



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
February 9, 2018 | 12 - 2PM
West Boylston Headquarters Office
180 Beaman Street, Clinton

Meeting Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: *Walter Bickford, Elisa Campbell, Heather Clish, Whitney Hatch, Wayne Klockner, Toni Pollak, Jim Van Dyke,*

DCR Staff in Attendance: *Stephen Doody, Lisa Barstow, Joe Rotondo*

EEA Staff in Attendance: *Faye Boardman, Chief Operating Officer, EEA*

Stewardship Councilors Absent: *Michele Hanss, David C. Murphy, Dennis Smith, Nate Walton*

Public Attendees: *Bill Boles, North American Mountain Biking Association; Henry Woolsey, MEU; Renata von Tscharne, Founder and President, Charles River Conservancy; Joseph Kelly*

Attachments: *Asset Management Modernization Program presentation*

Chairman Whitney Hatch called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Commissioner's Report – Leo Roy, Commissioner

- Snow removal on parkways has been dramatic after the storm.
- Issues related to Article 97
 - The City of Lowell seeks to file a bill in exchange for two parcels owned by DCR. DCR in exchange received land along lot on Vandenberg Esplanade. DCR favors this.
 - A bill has not yet been filed, but the Hull Redevelopment Authority would swap land with DCR that gives them continuous space and moves DCR land directly across from our bathhouse; in addition they will make improvements to the DCR parking lot. DCR favors this.
- DCR celebrated MLK birthday and Black History Month with Diversity and Inclusion Council program
- Number of staff departures at DCR, three with over thirty years of experience.
 - Division of Water Supply Protection position has been posted

- Planning and Engineering, Director has left and new staff coming on. We seek to fill top post quickly. Patrice Kish will be Acting.
- There will be a new director of the Central Region to be announced in the next two weeks.
- Head of the Charles Regatta approached DCR to renovate the Herter Center at the finish line. New England Sports Museum uses our building for storage. Head of Charles would renovate the building. They would use second floor as office. First floor would be public, open space. We are looking at the entire section of Artezani all the way to Eliot Bridge there is an opportunity by Boston Water and Sewer to do storm water work in our parking lot.
- Renewing Summer Nights: Successful program to give urban youth safe recreational opportunities during hot summer—extend hours at our pools and spray decks and other facilities in Lawrence, Worcester and Boston.
- Held Partnership Matching Grants Program ceremony at the Statehouse. DCR granted \$900,000, which leverages another \$600,000 in private funds. Twenty-six projects are involved including trails, invasives, signage, new pump at Leo J. Martin, ADA bathroom Paragon Carosul, ADA pathways Scusett Beach.
- Gov. Baker has almost tripled the public-private investment opportunity for recreational trails in budget.
- Held seven Morrissey Blvd. neighborhood meetings, additional meetings requested by Mayor Walsh. Very informative.
- Arborway improvement project and two circles continue with many internal meetings and later in spring public meeting(s).
- The Halibut Point Visitor Center is being renovated, shaped by the visitor experience.
- Friends of Cass Center plan to expand public programming based on public input.
- Transfer of New Bedford and Fall River piers continues.
- Master Plan in development for Peddocks Island
- In partnership with Lowell, DCR will expand the Vandenberg Esplanade creating a six mile greenway on the Merrimack River.
- A new boardwalk is being built at Belle Isle
- As part of a focus on improving the Mystic River and its banks, Draw Seven Park is proposed to have a new pedestrian bridge, DCR believe it can source private funds. Public meetings to come. Working with MBTA, we are moving to build connections to Boston.
- Advancing the South Bank Bridge, the final outstanding Central Artery commitment will connect the Charles to Northpoint Park, by Spaulding Hospital. The new Washington St. Bridge makes the link from Watertown dam down one side of the river to Boston Harbor and all the way up the other side. We have a few linkage problems in certain spots but we are making great progress.
- Working on DCR's North Point Garage. Requires some environmental clean-up on North Point Park and we thank the Charles River Conservancy for being helpful in this; allowing DCR to get our staff into a modern maintenance facility. They have been working out of trailers for the past 15 years.
- We are working with the New England Mountain Bike Association to expand single track biking in Oakham State Forest while doing forestry activities. Oakum State Forest is a test for us.
 - To alleviate frustration in Central MA due to the extra protection given to our watershed lands, we are working on improvements to Leominster State Forest on the north and Oakham to offer unfettered access to recreation.
- In Lynn, DCR with Gov. Baker, celebrated 10,000 trees planted over the past three year with the Greening the Gateway Cities Program. The Governor wants DCR to plant 10,000 trees in 2018—as a result of this success. This is a challenge due to the care that is given to sustain each tree planted. We will do what we can to meet the Governor's challenge.

- Working to clarify enforcement of off-lease dog issue. Last year we promulgated a commercial dog-walking permit, \$100 per handler. Requires handler has insurance and dogs have shots.
- Agile Scrums continue on Constituent Tracker and State House Security groups
- We were approved for increasing the pay for lifeguards, this will help DCR recruit, train and certify the 600 lifeguards we need for summer.
- This past week we were with the Governor and Lt. Governor honoring six State House Rangers – one ranger suffered a heart attack on duty. One of the Rangers noticed this, used the AD, got a shock and brought him back to life and into an ambulance. After by-pass surgery, he and his family were with us celebrating his new lease on life and the professionalism that our Rangers exhibit every day on duty at the State House watching out for our visitors. It's testament to our outstanding and professional Rangers. We are very proud of their training and their teamwork.
- On climate change, DCR has convened a vulnerability workgroup to develop a plan to meet the Governor's Executive Order 569 and submitted a report to EEA by January 31 deadline. It's first pass at our top ten areas of vulnerability, a risk assessment document to get us going. Shows the important role DCR plays in public protection through our built and natural infrastructure.

Commissioner Roy concluded his report and took Council member questions.

Questions:

- A member asked if the climate document is a public document. Commissioner said yes in that all our documents are public, but it's a matrix, not a narrative and preliminary assessment.
- A member asked if there is money for recreation trails? A discussion ensued about the various investments the Administration has made on trails. Commissioner Roy commented that trails bring communities together. A suggestion was made to invite Paul Jahnige in to update the Council on trail advancements.
- A member expressed not wanting to see water resources land further infringed upon. Commissioner Roy responded that in taking a step back, some areas should be places off limits to the public and fenced. There are other areas some distance away that have a reduced risk.
- A member wanted to know DCR's ability to hire with justification and the cap on FTEs, whether there is a hiring freeze. Commissioner Roy said he did not have that number but critical positions have to be filled and in that vein there is no hiring freeze.
- Chairman Hatch wanted to know if the budget proposal was sufficient to cover lifeguard raises. Commissioner Roy said the FY19 with the increase by the Governor will cover it fully and funds exist to cover the short FY18 period.
- Chairman Hatch asked if there was common theme in so much staff movement? Commissioner Roy said many DCR people reached retirement age and others had specific career moves.
- A member asked if the Greening the Gateway Cities tree planting program had a methodology, suggesting health benefits recorded in other states. Commissioner Roy spoke of the program's full aerial assessment, tracking where the tree can reduce heating and cooling costs—breaking winds and other factors. DCR partners with U Mass Amherst to track efficacy. When a tree is planted, we work with urban non-profits and community partners so there is local engagement. The program has multiple components including workforce training and community development. It's much more than just a tree-planting program. It has a societal benefit. A discussion ensued about a summary of success and the issue was raised that there was a presentation on this program a couple months ago.

- A member raised a question on electric bikes. Commissioner Roy said we plan to have a series of public meetings before implementing regulations so the public and advocacy groups can join the conversation.

Committee Reports

Policy Committee Update

- Policy Chairwoman Elisa Campbell gave an update re: a scoping meeting at Blackstone and another on Spectacle Islands operations. A document of DCR Resource Management Plans was looked at and discussion ensued about additional RMPs that could be included. Chairwoman Campbell said there is a focus on completing South East RMPs first; while members expressed interest in seeing more properties included. [further offline discussion took place post-meeting]

Finance Committee Update

- Finance Chairwoman Heather Clish noted the Governor's proposed budget was released and that finance committee has its own recommendation document. Overall, the Governor's budget recommends a five percent increase for DCR, which is a maintenance budget and restores a full camping season. Other positives are commitments to dam safety and holding retained revenue numbers even. The State House Ranger budget, parkway street lighting doesn't meet costs so we would recommend funding at the actual cost, as well as funds to continue asset modernization plan.

Chairman Hatch proposed a motion that Ms.Clish draft a letter to the budget committee for the Chairman's signature laying out the positives, as well as making the case for additional revue for shortfalls as laid out.

The motion was moved and seconded.

All in favor, the motion carried.

Ms. Clish also announced the Green Budget Coalition will be holding an event about what parks mean to people.

Chairman Hatch introduced speaker Faye Boardman to discuss the Asset Management Moderation Program update (presentation attached)

- Questions arose for Ms. Boardman and Commissioner Roy related to timeline, IT and connectivity issues—physical issues, costs—for this new system, how long implementation will take, migrating from DCR's current asset management system and human capital and training.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was moved to approve the revised minutes and seconded.

All in favor, the motion carried.

Member Discussion

- Walter Bickford noted he was reading through our legislative charge that Stewardship Council should meet with Fish and Wildlife twice annually. Chairman Hatch recommended working with Stephen and Lisa to see if Fish and Wildlife might join an upcoming meeting of ours or find we alternatives to meet.
- Chairman Hatch brought out latest version of Oversight Strategy and raised whether a vision and planning process should be added and capital project dashboard tracking.
- A member noted that DCR make very clear and transparent constituent issue volume.
- Commissioner Roy noted that so much of our budget falls into urban infrastructure, i.e. intersections in roadways.

Chairman Hatch requested a copy of the Communication Scrum relative to the development of this Oversight plan.

Public Comment

Chairman Hatch asked Renata von Tscharne to give an overview on the Interstate 90 program.

Commissioner Roy noted this is much needed transportation project, provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve parkland along the Charles River and applauds CRC for its recommendations benefiting pedestrians, and park and bike users.

A member question arose about Charles River flooding due to climate change and Ms. Von Tscharne said that absolutely has to be brought into the discussion but we don't want to lose parkland.

Chairman Hatch read a statement to submit as public comment in agreement with the I-90 policies discussed and approved by DCR.

Chairman Hatch recommended motion be moved to submit the letter and it was seconded.

All in favor, the motion carried.

A public comment was brought forward by a member of the public, Joseph Kelly, relative to prioritizing employee training on sexual harassment.

A public comment was brought forward by Bill Boles, New England Mountain Biking Association. He is encouraged with Governor's budget. Is submitting a proposal for an RTP Grant to improve trails at Oakham State Forest and believes this can be an example of how forestry and trails can co-exist.

Chairman Hatch adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m. without objection.

Next Meeting

May 3, Community Rowing, 20 Nonamtum Road, Brighton.