



CITY OF HARRISONBURG CITY MANAGER

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TO: Ande Banks, City Manager
FROM: Wesley Russ, Deputy City Attorney
DATE: February 22, 2024
RE: Proposed Urban Archery Ordinance Amendments

Summary: Proposal to Sections 16-6-41 and 16-6-42 to expand urban archery and clarify associated rules and regulations.

Background: Harrisonburg currently allows archery for the hunting of deer during the “early special archery season, the full general firearms deer season and the late archery season” (note that the use of firearms for hunting deer is prohibited, despite the name ‘full general firearms deer season’). The proposed amendments would permit archery during all available archery seasons. The proposed amendments would also permit archery on City-owned property with permission from the City Manager.

Key Issues: Deer hunting is one method of managing the local deer population. Virginia Code and Department of Wildlife Resources regulations permit deer hunting during a number of different seasons, provided the local governing body has adopted an ordinance to allow such hunting. City Code currently allows archery during some, but not all, of the available hunting seasons. It is unclear whether this limited participation in archery seasons was intentional or an oversight.

Additionally, City Code currently prohibits archery on city-owned property. Grazing deer have interfered with the City’s attempts to plant appropriate vegetation as part of the Blacks Run Stream Restoration project. Improved deer population management, including allowing authorized individuals to hunt deer on City-owned property during the various archery seasons, would benefit these City efforts.

The proposed amendments also remove references to archery seasons being limited to deer. The Department of Wildlife Resources takes the position that while localities can determine what methods of hunting (archery, firearms, etc.) are appropriate within their boundaries, determining the types of animals appropriate to hunt is within DWR’s jurisdiction.

Finally, the amendments note that Conservation Police Officers are vested with authority to enforce these ordinances within the City. Virginia Code allows Conservation

Police Officers to enforce the state's hunting laws and regulations throughout the state. This amendment clarifies that to the extent there are city-specific limitations on hunting, these officers will be able to enforce those as well.

Environmental Impact:

Fiscal Impact:

Prior Actions:

Alternatives: (a) Adopt the ordinance amendments as presented
 (b) Decline to take action at this time

Community Engagement:

Recommendation: Staff recommends alternative (a)

Attachments: Ordinances reflecting proposed amendments

Review:

The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.