



## March Meeting Minutes

**Council Members Present:** Jack Buckley, Ann Canedy, Esq., Jeffrey Collins, Dicken Crane, Melissa Harper, Vivian Ortiz, Susan Smiley, Dennis Smith, Nate Walton, Jennifer N.S. Wilson, Esq.

**Council Members Not Present:** David Murphy

**Member Materials:** n/a

**DCR Staff Attendees:** Lisa Barstow, Nick Connors, Jim Montgomery

### Public Attendees as Registered:

Branner Stewart  
Chris Redfern  
Chuck Anastas  
Myles Wilde  
Mark Kablack

Judy Jacobs  
Erica Holm  
Glen Ayers  
Judy Jacobs  
Julieannrapoport

Sarah Freeman  
Kathryn Craddock McKee  
Caroline Reeves

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### Call to Meeting – Chairman Nate Walton

Chairman Walton opened the meeting, offered an overview of the Zoom format. He welcomed new member, Susan Smiley, joining the Council from Worcester County and introduced Commissioner Montgomery to deliver the DCR Report.

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### DCR Report – Jim Montgomery, Commissioner

Commissioner Montgomery thanked the Stewardship Council for its ongoing work in this virtual format and welcomed Susan Smiley to the Council. He shared how the Executive Office of Technology and Security Services and EEA is making great strides in equipping DCR staff for the future of work, in remote locations or at the office, by rolling out the hardware and software tools to keep the agency serving our constituents over the challenging last year.

Commissioner Montgomery discussed ways DCR has piloted “platooning staff” in the field to mitigate against the spread of COVID over the winter months and into transitioning to summer plans as DCR begins to hire lifeguards and recall and hire seasonal staff.

To allow for greater pedestrian and recreational access there will be expanded parkway closures and a limited resumption of special events. If public health data allows, DCR will

consider reopening Visitor Centers later this season. Last year, DCR ran a curtailed Summer Nights program serving youth in urban settings for the 6<sup>th</sup> year and plans are underway for this summer, remaining COVID-safe but expanding over last year in quantity and creativity.

Commissioner Montgomery shared operational highlights including refashioning the RMP team, onboarding seasonal hires with EEA HR, using Tririga to capture data from Community Affairs to CAMIS and pricing out an electric vehicle for trash collection on the Neponset Greenway—thanking Councilor Ortiz for her ongoing advocacy there. In Visitor Experience, the Commissioner shared on the expansion of the, “Park as a Classroom” program through Interpretive Services and other ways we are reaching Commonwealth students and new visitors, engaging and educating them in flexible ways. Through celebrations like the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Halibut Point as a state park and adding mooring expansions at Peddocks Island, DCR continues capital improvements to these and many other parks.

Finally, Commissioner Montgomery provided an overview on how DCR has adopted and integrated technology into operations at every level, from booking tee times to integrating climate change data into our systems and how the SCRUM process has yielded improvements on lofty goals—demonstrating how DCR is delivering on high expectations while dealing with the pandemic on the ground.

~ Q&A ~

Councilor Canedy raised the issue that hybrid and remote meeting adaptive technology processes helps more of the public to become involved and inquired if the Open Meeting Law will continue to use these technologies.

Commissioner Montgomery said the decision not up to him, but he can see a combination as an advantage going forward. Councilor Buckley asked where the decision does lie. Deputy Commissioner Nick Connors said the Attorney General’s Office and Governor’s Office. Discussion ensued among councilors on the benefits of the virtual meeting format. Chairman Walton said he would discuss this with the Special Commission. Councilor Wilson said the Open Meeting Law is a one-size-fits-all and encouraged the idea of the council looking at employing different types of meetings.

Chairman Walton asked Commissioner Montgomery for an Edgewater update. The Commissioner said they are finalizing the RFP in the next few weeks to secure a contractor for design and construction with a June 2022 completion date planned.

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## **Regular Business I**

### *Approval of Minutes – March 11, 2021 Meeting*

Chairman Walton entertained a motion to adopt the February 8 minutes. Councilor Smith seconded the motion. Chairman Walton offered a roll call on the adoption of the minutes, as indicated for virtual meetings:

- Councilor Ortiz – Yes
- Councilor Walton – Yes
- Councilor Buckley – Yes

- Secretary Canedy – Yes
- Councilor Collins - Yes
- Councilor Smith – Yes
- Councilor Wilson – Yes
- Councilor Smiley - Abstain
- Vice Chair Harper – Yes
- Councilor Crane – Yes

The March 11, 2021 minutes were adopted.

*Public Comment – [Guidelines](#) are available on the DCR Stewardship Council website.*

Chairman Walton invited members of the public for comment, which was offered by the following:

- Kathryn McKee
- Glen Ayers
- Sarah Freeman

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## **Regular Business II**

*[Presentation by David O’Neill, President, Mass Audubon](#)*

*~ Q&A ~*

Councilors discussed the importance of education programs within DCR parks. Councilor Crane emphasized the importance of science-based programs on forest management. Mr. O’Neill noted their strong partnership with DCR on that kind of relationship—steeped in science and habitat ecology.

Discussion turned toward funding these programs. For Mass Audubon, funding derives from wildlife sanctuaries, operational funding, capital campaigns and an emphasis on public-private partnerships.

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## **Regular Business III**

*~ Committee Meeting Breakouts and Recap ~*

*Stakeholders Committee Recap*

Committee Chair Ortiz shared on behalf of the group. She stated that Councilor Harper is working on a form/calendar for “guest presenters” to share with the committee and discussed the April 1, virtual DCR Friends Gathering, “check-in.” The Stakeholder group hopes to help with facilitation and would like the Commissioner to give an update. It was reported Councilor Susan Smiley will be joining this committee.

Councilor Canedy asked if the April 1 meeting will include an MOU discussion and indeed it will.

### *Policy and Operations Committee Recap*

Committee Chair Wilson shared on behalf of the group. She said Dep. Commissioner Connors will provide RMP updates to the committee and noted their annotated updates will be shared with the full council. Additionally, DCR will roll out the “sleeker” RMP in the fall but prior the council may have a couple legacy RMPs to approve, as well as and two new ones now in the pipeline. Going forward, she invited all council members to reach out to Jeff, Ann or her with any policy issues they would like the committee to consider. She added as part of the RMP process, the committee now will focus on Landscape Designations, seeing those as living documents to be guidelines to keep fresh as a management tool. She advised that all committees may need to keep a placeholder to respond to topics that arise out of the Special Commission.

Councilor Crane noted Landscape Designation resulted from a visioning process. He questioned if there is effort to change that or review that. Discussion ensued among council members on this topic and Chairman Walton suggested answers may be forthcoming as part of this process.

### *Finance Committee Recap*

Councilor Buckley shared on behalf of the group. He noted the upcoming presentation on the operating budget. After that recommended two more presentations: 1) on the capital budget [in determining priorities] and 2) on “all other” revenue streams, i.e. trust funds, federal funds and public-private partnerships. Mr. Buckley noted the council needs to discuss and define its statutory role in the upcoming budget and wants to sit down with DCR in June/July to drill down on specifics before the council’s August break. Mr. Buckley reported an informative conversation with Dep. Commissioner Connors on public-private partnerships.

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### **Adjournment**

Just prior to adjournment, Councilor Ortiz asked if the DCR had any update to its e-bike policy, which Chairman Walton deferred for a follow up meeting. Thanking members for a productive meeting Chairman Walton adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

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Please check the [DCR Stewardship Council webpage](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council) for notice of upcoming meetings.  
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