



## Meeting Minutes

**Stewardship Councilors in Attendance:** Walter Bickford, Elisa Campbell, Heather Clish, Michele Hanss, Whitney Hatch, Wayne Klockner, Toni Pollack, Dennis Smith, Nate Walton

**Stewardship Councilors Absent:** David C. Murphy, Jim Van Dyke

**DCR Staff in Attendance:** Commissioner Roy, Stephen Doody, Andy Backman, Joe Rotondo, Lisa Barstow, Dan Driscoll, Paul Jahnige

**Public Attendees:** Tony Lechuga, Livable Streets: Bill Boles, North American Mountain Bike Association; Renata von Tscharner and Laura Jasinsky, Charles River Conservancy; David Loutheshiser, MAPC.

**Attachments:** *Update on DCR Trails presentation*

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### Welcome and Call to Meeting

Chairman Whitney Hatch called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

Mr. Hatch announced the appointment of a new member, Melissa Harper, yet to be sworn in, joining the next available meeting.

## Commissioner's Report

Leadership Academy -- Commissioner Roy commented on the success of this year's Leadership Academy, support from sister EEA organizations and our partnership with REI Co-Op. He complimented former Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis for his inspirational keynote remarks.

Park Serve Day -- Once again, thousands of volunteers observed Park Serve Day on April 28. In 35 locations across the state, nearly 5,000 volunteers gave 15,000 volunteers hours to remove over 100 tons of forest and ocean debris-including many other park beautification projects.

### Ribbon Cuttings :

- Two playground refurbishments were unveiled with local officials, one at Mary O'Malley Playground in Chelsea and one at Riverfront Park in Lawrence. Both included significant upgrades to include repairing pathways, creating ADA access, replacing surfaces and structures and beautification work.
- A new spray deck groundbreaking took place at Holyoke Heritage State Park.
- Governor Baker and local officials will host a ribbon cutting at the Mattapan section of the Neponset River Greenway--connecting Mattapan Square to Central Avenue in Milton, a 1.3 mile multi-use trail. It includes a Canopy Walk to allow safe passage over trolley tracks.

2018 Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants -- The Baker-Polito Administration awarded nearly \$91,000 in grants to eight cities and towns to maximize the environmental benefits of increased tree canopies in their communities, among other community-building activities.

Quabbin Fishing Season -- Season opens April 21 with seven day a week boat launch area access throughout the fishing season, which closes October 20, 2018.

Presentation Month -- May is National Preservation Month. DCR will showcase cultural sites throughout the month.

125-Year Anniversary -- 2018 marks the DCR predecessor agency, the Metropolitan District Commission, acquisition of Waverley Oaks in the Town of Belmont which became Beaver Brook Reservation in 1893. Activities over the year will take place to highlight this milestone.

Curator Selected for Wachusett House -- Cork and Windsor LLC has been selected as the curator for Superintendent's House at Mount Wachusett State Reservation. The new curator proposes to reuse the building as a cafe, market and a community gathering space. DCR estimates the value of the preservation, reuse and maintenance of the structure and ground as approximately \$969,000 over the forty-year lease.

## **Q&A**

Following up on prior discussions, Mr. Hatch noted that he will meet with the Chair of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to discuss watershed protection and public access issues.

A member inquired of Mr. Roy if DCR coordinates with the Massachusetts Historical Society and the City of Boston on projects and properties and Mr. Roy said yes and in many cases we have joint ownership responsibility for properties with municipalities and federal agencies. However, DCR cannot use state capital funds on a city/town owned property unless the legislature grants DCR that authority.

Mr. Hatch inquired of Mr. Roy an update to the group on prior issues regarding use of Wendell State Forest tree use. Mr. Roy reported there has been significant verbal communication on various levels between DCR staff members and Wendell Forest interested parties. He noted DCR takes seriously archeological sites and follows scientific measures on questionable sites, a matter raised by opponents of changes to the forest. A formal letter on the matter from DCR would be forthcoming upon completion of a review. Mr. Hatch said he was very comfortable with all the action steps DCR was taking on this matter. All agreed.

## **Committee Updates**

Policy and Planning Chairwoman Elisa Campbell summarized a series of conversations over email with DCR staff to more clearly describe the process of Resource Management Planning and its reporting functions. She noted that there is just one DCR staff member designated to this task and legislators need to have realistic expectations of DCR capabilities in addressing plans.

A member suggested this discussion provided an opportunity to scale back on plans; Ms. Campbell said we already have streamlined.

A member suggested that various vulnerability assessments [in the RMP process] provide allow DCR planners to flag issues.

Finance Committee Chairwoman Heather Clish summarized House and Senate budget negotiations and the window of time the coalition of environmental groups could weigh in. Ms. Clish will distribute her worksheet and Mr. Hatch asked if DCR would similarly distribute its draft bond bill summary.

A member asks if the bond bill addresses climate resilience. Ms. Clish replied that climate adaptation language across Energy and Environmental Affairs capital plans is strong.

Mr. Roy comments that approximately three-quarters of the bond bill is related to DCR and includes much needed support across various funding streams. Mr. Roy asked DCR staff to distribute the summary to members.

*Addendum to minutes:* Ms. Campbell noted a capital budget established by Commissioner Roy has enabled ecology staff to contract for an Invasive Plant Management Plan for each DCR region. In 2017, DCR contracted with an invasive species control crew and that crew will continue to work on priority

sites. Additionally, DCR has a seasonal (rare) shorebird monitoring crew for the North Shore properties and for the first time it has a crew for South Coast properties, as well. Ms. Campbell noted that DCR beaches are recognized as the most successful beaches for plover recovery in the Northeast United States

## **Special Business I**

*Presentation by the Tony Lechuga, Project Manager, Livable Streets / Emerald Network*

Discussion ensued about differences between Greenways and Bike Lanes, where his organization's funding is derived (answer: philanthropies) and whether they rent bikes (answer: no, but in discussions with various companies).

General discussion turned to trail mapping and accuracy issues with Google tools.

## **Special Business II**

*Presentation by Dan Driscoll, Director of the Office of Recreational Facilities Planning and Paul Jahnige, Director, DCR Greenways and Trails Program, Office of Recreational Facilities Planning*

A member inquired about using gravel pathways in certain areas as may be found in certain global cities. Presenters noted DCR must use ADA standards, stabilized paths, family-friendly crossings and work to balance extending trails with pathway standards.

A member asked about prospects for Belchertown and presenters noted there is some resurgence in support.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Hatch motioned to approve the February 2018 minutes, motioned was seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Hatch recommended April and May Minutes review be taken up at June meeting.

## **Public Comments**

Bill Boles - New England Mountain Bike Association commented on upcoming events, changes in grading at Wompatuck State Park bike path and the positive results of keeping the lines of communication open with DCR.

Renata von Tscharner and Laura Jasinski - Charles River Conservancy. Ms. von Tscharner introduced new Executive Director Ms. Jasinski. Mr. von Tscharner referenced a letter to Mass. DOT relative to the urgency of gaining parkland/green space with the Route 90 construction project. She thanked DCR for the completion of the addition of new lighting in the [Lynch Family] skateboard park, opening opportunity for evening recreation.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Hatch proposed a motion to adjourn, motion was seconded, all in favor, motion carried.  
Meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 7, 2018 at 12 p.m. at Willowdale Estate, 24 Asbury Street, Topsfield.