



October Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Ann Canedy, Esq., Dicken Crane, Vivian Ortiz, Alvin L. Reynolds, Esq., Dennis Smith, Nate Walton, Jennifer N.S. Wilson, Esq.

Council Members Not Present: Melissa Harper, David Murphy

Member Materials: n/a

DCR Attendees: Lisa Barstow, Nick Connors

Public Attendees as Registered:

Neponset Staff
Tom O'Shea
Amy
Bill Boles
Chris Redfern

Chuck Anastas
Ellen Aron
George Coorsen
Gia Neswald
Glen Ayers

Ian Dinnie
Michael Nichols
Sharl Heller
Steven Olanoff

Call to Meeting – Chairman Nate Walton

Chairman Walton called the meeting to order. Reviewed housekeeping items relative to the online meeting format and rules. He introduced DCR Deputy Commissioner Nick Connors for the DCR Report.

DCR Report – Nick Connors, Deputy Commissioner of Policy, Public Affairs and Administration

Deputy Commissioner Connors reported on the operational shift from summer to fall to winter preparations—shutting down and draining pools and preparing for snow and ice season. He noted the two sides of the agency, conservation and recreation, shift course as visitors increasingly visit parks closer to home and use waterfronts for walking. With fall comes preparation for the historical increases expected at scenic places for foliage, such as Mount Greylock.

All ice rinks have opened, with COVID-19 restrictions limiting the number of people in the building and face coverings required at all times. DCR is working to expand its contactless ticket purchasing at Leo J. Martin and the Blue Hills ski tracks.

Mr. Connors noted that the agency has come to a broad consensus internally on the decade-plus long challenges with undertaking a MOU revision with Friends groups—looking toward an annual conversation with groups under a framework vs. a set criterion.

Mr. Connors announced the retirement of four distinguished staff members who have been in public service with the Commonwealth or directly with DCR for three or four decades each: Karl Pastore, Les Perry, Lucinda (Cindy) Hudson and Anne Fiesinger, the latter two with over 45 years each in state service. He praised them for their many contributions to DCR.

Councilor Reynolds wanted his colleagues on the council to be cognizant that while adding parking meters at Charlesgate is far less expensive than alternative parking in the area, he sees it as an indirect tax and raised concerns about equity and making access to DCR properties available to everyone.

Councilor Buckley asked if at public meetings (with reference to the one on parking meters at Charlesgate) DCR provides context on how parks are funded. Mr. Connors said DCR's funding structure is not part of standard public meeting presentations.

Councilor Crane said that the long-term solution to decarbonization in the state is public transit and suggested solutions beyond parking fees be investigated to fund and expand access to parks.

Councilor Ortiz said driving directions often are provided for public meetings but DCR should emphasize public transit directions.

Councilor Reynolds inquired about a letter, dated August 3, 2020, distributed by Protect Sudbury Inc.'s Executive Director regarding the Eversource Transmission Line. Deputy Commissioner Connors provided background on the relevant communications and noted that he will distribute to the Council a relevant letter previously sent by the DCR.

Regular Business I

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Walton raised the issue of approval of the minutes. Councilor Smith motioned to approve the minutes and Councilor Canedy seconded. Chairman Walton offered a roll call on the adoption of the minutes, as indicated for virtual meetings:

- Councilor Smith – Yes
- Councilor Walton – Yes
- Councilor Canedy – Yes
- Councilor Crane – Yes

- Councilor Buckley – Yes
- Councilor Wilson – Yes
- Councilor Reynolds – Yes
- Councilor Ortiz – Yes

The September 10, 2020 minutes were adopted.

Public Comment

Chairman Walton read the Public Comment Guidelines, and public comment was offered by the following:

- Sharl Heller
- Bill Boles

Regular Business II

[Presentation](#) by Andres Ripley, Neponset River Watershed Alliance.

[Presentation](#) by Tom O’Shea, Trustees of Reservations.

Regular Business III

Committee Meeting Breakouts and Recap

Finance Committee

Councilor Buckley reported for the group noting their plan to begin a series of meetings at DCR to better understand the operational and capital budgets, and funding/monetizing work on state forest land.

Policy and Operations Committee

Councilor Wilson reported for the group who said they continue to monitor what is needed for the enabling legislation process, the tailored down RMP and a timetable for properties to be covered. They also are looking at how uses for DCR parkways, roadways and paths may not comport with an intersecting municipality as well as ways to apply consistent language to communicate DCR standards.

Stakeholders Committee

Committee Chair Councilor Ortiz reported for the group and discussed what may be done in lieu of the Friends Network conference, such as promoting the Friends web page, conducting a virtual conference or “check-in” with friends groups and informing friends groups on COVID-19 policy changes for volunteer activity.

Prior to adjournment Councilor Buckley asked for a presentation on DCR’s land acquisition program.

Seeing no other questions, Chairman Walton adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.

Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council>