



## November Meeting Minutes

**Council Members Present:** Jack Buckley, Dicken Crane, Melissa Harper, David Murphy, Vivian Ortiz, Alvin L. Reynolds, Esq., Dennis Smith, Nate Walton, Jennifer N.S. Wilson, Esq.

**Council Members Not Present:** Ann Canedy, Esq.

**Member Materials:** n/a

**DCR Attendees:** Lisa Barstow, Paul Cavanagh, Nick Connors, Priscilla Geigis, Wendy Pearl

### Public Attendees as Registered:

Glen Ayers	Chris Redfern	Richard.Ferrino/ iPhone7
Kelly Boling	Guadalupe Ga...	Stacy Kontrab...
Whitney Hatch	Ellen Aron	Charles River Conservancy
Jdowd	Mahir Kabir	Janel Nockleby
Vivien Morris	Julieann Rapoport	Sarah K. Frederick
Bill Boles	Rich Oetheimer	Michael Nichols
Sarah Freeman	Branner Stewart	Neponset Staff
Herb Nolan	Chuck Anastas	
Jessica Mink	Sonia Bouvier	

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### 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.

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

Deputy Commissioner Connors updated the council on two capital projects nearing completion: Northpoint Park in Cambridge which will serve as a staff labor yard for the Boston Region and a labor yard in Revere serving the Coastal/North Region. These facilities replace temporary trailers and/or aged-out facilities. Northpoint also offers community meeting

space, interpretive elements and with a lift and other elements was designed to be fully accessible to all community members. DCR also is completing renovations at Lake Park in Worcester. With its natural-turf field and boat house, this property will be ready for the spring 2021 season.

DCR has completed the closure of waterfronts and is working in cooperation with MassDOT on snow and ice readiness. Ice Rinks are open under COVID-19 protocols and transitions to ski operations at the Blue Hills, Leo J. Martin and Wachusett Mountain are on track.

### *Q&A*

Councilor Buckley noted that DCR's announcement offering free parking on Veterans' Day implied that there are fees at most DCR parks when that has not been his experience. Mr. Connors said that while park attendance is free, there is a parking fee at most but assured he would investigate the matter and consider more advantageous ways of publicly communicating the annual "Veterans' Day" parking waiver.

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## **Regular Business I**

### *Approval of Minutes*

Chairman Walton raised the issue of approval of the minutes from October 8, 2020. Councilor Smith motioned to approve the minutes with a friendly amendment from Alvin Reynolds to include language he would submit relative to council discussion on a petition by Protect Sudbury. Chairman Walton offered a roll call on the adoption of the minutes, as indicated for virtual meetings:

- Councilor Walton – Yes
- Councilor Smith – Yes
- Councilor Harper - Abstain
- Councilor Crane – Yes
- Councilor Murphy - Abstain
- Councilor Wilson – Yes
- Councilor Buckley – Yes
- Councilor Reynolds – Yes with addition of friendly amendment
- Councilor Ortiz – Yes

The October 8, 2020 minutes were adopted.

### *Public Comment*

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

- Whitney Hatch
- Glen Ayers
- Sarah Freeman
- Richard Ferrino

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## Regular Business II

[Presentation](#) by Paul Cavanagh, Regional Planner, on DCR Resource Management Plan Update; introduced by Deputy Commissioner for Conservation and Resource Stewardship Priscilla Geigis.

### Q&A

Chairman Walton asked about the RMP connection to the Forestry Resource Management Process. Mr. Cavanagh said it is a separate process, but Mr. Church has been involved in conversations and his process continues. Chairman Walton continued, asking what they envisioned as the council's role. Ms. Geigis suggested that ongoing input would be helpful and that their meeting a year ago opened a robust internal dialogue—charging us to quicken the timeline, and we reimagined the process to achieve a plan. Mr. Cavanagh encouraged the council to maintain the same enthusiasm and engagement over the coming five-year period.

Councilor Crane suggested appointing a council liaison to the process could be fruitful to both. Mr. Cavanagh agreed. Councilor Crane added that other agencies weigh in on state forest land and climate change relative to net-zero 2050 initiatives and create their own reports. He suggested that this process should try to engage the myriad outside planners and consultants working to influence what happens on state land.

Councilor Buckley suggested that as RMPs go out for public comment, that presents, “incredible opportunities” to communicate about the state park in a promotional way—thus having a liaison would be helpful, as would inviting internal stakeholders such as MassWildlife. He also encouraged the agency to pursue using drones to expedite the field-work process and said MassWildlife has done so successfully. Councilor Buckley concluded by underscoring the Stewardship Council's commitment as a body to the RMP process, noting, “Even as Commissioners come and go, the consistency of the council's voice in this process elevates its importance.”

Councilor Reynolds thanked Deputy Commissioner Geigis, Mr. Cavanagh and Ms. [Wendy] Pearl for, “Rising to the occasion,” becoming deeply engaged in transforming the process and emphasized the council's excitement around this large-scale effort.

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## Regular Business II *(continued)*

[Presentation](#) by Kelly Boling, the Trust for Public Land and Discussion by Vivien Morris, Edgewater Neighborhood Association

### Q&A

Councilor Smith inquired on the length of the wall. Ms. Morris said about seven blocks, but her focus has been in the Edgewater neighborhood.

Councilor Ortiz gave a, “Big thank you to Vivien [Morris],” who sparked her own involvement in the Neponset, and for Ms. Morris’ Kennedy Playground advocacy and leadership over decades.

Discussion ensued among council members and presenters about community safety and creating equitable access to safe recreation on and around the Neponset River at Edgewater, such as Councilor Wilson’s suggestion for wayfinding signage as a stop-gap measure.

Chairman Walton thanked Councilor Ortiz and Herb Nolan for their ongoing work in this area and council members thanked the Trust for Public Land and the Edgewater Neighborhood Association for their advocacy. Councilor Buckley requested monthly updates.

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## **Regular Business III**

### *Committee Meeting Breakouts and Recap*

#### *Stakeholders Committee*

Committee Chair Ortiz reported for the committee, whose members and public participants further discussed Edgewater. Deputy Commissioner Connors expected to report on the conclusions of the Friends MOU process at the December meeting. Councilor Harper is working on a document/process for the council on equitable access [to parks] around the Commonwealth.

#### *Policy and Operations Committee*

Committee Chairman Reynolds reported for the committee, suggesting the Policy and Operations Committee as the formal point of contact from the council to the RMP process and noting follow up with the Chairman would be forthcoming. The committee continues to move forward on an approach to amend the council’s enabling legislation. Councilor Reynolds announced his resignation from the Council effective at the close of the January 2021 meeting and said committee leadership transition plans would be discussed at the next committee meeting.

#### *Finance Committee*

Councilor Murphy reported for the group, noting Committee Chairman Buckley set up a meeting with DCR CFO Max Tassinari and team to be briefed on the FY22 budget. Concerned about reductions in revenue/retained revenue, the committee is interested in exploring creative ways to provide services. The committee sees a silver lining, as well as marketing opportunities, with increased visitorship in parks due to the pandemic. It was noted that the public meeting to discuss increasing parking meter fees was met with opposition and a question was raised on how DCR reports forest products sales.

## **Adjournment**

Prior to adjournment, Councilor Reynolds expressed his, “vehement opposition” to raising parking meter fees—seeing this as, “the public’s resource to access.” Councilor Harper agreed on social justice principles and inquired on a DCR [policy](#). Deputy Commissioner Connors said the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has an Environmental Justice Director. Councilor Buckley requested a copy of the report noted in the Edgewater presentation.

Seeing no other questions, Chairman Walton adjourned the meeting.

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

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