# Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

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

Other Councilors Present**:** Jack Buckley

DCR Staff Attendees: Matthew Perry

## 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 made a motion to approve the March 26, 2024 meeting minutes.

Councilor Collins seconded.

### ***Roll Call on the Approval of Minutes***

Councilor Collins: Yes

Councilor Canedy: Yes

Chair Wilson: Yes

The March minutes were approved.

## Discussion of Rodenticides

Mr. Perry presented his findings on rodenticide use on DCR property, including a presentation created to educate staff on the effects of rodenticides, and discussions about creating an agencywide policy.

Councilor Canedy said that alternatives to rodenticides seem more humane, but are also harder to implement. She noted that there needs to be follow up and staff time, but that she hopes they come up with a policy that is alternative to using poisons.

Councilor Collins said that integrated pest management addresses the root causes such as food sources, gaps in building, trash, and other things that attract rodents. He said that these techniques do require follow up. He asked what the process of putting a policy into place would be.

Mr. Perry said that he wasn’t sure if public meetings would be needed for something like this.

Chair Wilson commented that she would like to know what a timeline for a policy would be.

Councilor Buckley noted that Mass Audubon sent an email about this to its members and that there is momentum about the issue. He suggested that this issue be talked about during the committee’s report and that they could urge the Commissioner to act on this.

Councilor Collins said he agrees and said it would be an opportunity to lead on this issue.

Chair Wilson asked if the City of Boston has a Rat Czar.

Councilor Collins said that it does.

Chair Wilson said it would be good to build a relationship with them. She asked what good timing to engage and inform the full council would be.

Councilor Buckley said that this is a pest control issue on one level, but that its also a conservation issue that needs to be addressed.

Chair Wilson said that she would like to come to the meeting with good concrete conclusions and steps and wants it to be something that can be implemented and for DCR to take the lead on.

Councilor Buckley suggested that in the report they can mention that the committee has discussed it and are looking for a presentation on it.

Councilor Collins said that his colleagues at Mass Audubon have a presentation and can work with their counterparts at DCR on it.

Councilor Canedy said that they can start with a presentation from Audubon that can lead to a policy discussion. He said it would let the public know that they are aware of the issue.

Chair Wilson said that Mr. Perry and Councilor Collins can connect to find a time for a presentation from Mass Audubon.

## Discussion of the Fells Caucus Meeting

Mr. Perry spoke about the upcoming meeting of the Massachusetts Legislature’s Fells Caucus to discuss the “Be Kind!” campaign. He said that the members of the caucus expressed concern about the movement of the campaign and are looking for more enforcement in parks from DCR. He shared a presentation he would be giving at the meeting.

Chair Wilson asked what the agency’s plan to get to park users is.

Councilor Buckley said that the responsibility for that lies with the legislators and increased funding.

Chair Wilson said that she agrees, but that funding was provided and wants to know what has been done.

Mr. Perry spoke about what has been done so far by DCR and ideas on what can be done going forward.

Councilor Buckley said that these are great ideas that get press, but they need funding to be executed.

Chair Wilson said that the idea to expand to other parks is great, but success needs to be seen at the Fells where it was first introduced. She asked what the Friends of the Fells Executive Director Chris Redfern thought.

Mr. Perry said that he has expressed some frustration, and that Mr. Perry has become the liaison between Mr. Redfern and the DCR Communications Team to help move things forward.

Chair Wilson said that they have talked about enforcement before and that they can bring it up again.

Councilor Buckley said that the issue is funding and before taking on something like enforcement they need to have the funding in place. He mentioned that at Park Serve Day he saw lots of private docks at Whitehall State Park which is another enforcement issue that goes beyond Be Kind.

## Report on RMPs

Paul Cavanagh, Resource Manager Planner at DCR, sent along a written report about the status of RMPs for the committee to review.

Councilor Buckley said that he noticed a new review by the Office of Climate Resiliency has been added. He said that he has no problem with them doing a review, but that there needs to be a time limit on all the reviews that happen.

Councilor Canedy agreed, saying that the problem is the plan goes through the entire process and then another review is added.

Chair Wilson said that she will follow up with Mr. Cavanagh to let him know that reviews can’t slow the process down. She added that she would like to have a conversation with the Commissioner about RMPs and the Oversight Plan.

Councilor Collins said that its great that the Climate Office’s eyes are on the RMPs, but said that there needs to be clear deadlines to get additional information in. He said that they need to see that the plans are used for the properties.

## Environmental Seat

Chair Wilson asked if there was any movement on the filling of the open Environmental Seat.

Mr. Perry said yes, that he has been in touch with EEA and that it should be finalized soon.

## Adjournment

Chair Wilson thanked 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)