



## July Meeting Minutes

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

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

**DCR Attendees:** Lisa Barstow, Leo Roy

### Public Attendees

| Name              | Affiliation as Listed                         |
|-------------------|---|
| Alex Auriema      | Memorial Drive Alliance                       |
| Galen Mook        | Mass Bike                                     |
| Colin McCarthy    | Resident                                      |
| Joseph Kelley     |   |
| Bill Boles        | New England Mountain Biking Association       |
| Katherine Cabral  | Sachem Strategies                             |
| Louise Johnson    |   |
| Chuck Anastas     | Mass Conservation Voters                      |
| Jessica Mink      | Neponset Greenway                             |
| Alan Wright       | Free speech advocate                          |
| Kelly Lemmon      |   |
| Ian Schneider     | Public/MIT                                    |
| Sarah Freeman     | Arbor Coalition/Emerald Necklace Conservatory |
| George Schneeloch |   |
| Eliza Parad       | Boston Cyclists Union                         |
| Becca Wolfson     | Boston Cyclists Union                         |

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### Welcome and Call to Meeting – Chairman Nate Walton

Chairman Nate Walton opened the meeting. Shared with members he has connected with numerous stakeholder groups, including the legislatively mandated environmental groups. He made it clear to these groups, as a volunteer body, the Stewardship Council relies on feedback of stakeholders.

He told members that thank you letters have been mailed to past members with copies in your packet, he has conversed with Jenny Norwood on MOU process with friends groups along with Councilor Alvin Reynolds and following this to ensure its timely completion for the benefit of friends groups.

He is working to establish dates/locations for meetings through June 2020.

### **Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Leo P. Roy**

Commissioner Leo Roy spoke on history of the newly restored Dillaway-Thomas House at Roxbury Heritage State Park. The history of this house dates back to 1750 when Reverend Oliver Peabody began the construction of a parsonage for the First Church of Roxbury.

During the 11-month siege of Boston in 1775, the Continental Army and Major General John Thomas used the house as a headquarters. It is said that General Thomas watched the Battle of Bunker Hill and the burning of Charlestown from the windows of the home. In 1835, Charles K. Dillaway inherited the house during his time as headmaster of Boston Latin School.

Further, Dillaway was an accomplished author, writing several books including the History of the Grammar School and Roman Antiquities and Ancient Mythology for Classical Schools. He was heavily involved in education, the church and the Boston Society of Natural History – now the Boston Museum of Science.

To maintain the legacy of General Thomas and Former Headmaster Dillaway, DCR predecessor agencies took control of Roxbury Heritage State Park in 1984 and then the Dillaway Thomas House in 1992. In 2015, EEA and DCR announced The Roxbury Heritage State Park (RHSP) Signature Park Project and began a community engagement process. The project was one of six urban park projects identified as a priority for rehabilitation.

The goal of the projects was to help revitalize urban neighborhoods by opening up or upgrading green spaces for outdoor recreation and by rehabilitating historic community landmarks. In June 2018, DCR completed restoration and enhancement of the Dillaway Thomas House.

The project included:

- Exterior repairs to ensure that the building is watertight;
- Restoration of historic components and appearance of the building;
- Upgrades to the electrical systems;
- Upgrades to interior finishes, furniture, fixtures and equipment in areas dedicated for exhibits, or for public use;
- Creation and installation of interpretive exhibits; and,
- Improvement of park amenities to make the landscape more inviting.

## *Public Meetings*

With increased pedestrian traffic on our parkways and rail trails, it is incredibly important that the DCR continues to assess opportunities to expand their connections and make them safer.

- On Thursday, June 6, the DCR hosted a public meeting to present design and construction plans for the Clippership Connector, a proposed multi-use pathway located along the Mystic River near Medford Square.
- On Thursday, June 13, the DCR hosted a public meeting to provide design plans for the extension of the Cape Cod Rail Trail from Le Count Hollow Road to Route 6 in the Town of Wellfleet.
- On Monday, July 15, the agency also hosted a Quabbin Reservation White-Tailed Deer Controlled Hunt public meeting. The meeting enabled the DCR to present this year's plan, which expands into Quabbin Park, and highlight the impacts of high deer densities at the park.

## *MassTrails Grants*

Continuing efforts to support the state's vast network of trails, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$5 million in MassTrails Grants to 71 projects throughout the Commonwealth. The grants will provide assistance for the construction, maintenance, and improvements for a variety of public trails throughout the state trails system, such as hiking trails, bikeways, and shared-use paths.

MassTrails Grants focus on the improvement of existing trails, the construction of new trails, and the maintenance of the statewide trail system. This year's projects include:

- facility landscaping and amenities installation;
- land surveys and design plans;
- evaluation of off-road bikeway connections;
- culvert repair and gradient restoration;
- hiring of trail staff;
- structure construction;
- installation and maintenance of directional and interpretive trail signage;
- development and creation of GIS mapping and trails guides;
- purchasing of trail maintenance equipment; and,
- upgrading existing trails to accessible trail standards.

Funding for MassTrails Grants comes from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) capital budget, and from the motor fuel excise tax.

- These grant awards will allow continued investments in our trail networks, closing gaps that exist, expanding the shared-use path network, and enabling more members of the public to reach destinations in a safe, efficient, and healthy manner.

- The Baker-Polito Administration remains committed to supporting municipalities and local organizations to achieve our shared goal to conserve and protect the Commonwealth's natural resources while also increasing access to the natural world around us.

### *Artesani Wading Pool Ribbon Cutting*

To modernize popular urban recreation areas in our state parks system, DCR recently completed a new wading pool, new playground, and improved pathways at the agency's Artesani Park in Brighton. The \$3.2 million project will provide children and their families with new outdoor recreational attractions that support a healthy, active lifestyle.

Spray decks and playgrounds assist in a child's development of depth perception, spatial awareness, enhance gross and fine motor skills, and improve body strength in children in an inclusive play environment. Work on the playground includes:

- The removal of existing equipment and surfacing;
- The installation of new playground equipment for 2-5 year olds and for 5-12 year olds;
- The modification of the fencing to make one large enclosed space with three gated fully-accessible entries;
- The installation of poured in place rubber safety surfacing; and,
- The installation of associated site amenities, such as benches, fully-accessible pathways, and landscaping.

Work on the wading pool includes:

- The reconstruction of a new wading pool;
- The installation of 12 new spray features;
- A doubling of the water surface area;
- The installation of a new seating area: and,
- The installation of associated site amenities, such as benches, shaded structures, and landscaping.

The new wading pool at Artesani Park features the latest in aquatic technology with improved efficiency at the facility. With a fully-accessible, zero-depth entry area, the spray deck will be available for visitors of all abilities to enjoy.

Serving as a connector to the expansive Charles River Reservation, Artesani Park is an important urban recreational center for the neighborhoods of Allston and Brighton in Boston. The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to support the community by making significant improvements to the park that encourage everyone to get outdoors.

### *Fourth of July at the Hatch Memorial Shell*

As many of the Commonwealth's residents celebrated the Fourth of July, many of the DCR's staff were hard at work before, during, and after the celebrations at the Hatch Memorial Shell, and other locations.

However, what I am most proud of is the post cleanup work. Our staff was able to seamlessly return the Charles River Esplanade to normal conditions the very next

morning. Impressively, DCR staff picked up approximately 20 tons of solid waste following the 2019 Boston Pops July 4<sup>th</sup> Spectacular. Additionally, all roadways were open in time for the morning commute.

### *Summer Nights Initiative*

Finally, I would like to mention that for the fifth year in a row, Governor Charlie Baker kicked off his Summer Nights Initiative last week. The program targets urban neighborhoods and communities, offering recreational opportunities, such as increased programming at state parks and other facilities, as well as extending the hours of operations at select pool facilities.

This year, we were able to increase the number of partner organizations, who provide specialty programming, from nine to 14. This year programming will last until mid-August and includes the following locations:

- Boston: Dorchester, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Mattapan, South End
- Brockton
- Chicopee
- Everett
- Lawrence
- Lowell
- Malden
- New Bedford
- Springfield
- Worcester
- Programming includes:
  - Basketball tournaments
  - Flag football
  - Arts and crafts
  - Dance
  - Music
  - College readiness
  - Swimming
  - Entrepreneurship and more.

These partnerships will allow today's kids to build memories, stimulate their minds, and spend valuable time outdoors. The extended hours of operations will complement other programs already offered by the DCR for families at the hundreds of state parks, forests, and beaches across the state year round.

As stewards of 450,000 acres of a state parks system that consists of park, forests, beaches, bicycle and hiking trails, we are proud that for just a little longer during the week, we can ensure the public's resources are there to serve them.

Councilor Buckley asked Commissioner Roy if permission of the grant owners is required when you give trail grants. Commissioner Roy replied most of the grants are on DCR or municipal property.

### **Special Business**

Chairman Walton moved to accept a motion to merge the Policy and Operations committees. The motion was seconded. All in favor the motion passed.

Chairman Walton said he was open to creating an ad hoc advisory committee to plan meetings, annual officer elections and changes to enabling legislation.

Councilor Smith complimented the chair on this and making sure all members were in the loop. He also noted it could be cumbersome if there was too much involvement.

Councilor Reynolds liked the idea of delegating a lot of logistical tasks to Chairman.

Chairman Walton asked for feedback on meeting times and was open for discussion.

Vice Chair Harper said we're going to have a lot of variance based on location.

Councilor Buckley said it was valuable to move around to see the state parks.

Councilor Reynolds said it was convenient for him to take train/commuter rail to this location.

Councilor Buckley suggested an early evening meeting, which Councilor Smith concurred having at least one.

Discussion on pros and cons about timing of meetings relative to location in the state and access to public transit ensued.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Walton motioned for a vote on the June 6, 2019 minutes; motion was seconded, all in favor the motion passed.

### **Public Comment**

Joseph Kelley spoke on his experience holding a protest sign at Walden Pond and park staff asking him to leave. He said he was in his first amendment rights and DCR should educate staff before asking them to leave parks for quietly protesting.

Bill Boles of New England Mountain Bike Association and Wompatuck State Park said electric assisted bicycles should not be allowed on non-motorized trails, he would like to see a "donate" button on all DCR website pages and requested that MassDOT transfer roads at Wompatuck State park to DCR.

Louise Johnson is concerned that bicycles don't have protected lanes as working people trying to get places in the city. Believes roads need to be on a diet.

Q: Councilor Reynolds asked the commenter what her definition is of protected.

A: Raised curbs and poles. Added DCR needs to do studies and be out in front of this. "If I don't feel safe on the street, I'll ride on the sidewalk, I'm going to do what's safe for me."

Jessica Mink, new president of the Neponset Greenway Council shared that 35 years ago Bill [Boles] and I served on a statewide trails advisory board that met in Central MA in the evenings. Commented that to get people from all over the state -- you must drive. She added:

- It is tricky to know who is managing what at DCR--lots of reorganization. Wanted more maps at reservations. We need to know who to talk to about each of these parks
- Dog walking policy is not clear. I'm very worried about off-lease dogs.
- Scooter drivers are on bike lanes at 20 mph. Electric bikes should not be allowed on paved paths.

Alan Wright of Roslindale said he is a lifelong biker moving to electric bikes. Stated there, "Needs to be a marked shift from cars to bikes." Seeks for a car lane to be removed on Memorial Drive to accommodate bikes and pedestrians.

Kelly Lemmon, resident of Jamaica Plain, identified herself as a driver and bicyclist. She rides from Forest Hills to Boston University, noted that parts are unsafe so she drives her car. "When I drive, I worry about bicyclists. It's getting harder to be a driver." Said she would like to bike along the Arborway if DCR could make it safer. She commented that she does not ride her bike on the sidewalks because as a pedestrian she doesn't like that.

Andy, a resident of Somerville and visitor of Middlesex Fells said he commutes on Memorial Drive. He observed DCR is improving public outreach but has the wrong bias on the status quo [relative to Memorial Drive modifications]. He noted the importance of Draw Seven State Park as a connection to the Encore resort.

Sarah Freeman, of the Arborway Coalition, The Emerald Necklace Conservancy and a West Roxbury bike group, lives on the Arborway. She has been part of a DCR Arborway safety audit and asked when the final report will be ready [NOTE: Per DCR engineering, report will be available in September]. Sarah held a spreadsheet and stated there have been 177 crashes between the Arborway and Murray Circle and that the Arborway, "is terrifying to bikes and pedestrians." She noted cracks in sidewalks and the stone wall. Sarah also asked for clarification as to the Emerald Necklace being eligible for MassTrails Grant funding. [NOTE: After consult with MassTrails Program Manager the answer is yes. Sarah Freeman has been updated by DCR Commissioner's Office.]

George Schneeloch said he works on social media and took time off work/vacation to report deaths on DCR roads. He believes that two deaths over the past year show DCR is making bad decisions.

Becca Wolfson, President Boston Cyclists Union, said, "We have a congestion crisis and need to choose other modes." Suggested flexposts or quick curbs to give physical separation to cyclists but noted, "DCR as an agency doesn't believe in that and we see that as a systemic problem." Noted MassDOT brought in extra Blue Bikes did a big campaign and closed lanes to busses and

bikes. Said, “We’ve come to the decision that DCR doesn’t have the capacity to manage roads.” Noted improvements in snow clearing in the Southwest Corridor and the DCR needs more resources and capacity.

Eliza Parad identified herself as the director of organizing at Boston Cyclists Union. Expressed concern about VFW and West Roxbury Parkways. She, “Wants to make them feel bikable to commuters.” Said they want to see reduction of fatalities, have really high expectations, want a policy of protected bike lanes. Referenced studies from 12 cities with protected bike lanes and said MassDOT standards follow that data. Said a driver, “Rammed her on Park Drive.”

Colin McCarthy of Cambridge said of the Memorial Drive plan there are some good parts but it doesn’t go far enough. “The plan just keeps a highway there and the community wants more parkland.” He said the plans they saw go against MassDOT rules. Said there should be more cooperation between the DCR design team with location officials who want to see more bike lanes. Said the mix that’s coming is difficult--e-scooters and e-bikes and there are unneeded car trips because you can’t get to places via bike.

Councilor Smith said he is interested in all the aspects of cycling. This has been informative. We want to have better communication with our stakeholders. As we go forward we want to identify other discrete groups together.

Councilor Ortiz said it’s our responsibly to let the public know when a meeting is happening in our area and she shared via social media. Said she would like to see Blue Bikes on her trail.

Galen Mook of the Mass BikeCoalition said we want to transform how people think about open access and, “As pathways get more connected, the DCR should get the parkways as safe as pathways.” Noted MassDOT is making leaps and strides in bikes and encouraged the DCR to lean on MassDOT. Said at MassBike we are seeing more e-bikes on pathways and that may change how we buildout the network as we think about people transitioning out of cars.”

Councilor Wilson asked Jessica Mink for clarification if her [dog] issues where about off-leash or policy and Ms. Mink replied, policy.

Vice Chair Harper said, as we hear the comments the stakeholder committee should find a way to address them.

Councilor Buckley noted that based on how we knit together interest groups, our decisions may not be based on fact, however, hearing from people is very important. He added to make sure we update the website on project updates. When we make decisions about how people get to work, need to look at all options. He recommended the DCR set a standard when projects have a lot of public interest or a budget floor, we need to keep the public updated on the web. [Note: the [DCR Public Meetings Information](#) and [DCR Projects](#) webpages are updated when information is available.]

Councilor Reynolds noted he keeps hearing the word policy. Said he should be able to get on a Blue Bike and feel safe on a DCR road.



Commissioner Roy said the DCR follows parkway guidelines promulgated in 2007 and updated in 2010. Our emphasis is on shared use. Safe for peds, bikes and cars. Underscored our parkways were designed for peds, bikes and horseless carriages. We are now beginning to create designated space for physical barriers. Later this year we will publish a parkways study. Many of the spaces are really tight. He noted motorized vehicles are not allowed on the DCR pathways. Regarding dogs, he noted they are prohibited in some parks but in most parks are allowed on-leash. We have some parks with designated off-leash areas. By and large, dogs are welcome on-leash.

Chairman Walton accepted a motion to move into committee session, the motion was seconded, all in favor, the motion carried.



## **Committee Meeting Recap**

### *Stakeholders Committee*

Councilor Smith reported they looking at various ways to reach out to stakeholders for input, identify and address stakeholders comments prior to and post meetings and improve the DCR website content. There was interest in having Jenny Norwood come to a future meeting.

### *Finance Committee*

Councilor Murphy reported they want to improve the Council's understanding of how to increase parks in the budget for advocacy purposes, a more detailed and longer strategy – including retained revenue projections in this FY and going forward and to work with the larger Council on budget priorities. They are working with Mass Conservation Voters on the various leases, what does that entail and where does that revenue go.

### *Policy/Operations Committee*

The committee reported on the key points for joining both and overlapping focus. The committee wants to discuss the RMP process with the people who have to implement it and stakeholders and then make a recommendation. They also discussed reviewing details of the DCR policy on protests.

## **Adjournment**

Chairman Walton accepted a motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded. All in favor, the motion carried.

*The next meeting of the DCR Stewardship Council will be held on September 12 at Lawrence Heritage State Park, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence beginning at 10:30 a.m.*