



September Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Ann Canedy, Esq., 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: n/a

Member Materials: [Enabling Statute Alternatives Review](#)

DCR Attendees: Lisa Barstow, Dave Celino, Deputy Commissioner Nick Connors, Deputy Commissioner Priscilla Geigis, Commissioner Jim Montgomery

Public Attendees as Registered:

Jennifer Heine	Chuck Anastas	iPad
Andres Ripley	Claudia Phillips	Juliann Rapoport
Bill Boles	Daniel Jones	Kate Conlin
Branner Stewart	EAron@donahue.umassp	Maryanne Leonard –
Cathy Vittorio	.edu	Marshfield
Chris Head - Marshfield	Gary Wolcott	Pat Conlin
Chris Lisinski	Glen Ayers	Samantha Woods
Chris Redfern	Greg	Barbara Moran

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 Commissioner Jim Montgomery for the DCR Report.

DCR Report – Jim Montgomery, Commissioner

Commissioner Montgomery reported on the challenges of working through unchartered times during the COVID-18 pandemic but reflected on the honor it has been to serve as commissioner through these obstacles. He noted a stated goal in coming into the post was to drive deeper relationships with municipal partners. This spring and summer provided

those opportunities: to manage parking and visitation, coordinate operations functions including parkway street sweeping and more in communities where our parks are located.

The Commissioner named several highlights including the Sixth Annual Summer Nights urban initiative, reaching nearly 3,000 urban youth across the Commonwealth with enriching programs and safe recreational opportunities. DCR's commitment to iterative improvement, yielding improvements in the field and across our administrative practices that improve visitor experience and help make better decisions. He highlighted that Labor Day weekend caps off the summer season where hundreds of thousands of visitors seek a respite from the summer's heat, and DCR delivers low cost, swimming opportunities in some of the most beautiful locations New England has to offer.

He anticipates an extended recreational season as citizens seek out opportunities to be outside and we look forward to the ongoing work as we deliver a fantastic visitor experience and seek out opportunities to improve.

Regular Business I

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Walton solicited comments and seeing none Councilor Smith motioned to approve the minutes and Councilor Canedy seconded. Chairman Walton roll call on the adoption of the minutes, as indicated for virtual meetings:

- Councilor Reynolds - Yes
- Councilor Buckley - Yes
- Councilor Ortiz - Yes
- Councilor Murphy - Yes
- Councilor Harper - Yes
- Councilor Crane - Yes
- Councilor Canedy - Yes
- Councilor Smith - Yes
- Councilor Wilson - Yes
- Councilor Walton - Yes

The September 10, 2020 minutes were adopted.

Approval of Statement on DCR COVID-19 Response

Chairman Walton introduced a statement for adoption by the Council reflecting their appreciation to Commissioner Jim Montgomery, Secretary Katie Theoharides and all the women and men of DCR in keeping parks open and safe over the past six months.

Councilor Canedy requested that Deputy Commissioner Nick Connors be named in the statement most especially for his work with the Stewardship Council during this period, the sentiment was echoed by Councilor Reynolds and Chairman Walton. Discussion was raised about circulating the statement and posting to the DCR website.

With a friendly amendment that the Chairman also would thank Mr. Connors in the statement, Councilor Smith motioned to approve the statement and Councilor Canedy

seconded. Chairman Walton took a roll call on the adoption of the statement, as indicated for virtual meetings:

- Councilor Reynolds - Yes
- Councilor Buckley - Yes
- Councilor Ortiz – Yes
- Councilor Murphy – Yes
- Councilor Harper – Yes
- Councilor Crane – Yes
- Councilor Canedy – Yes
- Councilor Smith – Yes
- Councilor Wilson – Yes
- Councilor Walton – Yes

The statement was adopted.

Enabling Legislation Revisions

Councilor Reynolds asked to bring a motion to: “to authorize the Chairperson of the DCR Stewardship Council, and such councilors as he may designate, to provide statements of opinion, in oral or written form, in support of the Council’s suggested revisions to the enabling legislation.” Councilor Wilson seconded.

Councilor Buckley suggested that Councilor Reynolds prepare a statement detailing the aforethought that accompanied this exercise. Chairman Walton took a roll call on the adoption of the motion, as indicated for virtual meetings:

- Councilor Reynolds - Yes
- Councilor Buckley - Yes
- Councilor Ortiz – Yes
- Councilor Murphy – Yes
- Councilor Harper – Yes
- Councilor Crane – Yes
- Councilor Canedy – Yes
- Councilor Smith – Yes
- Councilor Wilson – Yes
- Councilor Walton – Yes

The motion was adopted.

Public Comment

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

- Kate Lindroos Conlin
- Samantha Woods – Executive Director, North and South Rivers Watershed Association
- Dan Jones, North River Commission
- Bill Boles, NEMBA
- Glen Ayers

Remote Participation Policy

Chairman Walton raised the issue on the adoption of a remote participation policy. Discussion ensued on quorum issues under such a policy and adopting this as a standard operating procedure, not as a replacement to in-person meetings [at such time as those resume] but to offer some flexibility to members.

Councilor Buckley asked if the public will have an opportunity comment in an online forum. Vice Chairman Harper noted that the Stakeholder committee is discussing the degree to which the current public comment structure is working and will be laying out further ideas to the committee. Discussion ensued how the online meeting format works for a body like the Stewardship Council vs. other public bodies under the Open Meeting Law.

Chairman Walton called for a motion to establish a remote participation policy. Councilor Smith move to authorize the chairman to create a policy for members to participate remotely. Councilor Buckley seconded. Chairman Walton took a roll call on the adoption of the motion, as indicated for virtual meetings:

- Councilor Reynolds - Yes
- Councilor Buckley - Yes
- Councilor Ortiz – Yes
- Councilor Murphy – Yes
- Councilor Harper – Yes
- Councilor Crane – Yes
- Councilor Canedy – Yes
- Councilor Smith – Yes
- Councilor Wilson – Yes
- Councilor Walton – Yes

The motion was adopted.

Regular Business III

Presentation by Dave Celino, [Update on DCR Forest Fire Control](#)

Chairman Walton thanked Mr. Celino and asked if DCR uses aerial drones. Mr. Celino said as an agency we have not but have tested them through partners.

Councilor Buckley noted that at Fish and Game they benefitted from private citizen drones for real-time intelligence. Mr. Celino answered that regulations prohibit the use of drones over federal airspace during wild-land fires. However, we can map fires similarly from State Police helicopters—it is the recognition of keeping of up with the latest technology.

Councilor Buckley also asked if in places in the state like Plymouth County/Southeastern MA are we in a place to defend against for catastrophic fires like California? Mr. Celino said the issue, “keeps him up at night.” Southeastern MA Pitch Pine Barrens fuel type are the second most volatile fuel type in the country, second only CA Chaparral. The major difference is the Santa Anna winds, with major heat and single-digit humidity. We are working with homeowner fire safety zones and partnerships like that will make a difference.

Councilor Crane thanked him for the thorough presentation and had questions about the Forest Fire Action Plan and forest fire management and protection activities to mitigate problems such as impacts of tree diseases, dead trees on the landscape, other safety issues and to improve forest health and resilience.

Mr. Celino gave the example of Freetown State Forest which had a massive number of Oak die back in 2007 and 2008. He noted we’ve seen that forest change from Oak, Hickory to almost Heath barons. With that came an increase in fuel loading like Huckleberry up to your waist. We removed dead Oak through proscribed fire. Building that proscribed fire capacity, working with fire chiefs and building that social trust has been central, noting much success in Martha’s Vineyard.

Councilor Canedy thanked Mr. Celino for their work on the Cape and Islands where she represents. She raised concerns about a 2000% increase in fireworks from a news report. Mr. Celino said we cannot prove how many wildland fires they sparked but we do find evidence of connections. She also asked about the 42 fire towers and how they are manned. Mr. Celino said the 22 are key towers are prioritized for staffing because they and have better observation. There may be times for a local issue some of the other towers are used. We also have to keep sufficient people on the ground. Additional questions arose about DCR seasonal firefighter roles.

Councilor Canedy asked if CA fires are largely driven because they do not focus on forestry management. Mr. Celino answered that CA has multiple factors and there is renewed interest in forestry management.

[Note: Presentation from Neponset River Watershed Association has been postponed to October meeting]

Regular Business III

Committee Meeting Breakouts and Recap

Policy and Operations Committee

Committee Chair Councilor Reynolds reported for the group plans to socialize the enabling legislation revisions project in light of DCR priorities and Sen. Brownsberger Commission.

He said they will review past agendas and align across other committees to put forward a cohesive agenda that captures issues that may have dropped off in light the major effort extended on the enabling legislation and RMP process revitalization projects.

Stakeholders Committee

Committee Chair Councilor Ortiz reported for the group noting they were joined by three stakeholders in attendance at the full meeting. She outlined the committee's three foci going forward:

1. Continue to invite Friends groups to these meetings and formalize that process
2. Public comment process and other ways for the public to engage, and
3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Friends groups.

Finance Committee

Councilor Buckley reported for the group noting Deputy Commissioner Connors offered to set a meeting with the new CFO to follow up on a budget calendar, capital budget plan, operational budget, retain revenue plan, federal money and a way to develop metrics or understanding on added value of activities. Then to take that input into a larger presentation to the council for an annual plan.

Prior to adjournment Councilor Buckley asked if there was an update on vacant council seats and Chairman Walton noted that the six environmental groups who recommend candidates for two environmental seats submitted names to the Governor's Office.

Seeing no other questions, Chairman Walton adjourned the meeting.

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

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