



Meeting Notes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: *Acting Chairwoman* Elisa Campbell **Councilors:** Christina Crowley, Michael Dutton, Frank Frey, James Van Dyke, Daniel Wolf **Excused:** Julian Agyeman, Richard Cross, Whitney Hatch, Laura Johnson, Henry Lee, John Natoli

Public Attendees: George Baker, Mashpee Fire - Bill Boles, New England Mountain Bike Association - Carol Gilmour, Friends of the Robinson State Park - Charl Heller, Forest & Park Friends Network - Claudia Hurley, Stakeholder for Forest Futures

DCR Staff in Attendance: *Commissioner* Rick Sullivan, Lisa Bishop, Stuart Conner, Conrad Crawford, Jeff Daley, Joe Rotondo, Patti Vantine

Acting Chairwoman Elisa Campbell called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

Commissioner's Report - Commissioner Rick Sullivan

Commissioner Sullivan apologized for the absence of Chairman Dick Cross; the meeting will be held without a quorum.

Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council on/of the following matters:

- The Technical Steering Committee is currently refining a set of draft recommendations on forest stewardship that will be released for public comment by the end of the month. The public forums are scheduled for February 4 in Westborough, the morning of February 6 in North Adams, the afternoon of February 6 in Pittsfield, February 9 in Amherst and February 11 in Taunton.
- The Commissioner had the privilege of attending the Nahant Board of Selectmen meeting where he announced that DCR will be publishing the request for bids through central register next week for the \$20 million project to reconstruct the Nahant Causeway, a long awaited project between Lynn and Nahant.
- First Day Hikes and First Day Skate were held on New Years Day. On the First Day Hikes, we had over 1,500 visitors state wide who participated at 16 different locations with Blue Hills being the most popular. In addition, Hampton Ponds in Westfield participated for the first time with over 80 visitors.
- As our commitment to the investment into the Urban Parks System, we had an Opening Event celebrating the completion of the \$600k full rehabilitation of the Kelly Skating Rink in Jamaica Plain. In addition, DCR is looking to do an investment in the Cass Recreation Facility, to convert an old rink into a multi-use recreational facility. A public process will begin within the next couple of weeks.
- DCR received gratitude from our investment into the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Facility (DCR's conservation and green side of the house). It is a collaboration of multi community partnerships with DCR that provides regular recycling on the Wachusett watershed properties.
- DCR has a new partnership with New Balance where they have pledged to provide funding up to a minimum of \$10k to support snow removal efforts along the 17-plus mile path along the Charles River. DCR will place sandwich board signs outlining New Balance's participation in the snow removal in various locations for up to three days after a snow event. This is presently a pilot program. Conversations with other companies to do similar partnerships have begun.

Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

Finance Committee

Finance Report – Patti Vantine, Director of Administration and Finance

Patti Vantine informed the Council on/of the following matters:

- State revenues have increased for the third month in a row.
- House II will be released after the Governor delivers his 2010 State of the Commonwealth Address on January 21.

- Staff has been working “outside of the box” to address the cuts.
 - DCR has not received any guidance whether or not we will endure another 9c cut; we do not have any indication of a decrease or increase to the \$70m proposed budget; other agencies have been slightly restored, however DCR has not.
 - Relevant to the pre-merger operating budget spreadsheet, it appears that all revenues took a down turn; transportation agencies likely have high numbers since they can sometimes put operating expenses into their capital budgets rather than make actual cuts.
 - It was requested that an updated detailed spreadsheet that combined capital and operating monies and total spending within each department be distributed for the February meeting.

Policy and Planning Committee

Resource Management Planning – Commissioner Sullivan for Councilor Henry Lee

- Once the Policy Committee is briefed on the Beaver Brook RMP Addendum, it will be presented to the Council.

Special Business

Office of Partnerships Public Private Partnership Projects Update –Director, Conrad Crawford

The Director of Partnerships provided a briefing on the DCR Public Private Partnership Program.

- DCR is accepting applications from Friends groups and other park advocacy groups, civic and community organizations, institutions, businesses, and dedicated individuals with an interest in improving the Commonwealth’s natural, cultural, and recreational resources. During the remainder of fiscal year 2010, DCR will allocate \$1.35m in matching funds to capital projects proposed and partly funded by those groups and approved by agency officials. This year, DCR will consider applications that will provide a match of non-state funds for capital projects at the agency’s parks. The agency will consider projects that may require more than one year to plan and complete, and DCR will manage the implementation of the projects, in close consultation with the partner(s) making the contributions.
- Applications for the matching funds are due by January 15; DCR will begin notifying applicants of the decisions on February 15. Presently we have 31 applications.

New Business

- Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council that their packet contains a list of locations for the year that distinguish between regional and statewide meetings. The idea of the regional meetings is to focus in that region on specific issues and interest to the Councilor of that region, the general public and Friend groups. In turn, we would have Statewide meetings every four months for larger issues that can come before the Council including public comment.
 - It was requested by the Commissioner to look it over during the month and to submit their thoughts at the February meeting.
- Councilor Michael Dutton asked the Commissioner “where do we stand trying to partner with the municipalities on the pool issue and any legislative authorization for municipal rinks”?
 - Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council that DCR has issued Requests for Proposals to operate, manage, and maintain the LoConte Memorial Rink and Flynn Memorial Rink in Medford, Ulin Memorial Rink in Milton, Shea Memorial Rink in Quincy, and Veterans Memorial Rink in Somerville. These five rinks have been selected due to the interest of their cities.
 - In regards to the pools, DCR has met individually with cities and towns to work a partnership for the city/town to take over the operations of the pools; however the capital asset would still remain with DCR. At this time, cities most likely to form a partnership are Milford, Melrose, Chicopee, and Somerville. Other cities have expressed interest in managing some areas of the operation instead of full operation.

Public Comment

The following constituents expressed their opinions/issues/matters to the Council:

Bill Boles, New England Mountain Bike Association/Stakeholder for Forest Futures

- Mr. Boles expressed his pleasure with DCR’s Forest Future Vision Process; a well thought-out plan will be dispersed soon and he is happy to have been part of the process.

- Awarding of cutting contracts has been suspended and he is in hope that it will continue until the process is complete.

Claudia Hurley, Stakeholder for Forest Futures

- Ms. Hurley informed the Council of the intended process for the first draft from the Technical Steering Committee, which should be available to the public for review between February 19 & 22.
- An interest to create a Friends group in Hampton Ponds was expressed.
- Ms. Hurley is concerned of the projected process that will take place at the public forums and she is in agreement with Sharl Heller that it could be a better format.

George Baker, Fire Chief of Mashpee

- Chief Baker thanked DCR for saving jobs in Southeastern Massachusetts, labeled as number three on the federal forest schedule of volatile fire areas.
- Chief Baker is very concerned that we lack a State Forester, which is vital to fire protection for our lands.

Sharl Heller, Forest & Park Friends Network

- The Friends Network (FN) sends their gratitude to the DCR employees' who joined their 2nd Annual Conference last October. Their participation allowed an effective and meaningful conference.
- The FN requested DCR to consider sponsoring another Partner in Parks Conference in 2010.
- The FN would like DCR to find a way to collect information about volunteer hours and monetary contributions to the state's forests and parks through a standardized process.
- FN would like to add to the record their appreciation of the wonderful DCR staff in the Southeast Region on the First Day Hike at Ellisville Harbor State Park.
- Friends of Miles Standish would like to thank John Roberts, Supervisor, for an exceptional job managing MSSF. They are also requesting that DCR support the Park Watch Program.
- FN would like an OHV Enforcement Plan; they are working on recommendations and plan to have a workshop of stakeholders in mid-March and will invite DCR to participate, including Ken Anderson and Frank Frey.
- FN objects to biomass interpretive trails in state forests.
- FN is waiting for the final draft of the FFVP but understand that a dissenting opinion may be released. They are also concerned that the FFVP public meetings are designed to push through recommendations. They are in disagreement with the format and suggested a different format along with other recommendations.

Closing Comment

- No closing comments

Meeting Schedule

- Next meeting will be held Friday, February 5, 2010 at Elm Bank in Wellesley.

Meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.