# **April Meeting Minutes**

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Jennifer Wilson, Dicken Crane, Melissa Harper, Susan Smiley, Vivian Ortiz, Dennis Smith, Jeff Collins, Ann Canedy, Ted Dooley

Council Members Absent: Phil Doherty, Kevin O’Shea

DCR Staff Attendees: Matt Perry, Nick Connors, Doug Rice, Julie Martin, Ilyse Wolberg,

Public Attendees as Registered**:** Chris Redfern, Judy Lehrer Jacobs, Alexi Conine, Angela, Ashley McCoy, Buzz Constable, Chris McIntosh, Chuck Anastas, Ellery Klein, Ethan Lay-Sleeper, Glen Ayers, Itamar Turner-Trauring, Jun Lee, Laura Jasinski, Lee Toma, Lizzie Roche, Lynne Man, Maddie Morgan, Matthew Brisch, Morning Star Chenven, Patricia Connors, Randy Stern, Sarah Freeman, Susann Wilkinson, Suzanne Gall Marsh, Rachel, Joe Poirier

## Call to Meeting, 9:00am – Chair Jack Buckley

Chair Buckley welcomed everyone to the meeting and did a roll call of councilors. He announced the news of the appointment of Brian Arrigo, mayor of Revere, as the new commissioner of DCR and welcomed him. He also thanked Commissioner Doug Rice for his work as Commissioner. Chair Buckley announced that the new standing nominating committee would consist of Councilors Dicken Crane, Jennifer Wilson, and Dennis Smith. He said that he was aware of the change in policy to Riverside Park on Memorial Drive in Cambridge and that the council had received several written comments concerning the change. He said that he would be enforcing a two-minute clock during public comments, and anyone who wished to make a public comment need to inform Matt Perry before the start of Regular Business. Chair Buckley then invited Commissioner Doug Rice to update the council.

## DCR Report – Doug Rice, Commissioner

Commissioner Rice thanked the Council and chair for inviting him to speak. He noted that with the appointment of Mayor Arrigo, this would be his last time addressing the council and that he will be returning to the MWRA to reassume the position he left to become Commissioner after staying on a little longer to help Mayor Arrigo with the transition. Thank the council for all its hard work and collaboration during his time as commissioner.

### New Commissioner

Commissioner Rice welcomed Brian Arrigo as the new commissioner of DCR. Mayor Arrigo was elected in 2016. Under his leadership, the City developed its first master plan in over 40 years, created a 311-constituent service office and a Human Resources Office, constructed a new Department of Public Works facility and a new Point of Pines Fire Station, and ushered in hundreds of millions of dollars in public and private investment along Revere Beach, Shirley Avenue, and Suffolk Downs.

Prior to being elected, Mayor Arrigo was a City Councillor and held various positions with the MBTA, the City of Somerville, the District of Columbia’s City Council, and the Massachusetts Senate Committee on Ways and Means. A graduate of Suffolk University, Arrigo resides in Revere with his wife Daveen and their two sons Joseph and Jack. Commissioner Rice noted that DCR is very excited to welcome Mayor Arrigo to his new position and looks forward to him starting.

### Staff Changes

Councilor Rice announced several staffing changes at DCR. Deputy Commissioner Nick Gove’s last day with DCR was on Friday, April 7 after 15 years of working with the agency. Starting out as the District Manager of the Coastal District in 2008, Nick went on to serve as the Director of the North Region of Urban Parks, Boston Regional Director, and Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Operations before taking on his current role. He is leaving to join the City of Boston and the Commissioner wished him well on his next endeavor and thanked him for all that he has done for the agency.

As a result of Mr. Gove leaving, Susan Hamilton is now Acting Deputy Commissioner of Park Operations and Mike Nelson will be taking over as Acting Director of Park Operations.

DCR Budget Director George Trubiano announced that he will be retiring at the end of this month. George has been in charge of the DCR budget for sixteen years, and the Commissioner congratulated him and wished him well on his well-deserved retirement.

### Forestry Meeting

On Monday, April 10, DCR briefed Secretary Tepper and Climate Chief Hoffer on the 10-year Review of the Landscape Designations and Management Guidelines. DCR has spent the last year conducting the 10-year review which included soliciting public input with a series of on-line and in person meetings in the fall.  Shortly, the public comments and questions and answers that resulted from those public meetings and public comment period will be posted, and EEA will be review the draft.  Once the draft is finalized, DCR will post it for public review.

### Park Serve Day

Commissioner Rice reminded the Council that Park Serve Day will be held on April 22, 2023, which is also Earth Day. Park Serve Day is DCR’s annual day of stewardship which encourages people to volunteer in participating parks to get them ready for the summer. Commissioner Rice encouraged everyone to come out and participate on the day.

### April Vacation Week Events

During the week of April School Vacation, State Parks are planning special events for families and kids to have some free fun and get some fresh air. Highlights include Geocaching 101 at Mt Greylock, Archeology Pop Up Labs at Roxbury Heritage, One Acre Safari at Wachusett Reservoir, Eagles, Hawks, and Falcons at Waquoit Bay, and “Talking Trash” at Halibut Point.

### Lifeguard Recruitment

Recruitment of Lifeguards for the summer season is ongoing. DCR has collaborated with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to include the notice of lifeguard hiring in their weekly newsletter that goes out to superintendents and principals across the state to get the word out to high school students looking for summer jobs. To be considered for a DCR lifeguard position, applicants must be at least 16 years of age by the date of hire, must complete lifeguard training, and must be certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The agency offers free training classes and certification to lifeguards who commit to DCR summer employment prior to the opening of designated swimming areas.

### Seasonal Position Recruitment

DCR is working hard to get the word out about the hiring of seasonal workers. This includes holding open houses about opportunities, including one on April 13 at Holyoke Heritage State Park from 12pm – 2pm, and one on the April 19 at Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Worcester from 12pm – 2pm. Commissioner asked for the council’s help to get the word out so important positions can be filled before summer.

### Move Update

DCR’s will be completely out of 251 Causeway Street on April 28. The team has been hard at work sorting through files, supplies and other materials and undertaking a large digitization project as part of the preparations. From May 1 to June 2, staff will be encouraged to telework while the final touches are put on our new space at 10 Park Plaza. Senior management, administration, finance and legal will have the opportunity to work out of 100 Cambridge Street in Boston, and parks around the state will be made available as meeting locations. The agency is scheduled to be in 10 Park Plaza the week of June 7- 13

### Riverbend Park in Cambridge

Commissioner Rice acknowledged receiving multiple comments about the recent announcement to return to the pre-pandemic Sundays only schedule for the closure of Memorial Drive in Cambridge. He said that DCR has worked closely with the City of Cambridge over the past three years to provide expanded outdoor recreational opportunities for residents. During lockdown, DCR closed many road segments throughout greater Boston, including extended hours at Riverbend Park, and expansion of this park from one to two days was the direct result of the COVID pandemic.

Commissioner Rice noted that Riverbend Park is the final remaining park to return to its pre-COVID-19 schedule in the DCR system. While this effort was a success in expanding access to outdoor recreation, it was not without its negative impacts, particularly to the surrounding neighborhood, who expressed concerns about rerouted Memorial Drive traffic in residential areas and associated pollution. Commissioner Rice noted that parts of the adjacent neighborhoods are classified as an environmental justice block group and added that DCR and the executive office are eager to ensure all communities have access to open space, but that they must also ensure that no community disproportionately bears the impacts.

### Councilor Questions and Comments

Chair Buckley again thanked Commissioner Rice for his time at DCR.

Councilor Collins thanked Commissioner Rice and wished him luck back at the MWRA.

## Legislative Update – Matthew Perry, Manager of Stewardship Programs and Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Perry presented the House Committee on Ways and Means budget recommendation to the council and compared it to the Governor’s budget recommendation.

**2800-0100 – Operating Costs:** $6,630,306

**2800-0101 – Watershed Management**

Gov: $2,136,595

House: $1,936,594

**2800-0401 – Stormwater Management**

Gov: $499,762

House: $3,249,761

**2800-0500 – Beaches**

Gov: $965,282

House: $1,205,231

**2800-0501 – Seasonals**

Gov: $24,385,117

House: $25,385,117

**2800-0700 – Dam Safety:** $675,676

**2810-0100 – Division of Parks and Recreation**

Gov: $107,632,351

House: $102,172,782

**2820-0101 – State House Rangers:** $2,692,063

**2820-2000 – Park way lights:** $4,330,000

After Mr. Perry presented, Councilor Wilson suggested the Council write a letter to the Committee on Ways and Means urging support of the Governor’s original budget numbers.

Councilor Smiley made a motion that Chair Buckley and Mr. Perry will draft a letter in support of the Governor’s budget to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Councilor Collins seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

## Regular Business I

### Be Kind! Campaign Presentation – Chris Redfern, Executive Director, Friends of the Fells, and Judy Lehrer Jacobs, Executive Director, Friends of the Blue Hills

Mr. Redfern and Ms. Lehrer Jacobs gave a presentation on the Fells and Blue Hills joint campaign, *Be Kind!*, a campaign “**to create a parks culture that welcomes everyone and encourages a sense of responsibility for the environmental health of the park.”**

### After the presentation concluded, Councilors were given the opportunity for questions and comments.

Councilor Harper thanked Mr. Redfern and Ms. Lehrer Jacobs for the presentation and said that this was a great example of how friends groups can help DCR staff.

Councilor Crane agreed saying that it was a commendable project.

Councilor Ortiz said that as part of the Neponset River Greenway Council, the group has been working on messaging on their own and that she now looks forward to working with the Fells and Blue Hills to adopt the program. She said that having an actual program in place will be very helpful.

Councilor Wilson said that the presentation reminded her of the focus groups that were done before strategic planning and the Special Commission Report, saying that one thing people value is the feeling of good will between users of the parks. She added that this is a good way to change culture and make people more comfortable going to parks. She asked what they envision for trickier situations and if they are looking to DCR Rangers and others for help.

Mr. Redfern replied that there was an assault that happened in the Fells last summer which was a dog related incident. The DCR Mounted Unit came out and word got around that DCR may be giving tickets and as a result, everyone put their dogs back on leashes. He said that DCR needs to have a presence, and although they can’t be at every trailhead, being present shows people that there are people at the park who care and who may ticket you for violations.

Ms. Wilson responded that she loves when friends groups are engaged and have resources in terms of dollars and volunteers, and that she hopes that this campaign can help other parks as well.

Chair Buckley commended the work and said it’s a great start to how DCR can approach these issues. He asked how law enforcement presence is calibrated, saying that presence can have a positive impact, but that it needs to be calibrated so its not a “police state.”

Mr. Redfern replied that he has had a lot of conversations with DCR and the State Police. The State Police are stretched thin and loathe to leave their cruisers since that’s where their resources are. It goes back to simple presence at the park. DCR workers are doing amazing work with what they have, they just can’t be out there on the trails all the time because they have way too much to do. Just being there would make a huge difference.

Chair Buckley asked about dogwalkers using the park for a commercial purpose.

Mr. Redfern says that they have programming where they encounter large groups of dogs off leash, for example a camp with young children who suddenly are surrounded by off leash dogs, and that can make it so children are scared to go to the park. That’s what we are most concerned about.

Chair Buckley said that he thinks the program is great because it benefits the users of the Fells and the Blue Hills, but it has the potential to benefit users of other parks as well. He also commented that he thinks DCR currently does not have a Facebook page, and that this campaign is on social media.

Councilor Wilson commented that she thinks there are very few uses of the parks that are unwelcome when done right, noting that the Sheepfold area of the Fells is used as a dog park and that there are specific paths for mountain bikers. She said that it is easy to “other” the uses of the park that you don’t like, but this campaign brings a sense of compatibility to what people use the park for and that’s part of “being kind.”

Mr. Redfern said that that is a big part of it, that some people don’t know that they are doing something wrong like going off trail. They aren’t doing things on purpose.

Councilor Wilson said that it is important for everyone to know that there are a variety of welcomed uses for the park, not just theirs.

Councilor Smiley gave kudos to the team that worked on the campaign and said that it finds a way to bring all user groups together, something that the Stakeholders Committee is trying to focus more on. The Committee is working to integrate friends groups with DCR, and this is a good example of that.

Nick Connors, Deputy Commissioner of Policy, Public Affairs & Administration clarified that DCR currently does not have a Facebook page, but does have an Instagram account and a Twitter account. He said that there is a commercial dog walking permit and a webpage that outlines it. He noted that Park Rangers role is to educate and tell users what the rules and expectations of the parks are, and that people should expect that when encountering rangers, not strictly enforcement.

Chair Buckley said that this is the kind of program that would be great to have in all parks and could be a way to influence people to try out other parks.

### Approval of Minutes – March 9, 2023

Councilor Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2023 Stewardship Council meeting.

Councilor Canedy seconded the motion.

### Roll Call on Approval of Minutes

Councilor Harper: Yes

Councilor Canedy: Yes

Councilor Smith: Yes

Councilor Ortiz: Abstain

Councilor Crane: Yes

Councilor Wilson: Yes

Councilor Collins: Abstain

Councilor Smiley: Abstain

Councilor Dooley: Abstain

Chair Buckley: Yes

The March 9, 2023 minutes were approved.

### Public Comment

[Guidelines for Public Comment are available on the DCR Stewardship Council website.](https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcr-stewardship-council-public-comment-guidelines/download)

Chairman Buckley invited members of the public for comment, which was offered by the following:

* Randy Stern, Cambridge
* Ellery Klein, Medford
* Morning Star Chenven, Erving
* Glenn Ayers, Greenfield, MA
* Sarah Freeman, Jamaica Plain
* Buzz Constable, Lincoln
* Joe Poirier, Cambridge
* Itamar Turner-Trauring, Cambridge
* Chris Cassa, Cambridge

## Regular Business II

### Council Matrix Discussion

Mr. Perry presented the council scheduling matrix that he has worked on with Chair Buckley to the council for review.

Councilor Wilson commented that it is a fluid document and can change from year to year. She noted that a 30 day public comment period needs to be added in for the strategic oversight plan, and that the timing for RMP reviews will be influenced by thoughts on the strategic oversight plan.

Chair Buckley stated that the document can change as the council goes along.

Councilor Smith said that the document is great and that it will help more than anything that the council has done in the past. He said it is a broad outlook of where the council is and where it is going. He suggested adding in a listing of members of various committees and chairs of committees on another sheet.

Councilor Wilson suggested that in conjunction with the election of officers, councilors can rotate around the different committees so they aren’t on the same ones for their entire terms and that there should be a review of committee charges and memberships around the election.

Chair Buckley said in addition to being helpful to the council, it is also good for the public that asks what the Stewardship Council does because it shows everything.

Councilor Smith said that RMPs should be spelled out once in the document, and that Mr. Perry should continue to put this document together.

### Committee Updates

Policy

The committee did not meet prior to this meeting but will be holding its next meeting on Tuesday, April 25 at 8am. The primary discussion will be about the strategic oversight plan draft. Councilor Wilson added that there is still a delay with RMPs, and that a couple of wrinkles came up in terms of boundary corrections, identification of rare and endangered species by name in the plans, and that they don’t expect anything before the council before June. The hope was that slimmer RMPs would move along at a better clip and that this will be discussed as part of the strategic oversight plan.

Stakeholders

Councilor Smiley reported that the committee met on April 7 and that the next meeting is on May 5 at 8am. The committee looks forward to getting updates on Park Serve Day.

Last meeting focused on the public comments section of the council meeting, spoke about partnership activity with DCR, and about reviewing MOUs and VSAs. She added that she was grateful to have friends groups present today, and that any others on the meeting that are interested in presenting should contact the Stakeholders Committee.

Finance

Chair Buckley reported that the committee met with DCR’s financial staff and that Budget Director George Trubiano is retiring. He said the staff has been exceedingly helpful and forthcoming, and reported that last year DCR had increase of $10 million, and that this year, the Governor’s budget is $22 million, which is an increase of $32 million over 2 years. Almost half of the proposed increase would go to paying people that are currently paid under capital funds to operational funds. Chair Buckley said that he will provide the summary that was shared with the committee with the councilors.

Councilor Crane reiterated how helpful the finance team at DCR has been, taking a very complicated system of accounts and explaining it.

### Councilor Comments

Councilor Wilson thanked Commissioner Rice and wished him well.

Councilor Ortiz said to have a great park serve day and is looking forward to seeing pictures of the events.

Councilor Collins said that he met with staff from the six organizations named in legislation for the open environmental seat on the council, and that they are working on generating a list of nominees that would go to Governor’s office.

Councilor Smiley thanked Commissioner Rice and wished him all the best.

Councilor Dooley thanked Commissioner Rice and said it has been fun working with him.

Chair Buckley thanked Commissioner Rice for all of his work with the council and wished him well in the future.

## Adjournment

The Council adjourned until their next meeting on May 11 at 9am.

Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council>