



## June 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:** n/a

**Member Materials:** n/a

**DCR Staff Attendees:** Lisa Barstow, Paul Cavanagh, Priscilla Geigis

### Public Attendees as Registered:

Chuck Anastas  
Bill Boles  
Michael Christy  
Buzz Constable  
Taylor Leonard

Sarah Freeman  
Branner Stewart  
Chris Redfern  
Ellen Aron  
Glen Ayers

Judy Lehrer Jacobs  
Michael Nichols  
Suzanne Gall Marsh  
Celeste Walker

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### Call to Meeting – Chairman Nate Walton

Chairman Walton opened the meeting and noted the meeting is being recorded. He provided an update on the May 27 Special Commission meeting and commended DCR Forestry and Fire Control Bureau for containing the massive state wildfire. He also commended the council for its resilience through the pandemic noting the Executive Order enabling public bodies to meet remotely ends soon but may be extended. Chairman Walton said he will introduce a remote participation policy for the council and going forward proposes to hold meetings in accessible places while moving the July 8 meeting to July 22 to account for the August gap.

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### DCR Report – Priscilla Geigis, Deputy Commissioner for Conservation and Resource Stewardship

Dep. Commissioner Geigis said DCR has moved headlong into the summer season since the last meeting, with guarded waterfronts commencing over Memorial Day weekend, as well as spray-deck operations. Deep water pools are slated to open in late June—signals of a more normal pre-COVID-19 schedule.

Ms. Geigis said she was thrilled that Paul Cavanagh and she could provide an RMP update today on progress made the last time they presented. On a personal note, she underscored her gratitude to the council for their input and interest in this process as we move into a rhythm for updates and approvals under revised plans.

Ms. Geigis shared some standing updates from Dep. Commissioner Connors, who could not be present:

- The Design and Engineering team is close to awarding a contract for the design of Edgewater Drive work—the scope of which runs from Kennedy Playground all the way down to Osceola Street. We will be looking at entry points, path alignment and materials, the best treatment for the wall itself, plantings and more. The project opens approximately three acres that was previously walled off from the community. We anticipate beginning construction next spring.
- On the budget presentation for July, Councilor Buckley has given a general outline of the type of information you would like to see and DCR’s goal is to provide a presentation and document for the council’s review and vote.
- The Special Commission continues to work through their public meetings and the research of the UMass Donahue Institute. Many of the presentations are based on issues the Stewardship Council has raised. It is a testament to you that the topics on which you are focused are informing Commission members and the public about

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## **Regular Business I**

### *Approval of Minutes – May 13, 2021 Meeting*

Councilor Smith moved to accept the minutes of the May 13, 2021 meeting and the motion was seconded. Chairman Walton called the roll on the adoption of the minutes, as indicated for virtual meetings:

Councilor Walton – Yes  
Councilor Ortiz – Yes  
Councilor Collins – Yes  
Councilor Crane – Abstain  
Councilor Harper – Yes  
Councilor Buckley – Yes  
Councilor Smith – Yes  
Councilor Wilson – Yes  
Councilor Smiley – Yes  
Councilor Canedy – Yes

The May 13, 2021 minutes were adopted.

### *Motion to Adopt Remote Participation Policy*

Chairman Walton motioned to adopt a remote participation policy for the council, in accordance with Open Meeting Law requirements. Councilor Wilson seconded the motion. Chairman Walton called the roll as indicated for virtual meetings on the adoption of the motion:

Councilor Walton – Yes  
Councilor Ortiz – Yes  
Councilor Collins – Yes  
Councilor Crane – Yes  
Councilor Harper – Yes  
Councilor Buckley – Yes  
Councilor Smith – Yes  
Councilor Wilson – Yes  
Councilor Smiley – Yes  
Councilor Canedy – Yes

The remote participation policy was 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:

- Barry Moore
- Bill Boles
- Sarah Freeman
- Glen Ayers

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### **Regular Business II**

[Presentation](#) – *Resource Management Plan Update Priscilla Geigis, Deputy Commissioner for Conservation as Resource Stewardship and Paul Cavanagh, Resource Management Planner*

~ Q&A ~

Councilor Smith thanked Mr. Cavanagh for making progress and asked what pitfalls might derail progress. Mr. Cavanagh said the team is very capable and the pieces are in place internally, but now we need to focus on public engagement. Deputy Commission Geigis underscored that the team is great, but they are “seasonal” so consistency is an issue in this job market. Turnover could set us back but processes and procedures will help and written plans have been a goal this year, she added.

Councilor Crane asked for clarification on terminology, what is larger a complex or a district. A district is larger. He asked if the budget was adequate to meet stated goals, and Ms. Geigis said the funding will be fine if level over a five-year period.

Councilor Smiley thanked Dep. Commissioner Geigis and Mr. Cavanagh for their work on RMPs and asked how they as councilors can engage people in the regions they represent, as well as how RMP surveys address four-season use. Discussion ensued about public meetings, surveys and structured councilor feedback as part of public process.

Councilor Collins underscored that the lack of continuity due to seasonal positions jeopardizes the long-term stewardship of DCR lands, stating that moving even one position to full time is worth the advocacy.

Councilor Buckley proposed creating a priorities scorecard tied to the budget process. He suggests that linking the budget to the RMP is a nice pairing of the council's responsibilities. Deputy Commissioner Geigis said that philosophy has been with the Commissioner since his tenure with Administration and Finance, linking the AMMP to the Capital process.

Councilor Wilson opined how council members can be "strategic reviewers," ensuring the public is aware of the full scope of agency needs.

Councilor Crane discussed the nexus of climate resilience to RMP oversight and the need to adapt to our increasing knowledge of climate. Mr. Cavanagh remarked that Sarah White (DCR Director of Climate Resilience) and the RMP team are reviewing various assessments to build living vulnerability assessment plans. There was interest in having Sarah present to the Stewardship Council.

Vice Chair Harper and Councilor Buckley underscored that RMPs, budget, and climate vulnerability plans, when looked at together, could reveal strategic trends of value to the Secretariat.

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## **Regular Business III**

### *Committee Meeting Breakouts and Recap*

Prior to breaking off into committee meetings, Chairman Walton shared the status of discussions among members of the Stakeholders Committee, i.e. if maintaining this committee is the most effective way to strengthen the public private partnerships to which the council is committed. Chairman Ortiz agreed to remain in the role through the September.

### *Finance Committee Recap*

Committee Chairman Buckley shared on behalf of the group. He laid out plans for the adoption of an annual review and sign-off of the Commissioner's priorities and approval of the capital and operational budgets along with an advocacy framework for the council.

## *Policy and Operations Committee Recap*

Committee Chair Wilson shared on behalf of the group. She said they will continue RMP discussions with Mr. Cavanagh leading to a regular, two-part process, where RMPs are presented to the Council then approved at the following meeting. Ms. Wilson also discussed advocacy on the Open Meeting Law and feedback with appropriate bodies toward permanent hybrid meetings.

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## **Adjournment**

Before adjourning, Chairman Walton solicited comments from members on possible in-person meeting start times and locations. Chairman Walton thanked everyone for their participation.

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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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