too High = 42 Too Low = 45 About Right = 29 Do Not Know = 26

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C. In your opinion, do you think the deer herd should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

Increase = ?

Decrease = ?

Remain Same = ?

Do Not Know = ?

D. In your opinion, by what percentage should the deer herd in your area (WMU 5C) increase or decrease?

Percent Increase = ?

Percent Decrease = ?

Benefits

- Protect the landowner.

Total response for all stakeholder groups = 488

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APPENDIX B: CAC Member Points During Consensus Discussion and Decision

- Different areas of 5C have much less deer.
- CAC members feel the 5C wildlife management unit is very diverse.
- There is a need for sharpshooters to take our deer in high deer density areas. The current primary method of managing deer through doe license allocations is limited by the special hunting regulations that apply to the unit.
- The CAC is concerned an increased doe license allocation within wildlife management unit 5C will further adversely affect those areas within the unit that have low deer density (northern parts of the unit, particularly from I78 in Berks County to the Montgomery County line).
- While CAC members understand there is not a way for the PGC to address this point, there was general agreement the greatest need to decrease the deer herd is particularly in the southern portions of the unit.
- The seven agreeing members were also in agreement with the one dissenting members concern that there are areas within 5C, particularly the northern area, which have low deer density and will suffer from an increase in the doe license allocation.

Conclusion: *Seven of eight attending CAC primary members agreed with a decrease of 40 percent in the WMU 5C deer herd. An additional primary member, who did not attend the second meeting, provided their summary in advance of the meeting, and was in favor of a decrease of 34 percent. This information was presented at the meeting by BMC staff and was used in the decision making process.*