



## January Meeting Minutes

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

Council Members Not Present: David Murphy

DCR/EEA Attendees: Lisa Barstow, Stuart Connor, Olivia Dorrance, Sean Getchell, Acting Commissioner Jim Montgomery, Jennifer Norwood, Sean Pierce, Joe Rotondo,

Public Attendees (from sign-in sheet): Brandon Pelchat for Rep. McMurtry; Vanessa Nason, Charles River Conservancy; Abigale Purvis, Charles River Conservancy; Ellen Arnstein, Emerald Necklace Conservancy; Celeste Walker, Friends of Allendale Woods; Sarah Freeman, Arborway Coalition; Hannah Buntich for Sen. Timilty; Lisa Consalvo for Rep. Scaccia; Derek Silver for Sen. Gobi; Andrew Bettinelli for Sen. Brownsberger; Rep. Donald Wong; Paula Matrisko; Donna Cuipyllo; Michele Hanss; Don Siriani for Sen. Tarr, Chris Kenny for Rep. Brad Hill, Chuck Anastas, Mass. Conservation Voters

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### Call to Meeting – Chairman Nate Walton

Chairman Walton opened the meeting and welcomed guests at this special location for the first time—the Great Hall of the State House. He thanked Councilor Dennis Smith for suggesting the location and for securing it. After a brief update on the structure of meetings, Chairman Walton asked members of the council to go around the table to introduce themselves. He asked any legislators or staff in the room to please introduce themselves.

He introduced Acting Commissioner Jim Montgomery to deliver the Commissioner’s Report.

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### Commissioner’s Report – Acting Commissioner Jim Montgomery

The report is attached hereto and made a part hereof.

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## **Special Business – Joint presentation by The Esplanade Association and The Charles River Conservancy**

The presentation attached hereto and made a part hereof.

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### *Council follow up questions to presenters*

Councilor Reynolds commented on retained revenue as an indirect tax and spoke of, “our responsibility to those who don’t have disposable income,” that this a deterrent to potential visitors.

Ms. Jasinski suggested that CRC has a special role in constituent building by being in touch with neighborhoods and their volunteer work is a form of indirect revenue.

Mr. Nichols spoke to the role TEA plays working with DCR’s social media team, not supplanting but augmenting DCR’s resources.

Councilor Wilson said success breeds success and thanked these groups for their work. She asked for their opinion as to the concerns funders may have in partnering with the state.

Ms. Jasinski said how quickly we can enact their gift can be an issue; but if there is up-front dialogue, understanding can be built, and expectations understood. This is preferable to groups rushing toward a planning stage before ever speaking with DCR.

Councilor Buckley commented on the great work these organizations are doing on the Esplanade and compared it to the NYC High Line and the Central Park Conservancy, questioning whether we are getting the same economic impact.

Mr. Nichols said Massachusetts has been later in advocating to legislators than New York. DCR has been open and transparent about frontloading some of this work to TEA.

Councilor Smith praised the strong relationship between these organizations and DCR but asked how the Council could be helpful. Ms. Jasinski suggested that leveraging private support to expand and strengthen their positions would be helpful.

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## **Regular Business**

Chairman Walton moved to the Regular Business portion of the meeting. Councilor Smith moved to accept the November and December meeting minutes, Chairman Walton seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed.

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## Public Comment

Sarah Freeman of the Arborway Coalition said she was here wearing multiple hats. Spoke on her work as neighborhood watch on Arborway safety issues and sharing information on social media. Vision 2020 Parkways project—putting the park back in the parkway—and a chain being only as strong as its weakest link; speaking of Olmstead paths to be rejoined.

Chairman Walton called for a break in the meeting for committee sessions.



## Post Committee Meeting Reports

### *Finance Committee*

Councilor Buckley reported for the committee. He stated that the Governor’s budget was coming out next week. Also stated that now we know the schedule. When we speak to the Secretary and pursue advocacy, we do so with a clearer understanding of the calendar and process. He said that advocacy funding is something the council can work on all the time, not just seasonally.

Priorities to articulate to the Secretary could include that retained revenue stay in parks, DCR should have a stable and aggressive budget and social media resources to promote the parks/outdoor recreation as an economic driver. He stated that future State House meetings could include some time speaking with their legislators.

### *Policy and Operations Committee*

Councilor Reynolds reported for the committee. He spoke of the RMP process updates making RMPs, efficient and scalable. He noted the committee felt good about the direction and analysis that has been done by DCR, but questioned if there will be “a timeline for the timeline.” He said there was discussion about a working group.

Councilor Reynolds also noted some back and forth on a Parkways study—they haven’t seen a parkways study and what if anything can the committee/Council do to be a catalyst for such discussions. Councilor Canedy mentioned that the committee will bring recommendations on the Council enabling legislation back to the Committee in March. Councilor Buckley recommended that the Council track that with the Commissioner.

## *Stakeholder Committee*

Councilor Smith reported for the committee. Jennifer Norwood presented on constituent tracking and trends. He spoke further on a customer survey and talked about having a workshop in lieu of a survey—pertinent in light of the fact that the Friends Network may not hold their meeting next year.

He discussed holding the February meeting in Roxbury but opined where to go in the future and noted the desire to be where various constituent groups can benefit, as well as getting more involved with A&F. As an aside, Councilor Buckley recommended that the Council not get ahead of government. Councilor Smith suggested scheduling a coffee hour ahead of the meetings for time to meet with stakeholders. Chairman Walton liked the idea, as well as engaging with DCR staff in the Atrium, perhaps doing a stand-alone coffee hour with staff—something to discuss with the commissioner.

Chairman Walton noted that he reached out to over 20 legislators' offices and got a good response; as indication for future outreach to individual reps. and senators.

Chairman Walton introduced a motion to adjourn which was seconded and unanimously accepted.



The next meeting of the DCR Stewardship Council will be held at Roxbury Heritage State Park, February 7, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.