



Meeting Minutes

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

Public Attendees: Bill Boles, New England Mountain Bike Association - Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon - Steve Kaiser, Citizen - Claudia Hurley, Stakeholder for Forest Futures – George Houghton, MA Forest Fire Council – James McCaffrey, Sierra Club – Edward Murray, Friends of Breakheart - Renata vonTscharm, Charles River Conservancy

DCR Staff in Attendance: *Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Lisa Bishop, Stuart Conner, Stephanie Cooper, Conrad Crawford, Jeff Daley, Gary Davis, Anthony Guthro, Jack Murray, Joe Rotondo, Patti Vantine, Suzanne Wilson*

Acting Chairman Henry Lee called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m.

Acting Chairman Henry Lee informed the Council that Director Anthony Guthro has offered tours of the rental cabins after the meeting; Councilor Henry Lee thanked Anthony and staff for their hospitality.

Commissioner's Report - Commissioner Rick Sullivan

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

- Governor Patrick recently announced statewide budget reductions. DCR's share of these cuts represents a decrease of 5.2 percent, or \$4.3 million, in our current Fiscal Year 2010 budget. We are currently evaluating the impacts that the budget reduction will have on operations at DCR. On the most recent reduction, DCR had 54 early retirement/layoff volunteers and 37 involuntary layoffs that are currently in the bumping process.
 - Commissioner Sullivan commended Patti Vantine and Finance for a great job.
 - Councilor John Natoli asked if the union has considered negotiating; Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council that "all things are on the table" with union negotiations.
- As of Monday, November 2, all of DCR's 140 vehicular bridges (with the exception of the Storrow Drive Tunnel) and eight of its parkways were formally transferred to MassDOT.
 - Jack Murray will provide the specifics later in the meeting.
- On Tuesday, November 10 as part of the FFVP, the Technical Steering Committee will meet at the Trustees of Reservations Doyle Conservation Center in Leominster. The Steering Committee and Advisory Group of Stakeholders will continue to meet through the fall, when the Steering Committee's draft recommendations are expected to be available for public review. A series of public forums to seek input and feedback on the recommendations before they are finalized. The process is expected to conclude with final recommendations to DCR in the next few months.
- Bascom Lodge and the Veterans War Memorial Tower at Mt. Greylock, received \$800k in grant money awarded by the Federal Highway Administration. The grant money for Mount Greylock will fund "design, permitting and construction for exterior preservation, improved accessibility, systems upgrades to solve moisture problems, and interior finishes to preserve the characteristic public spaces of the Veterans War Memorial Tower and Bascom Lodge.
- DCR and the Boston Harbor Alliance have been developing a plan that was submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) for review. MHC signed off on the stabilization and rehabilitation work, but the proposed demolition of 13 buildings has triggered a process whereby DCR and the Island Alliance will need to work with MHC to explore ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effect of the demolition. DCR and Island Alliance are developing a plan for opening the project up to public comment while moving forward with the stabilization work.
- On Monday, October 12, all of DCR's Boston Harbor Islands were officially closed for the season. Construction of the new George's Island Visitor Center will continue during the off-season.
- On Saturday, October 24, ten of the 12 indoor skating rinks operated by DCR officially opened. The remaining two skating rinks, Steriti Rink in the North End and Veterans Rink in Somerville will

open on Saturday, November 14 with the final outside skating rink, Kelly Rink in Jamaica Plan, to open mid- December. Public skating at all rinks will begin on November 27.

- On the weekend of October 17, DCR's Charles River Reservation hosted the very successful Head of the Charles River Regatta. More than 8,000 athletes rowing in around 1750 boats in 56 events, with an estimated 300,000 spectators throughout Regatta weekend.
- Several DCR staff participated in a conference organized by the Forest and Park Network Conference on Saturday, October 24 in Worcester. The conference is billed as an opportunity for friends groups from across Massachusetts to catch up on important issues affecting forests and parks statewide, learn about DCR programs for friends groups, and share ideas for strengthening friends groups. Congratulations to Claudia Hurley as the "Volunteer of the Year" from that organization.
- On Tuesday, October 27 at the Ponkapoag Golf Course in Canton, a public meeting took place to discuss a project to clean up contamination at the former Canton Airport site and convert the former hanger area into public parkland. DCR will share the design and plan for remediation activities and present a draft plan for the future use of the site as parkland.
- On Thursday, November 12, a public meeting will be held to discuss development of a Resource Management Plan for Horseneck Beach in Westport and Demarest Lloyd State Park in Dartmouth. The meeting will take place at the Fall River Heritage State Park in Fall River at 6:30 p.m. to share ideas about the future management of these facilities related to recreation and stewardship of resources.

Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

Policy and Planning Committee

Resource Management Planning – Councilor Henry Lee

- No Report

Finance Committee

Finance Report – Councilor Whitney Hatch and Patti Vantine

- Councilor Hatch informed the Council that the finance committee has met a couple of times to identify shortfalls in the agency and what funding is needed to close the gap.
- Councilor Hatch asked Patti Vantine to update the Council in terms of the budget post recent 9c cuts.

Patti Vantine, Director of Administration and Finance informed the Council on/of the following matters:

- The magnitude of the current (2010) operating 9c cut was between 4-8%, however the final requirement for DCR is 5.2%.
- Cuts have been saved by mandatory management furlough up to nine days, an unspecified cut, and an earmark that was removed.
- Voluntary layoff and retirements are being wrapped up, and involuntary layoffs are nearing the end of the bumping process.
- A final projection number will be tallied once the full bumping/retirement process is complete.
- Our state revenue has slightly increased for October.
 - DCR was able to maintain six firefighters, one Warden in each district.
 - The overall budget for DCR is \$78,348,984 after the 9c budget cuts.
 - Environmental Police has taken a \$1.5m cut.

Finance Report – Councilor Whitney Hatch, informed the Council on/of the following matters:

- Moving forward, DCR is now working on a \$78m budget, therefore it is time for the Council to rethink the model of DCR that will allow maintaining the level of services the agency provides. A draft letter was prepared by the committee and circulated to the Council (and public) urging the Governor, Secretary Bowles and the senior management of DCR to radically reconsider the model on which DCR and its predecessor agencies have operated. Councilor Hatch read phrases from the letter with suggestions/opinions/discussion to follow.
 - *After a lengthy discussion, considerable suggestions were presented:*
 - *Prioritize limited staff; engage more with friends groups, apply for grants, implement alternative management arrangements, sell property, collect ideas from other colleagues, mothball facilities, and create more partnerships.*

- *It was agreed upon that within 72 hours, each Councilor would submit their suggestions to Councilor Hatch and the Finance Committee would re-write the letter.*

Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council of the following issue:

- As part of EEA's effort to solicit public input on options for changes in administrative structures and programs to meet environmental goals in light of budget challenges, Commissioner Sullivan and EEA Senior Advisor/Counsel Christian Scorzoni are co-chairing sessions about Public-Private Partnerships task force. The goal is to seek input and ideas on the potential for greater sharing of responsibility for the management and operation of DCR properties with other public and private entities in a way that preserves and enhances opportunity for active, outdoor recreation by the public. Parks Caucus was held with legislators at the State House on Thursday, November 12. Two public forums are scheduled for November 17 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at 100 Cambridge Street, Boston, and for Wednesday, November 18 at the Governor's Western in Springfield from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Special Business

MassDOT Update – Jack Murray, Deputy Commissioner of Operations

Jack Murray informed the Council on/of the following matters:

- Landmark Legislation signed by the Governor in July has eliminated the Turnpike Authority. The consolidation of transportation agencies includes portions of MassPort, DCR, MBTA, Turnpike Authority, Registry of Motor Vehicles, MAC and Mass Highway.
- Since July, DCR staff have participated on more than 65 subcommittees and attended hundreds of meetings designed to help formulate policy and give guidance and construct to this new entity.
- All of DCR's 140 vehicular bridges and eight of its parkways were formally transferred to MassDOT on November 1. Fifty-five DCR employees also moved over to MassDOT to help create this new organization.
- In addition to pedestrian bridges, DCR will continue to have ownership of its historic parkways. Within the next few months, DCR will commence a study mandated by the transportation legislation to make recommendations with regard to future ownership of these parkways (due in 11/2010). In the meantime, the agency will continue to have full operational responsibility for the preservation, maintenance, rehabilitation, and resurfacing of these roadways. For the upcoming snow season, DCR will also retain responsibility for snow removal on all of the roadways and parkways plowed in recent past years including the eight parkways that have been transferred to MassDOT.
- Thirty existing open DCR contracts have been assigned to the new agency as of November 1.
- \$760m ABP program funds were transferred; \$600k in operational and capital personnel; \$330k anticipated utility expenses and \$34m remains within DCR.

Asian Longhorn Beetles – Commissioner Rick Sullivan

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

- On Monday, November 9, Jeff Daley and myself will attend a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Congressman McGovern and Governor Patrick at UMASS Medical in Worcester to brief the Secretary on the ALB project.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Councilor Elisa Campbell, seconded by Councilor Frank Frey to accept the July, 2009 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.
- Motion by Councilor Elisa Campbell, seconded by Councilor Whitney Hatch to accept the September, 2009 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.
- Due to lack of quorum during October's meeting, "Meeting Notes" will be posted.

New Business

- No new business

Public Comment

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

Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck/NEMBA

- Throughout the year, NEMBA has taught volunteers and professionals good trail building and maintenance skills through their Trail Care Schooling classes.
- NEMBA held a fundraising event and would like to extend some of their monies towards an effort to improve the public's trail experience.
- NEMBA would like to volunteer to work with DCR to do trail marking and signage and to assist in laying out stacked loops of trails.

Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon

- Ms. Ricci acknowledges public lands are living natural systems, and can be "put in moth balls" without any harm and that it wouldn't cost money to DCR and wouldn't hurt the lands to leave them as reserves.
- DCR needs to find ways to engage more citizens for OHV enforcement.

James McCaffrey – Sierra Club

- Mr. McCaffrey thanked Councilor Hatch and the Council for their efforts to endorse an effective and efficient model for DCR.

Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods

- Mr. Kaiser spoke on behalf of the OHV safety bill, bio-mass and land, FFVP, the ineffective control of DCR regarding parkways and State Chapter 168 – public trust has not been protected.

Renata vonTscham, Charles River Conservancy

- Ms. vonTscham updated the Council that 50+ volunteers planted 10,000 naturalizing daffodil bulbs along the banks of the Charles.
- Ms. vonTscham is an advocate for the parks – she would like to have more active recreation along the Charles. They would also like DCR to speak more about the parkways and partnership work.

Edward Murray, Friends of Breakheart

- Mr. Murray believes that the volunteers at Breakheart are not properly utilized and that DCR does not treat Friends as equals to promote the park. Friends of Breakheart are willing to help.

Claudia Hurley, Stakeholder for Forest Futures

- Ms. Hurley is pleased hearing from the Council that they would be working more with partnerships, and she appreciated the comments of Laura Johnson with respect to evaluating the forestry from a fiscal perspective.
- Many people on the stakeholder committee of the Forest Futures Visioning Process (about 25 of them or so) want more and larger reserves. In addition, there are many ecological and biodiversity reasons for more reserves, but also there is the fiscal argument of more reserves and a much smaller forestry division that can be operated within our budget with adequate oversight.
- It was suggested to stop green certification, that it would be a cost saving measure.
- Ms. Hurley serves as a Stakeholder for the FFVP and wished the council would not wait for the TSC recommendations, but would make recommendations to them.

George Houghton, MA Forest Fire Council

- Mr. Houghton is concerned in the reduction of DCR's firefighters.

Closing Comment

- No closing comments

Meeting Schedule

- Next meeting will be held Friday, December 4, 2009 at Ponkapoag Golf Course, Canton, MA.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.