# April 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Wilson, Jeff Collins, Ann Canedy

**Committee Members Absent:** Phil Doherty

Other Councilors Present: Jack Buckley, Dicken Crane

DCR Staff Attendees: Matthew Perry

## Public Attendees as Registered: Chuck Anastas, Steve Greenberg

## Call to Order and Welcome – Committee Chair Jennifer Wilson

Chair Wilson welcomed the attendees and went over the meeting agenda.

## Approval of Minutes

Councilor Canedy moved to accept the February 28, 2023 meeting minutes.

Councilor Collins seconded the motion.

**Roll Call on Minutes Approval**

Councilor Canedy: Yes

Councilor Collins: Yes

Councilor Wilson: Yes

The minutes were approved.

## Natural Resources Committee Discussion

Councilor Crane introduced the charge of the proposed Natural Resources Committee to the Policy Committee. He said that the Natural Resources Committee would be able to find expertise in DCR to help recognize what our resources are, particularly related to wetlands and other sensitive habitats and what can be done to further protect and enhance these resources. He said it is a way to focus on the specific resources and get more information for the full Council.

Councilor Canedy asked if Councilor Crane envisioned the committee drawing primarily from DCR staff or if he envisioned bringing in other voices and viewpoints to give opportunities for others to be heard.

Councilor Crane responded that the most important thing would be that an expert is the one speaking, whether they are from DCR, Mass Audubon, UMass, Nature Conservancy, Harvard Forests, or another organization. He said they would truly have to be an authority, not talking about opinions, but science and evidence.

Councilor Collins said that he thinks it’s a great idea to elevate the management of natural resources that DCR owns and manages, but that he is interested in hearing others thoughts about the capacity of Council members to fill another committee.

Councilor Crane said that he would turn to Matt Perry about capacity issue and getting experts and identifying who they are within DCR to make presentations.

Mr. Perry responded that he thinks there are lots of people within DCR that would be willing to present on their work.

Chair Wilson said that she would not be comfortable taking suggestions of experts from people who show up at meetings on that basis alone (vetting is needed), and would like to make DCR staff is prioritized and that they can make recommendations on other experts. She added that she has a worry about outsourcing protecting lands and resources since the whole Council is supposed to be concerned with the protection of natural resources.

Councilor Buckley said that his concern is the capacity of Councilors, but that if people are interested, he thinks the committee is a good idea. He pointed out that right now, the Finance Committee is just him and Councilor Crane and that he would hate to lose him to this new committee. He added that he would like to be in a place where DCR comes to this committee and offers to present on a topic such as the coastal bird program. He noted that from his experience committee meetings allow you to get information you won’t necessarily hear at the full Council meetings and that the meetings allow for less formal presentations and more conversations.

Chair Wilson suggested that the Chair of the Natural Resources Committee could work with the Chair of the Council on setting meeting agendas.

Councilor Collins said that the Council wouldn’t want a set of presentations to inform happening only in the committee and that the committee should be more of a working group. He suggested that they could look to Mr. Perry who could let them know the people who could join the meetings and help think through things, elevate issues, and track the proper investment in natural resources.

Councilor Buckley said that he would characterize committee meetings as conversations instead of presentations.

Mr. Perry said that the Natural Resources committee could be an opportunity to build a relationship with the new DCR Research Office.

Councilor Crane said that he imagines within the research that DCR is doing, there are partnerships with universities and other entities and that bringing a light to those partnerships would be a useful outcome of a Natural Resources Committee.

Chair Wilson said that it seems like everyone is feeling positive about the committee and that with 12 Councilors now, they will need to explore the willingness to have people join more than one committee.

Councilor Buckley stated that a new committee would need to focus on building relationships.

Councilor Canedy asked Councilor Crane if he has identified anyone interested in joining the committee.

Councilor Crane replied that he thinks Councilor Collins seems like a logical person to join, but beyond that he has not. He said that if the other environmental seat on the Council is filled, he hopes that the new Councilor would be interested in joining. He added that he would definitely continue serving on the Finance Committee as well as the new committee.

Chair Wilson said that anyone with questions on wording and comments about the charge should get in touch with Mr. Perry and Councilor Crane about changes.

Councilor Buckley said that he needs guidance about bringing the charge to the full Council.

Chair Wilson said that first they should find out the interest of joining multiple committees.

Councilor Collins will get in touch with Councilor Crane with thoughts about the committee charge.

## Strategic Oversight Plan

Chair Wilson reintroduced the Strategic Oversight Plan to the committee, stating that the Council is meant to do a plan by statute. She said that it interrelates with the matrix that Mr. Perry is putting together. After the last committee meeting, an outline was put together by Councilor Collins. The document is about how the Council will fulfill its oversight role, not a strategy about how DCR should be doing its policy. The Council has not created one since 2019, and the new one will update where the Council is and where it wants to be. Chair Wilson said that she would like to move from an outline to a draft for discussion at the next policy meeting, then there can be a draft that can be presented to the whole council after.

Councilor Collins presented the draft to the committee.

Councilor Buckley commented that there should be information on the Strategic Readiness Initiative and the Special Commission Report that highlights what the Council has done.

Councilor Collins said that he hopes the document is something that members can look back on and use for planning.

Councilor Buckley added that he would like to see periodic updates on climate action from DCR.

Chair Wilson said that the document is not for the day-to-day business of what DCR is doing, but to say what the Council’s expectations are so they can fulfill their role. She stated that some of it will reinforce good activity that is happening and some of it will be more aspirational. Chair Wilson said that it is timely to have a new commissioner that they can work with and maybe get input from on this document.

Councilor Buckley said that he hopes DCR staff will look at the finished plan, and that it should be a little bit about pushing DCR in a positive direction.

Councilor Collins said that part of the process of putting this together is asking the committees to flesh out in a paragraph or two what they’ve worked on to add to the plan.

Councilors Crane and Buckley agreed to write a paragraph for the Finance Committee.

Chair Wilson said that she will talk to Councilor Dennis Smith and have him work with Mr. Perry on Council structure and roles.

Councilor Canedy asked about the commitment to finishing RMPs on schedule.

Chair Wilson stated that she thinks its important to call that out.

Councilor Canedy added that she thinks the schedule that was agreed upon has been abandoned.

Chair Wilson agreed saying that there have been a lot of updates but that things aren’t moving along as hoped. She said that maybe a goal date can be set.

Councilor Crane said that he hopes the plan is as much for the public as it is for DCR, that the Council is supposed to be the link between the two, and that the plan can set expectations for both.

Councilor Buckley said the plan will also show a roadway for Councilors.

Chair Wilson said that the goal is to have some of the plan drafted within the next two weeks and to look at it as a committee at the end of May.

**Resource Management Plans**

Paul Cavanagh, Resource Management Planner at DCR, provided a written update to the committee on the progress of Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

Councilor Buckley commented that reading the update, he noticed that there was a new tracking tool being used. He said that there will always be something new and that the current RMPs need to be finished and new things can be added later.

Councilor Canedy agreed, saying that they have to be finished by a certain date.

Chair Wilson said that although the update is from Paul, they are discussing the DCR process, and the committee needs to help protect the process from being derailed.

Councilor Crane said that the RMPs are meant to be living documents, and that when the redesign occurred to this new style, that was a key distinction.

Chair Wilson said that it was designed with the idea that it can be modified.

## Public Comments

Steven Greenberg from Hull introduced himself and said that he is a member of the carousel board and has concerns about DCR properties in Hull.

## Adjournment

Chair Wilson thank everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting.

*Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings.* [*https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council*](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council)