



June Meeting Minutes

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

Council Members Not Present: David Murphy, Alvin L. Reynolds, Jr., Esq.

DCR Attendees: Lisa Barstow, Paul Cavanagh, Stephen Doody, Leo Roy

Public Attendees: Charles Anastas, Mass. Conservation Voters; Doug Pizzi, MA Conservation Voters; Ellen Arnold, MA Forest and Park Friends Network; Bill Taylor, Friends of Upton State Forest

Welcome and Call to Meeting

Chairman Nate Walton opened the meeting, his first as chairman, with remarks about his family, his love of hiking across DCR properties around the state and his three-year tenure on the council. He shared the importance of the Council being a conduit between DCR and stakeholders, retaining independence while relying on DCR staff for expertise. He underscored the steps taken to restructure this volunteer body to improve its effectiveness and allow for more committee deliberations while retaining an open and transparent format and monthly public comment. Remarks of the Chair are attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Leo P. Roy

- The building we stand in today is home to our valued partners in conservation, MassWildlife. The DCR and MassWildlife work collaboratively on many projects from the Upper Mystic Lake Dam and fishway to the pitch pine barrens in the Myles Standish Complex.
- It is an honor for DCR to have strong partnerships with agencies who share our mission of preserving, protecting, and restoring Massachusetts' environmental resources. I encourage

you to explore the Myles Standish Complex or visit the Upper Mystic Lake Dam and fishway to witness, firsthand, the success of our agency to agency partnership.

Public Meetings

- Thursday, May 16, the DCR attended a New Charles River Basin Citizens Advisory Committee meeting seeking to provide final design plans and proposed construction schedule for the new Paul Revere Park Playground project. State parks equipped with bike paths and greenways have seen a steady increase in pedestrian activity and commuter usage by residents. Therefore, it is important for DCR to continue evaluating opportunities to improve and expand them.
- DCR will be holding a public meeting in the City of Medford seeking to gather public feedback for the proposed Clippership Connector multi-use path.
- June 13, the DCR will be holding a public meeting in the Town of Wellfleet to present the preferred alternative design for an extension of the Cape Cod Rail Trail.
- If you're interested in receiving information regarding public meetings, contact Commissioner Roy's office and the materials and/or the presentations can be sent out.

Recreational Season Kick-Off

- Ahead of the Memorial Day weekend, DCR announced the opening of several inland and ocean beaches with waterfront services, marking the start of the recreational season. It was a warm-weather weekend in much of the state, where children and families enjoyed the unique recreational opportunities that DCR's statewide waterfronts have to offer. With spray decks, deep water pools, coastal and inland waterfronts, DCR is committed to providing Massachusetts residents and visitors with healthy outdoor recreational options during the recreational season.

Wellfleet Hollow

- Memorial Day Weekend marked another opening for DCR, the opening of Wellfleet Hollow State Campground, formerly Paine's Campground. This summer will commence its first camping season under the management of DCR. In 2018, the DCR purchased the campground, and began managing the facility during the fall season. Since then, several enhancements have been completed, including:
 - Improvements to the campground's infrastructure;
 - Roadway repair work;
 - Campsite enhancements, such as new fire rings; and,
 - The conversion of the former residence building into a camp office and park headquarters with an accessible restroom.
- The DCR is extremely excited to open Wellfleet Hollow State Campground this year, and we are proud of our efforts to maintain the quiet, quaint nature of this amazing family-friendly campground. In fall 2019, the DCR plans to conduct additional enhancements at the campground including accessible sites and comfort station improvements. The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to offer first class camping locations to residents and visitors of Massachusetts with the addition of the quiet and quaint Cape Cod campground.

National Trails Day

- As you know, to offer a high quality state parks system, it is crucial for DCR to share in park stewardship with staff, volunteers, and partners. In honor of National Trails Day®, DCR once again partnered with REI Co-op to coordinate volunteer events. On Saturday June 1, 2019, volunteers at six state parks cleared debris, improved trail access, assisted in plantings, and donated their valuable time.
- Trails provide benefits to communities and regions, such as increasing recreational opportunities to incorporate a healthy, active lifestyle; strengthening regional and community bonds; and increasing resident property values. The Baker-Polito Administration is pleased to work closely with partners like REI, Co-op to ensure Massachusetts resources are maintained and available for people to enjoy.

Kelley Field House Ribbon Cutting

- As DCR sees increased interest in urban recreational areas, it is extremely important to invest in community fields and facilities. In May, DCR unveiled the newly renovated Kelley Field House in Hyde Park in the City of Boston. The new field house has updated systems, all new features, improved plumbing, and energy efficient technology. The interior now contains upgraded team changing rooms, and an all-new concession stand with storage. The newly renovated Kelley Field House will increase the sense of community pride while enhancing the park experience for visitors enjoying a pickup game or practicing in Pop Warner sports.

Holyoke Heritage State Park Spray Deck Ribbon Cutting

- In a continued effort to enhance Massachusetts urban parks, DCR recently completed and unveiled park improvements to Holyoke Heritage State Park. The \$1.5M project included the installation of a new spray deck, the addition of a new playground structure, and significant site improvements. The site improvements include the reconstruction of existing brick and concrete walkways for increased access and installation of benches and landscaping.
- Commissioner Roy encouraged the Council to tune into WWLP-Channel 22 News – Mass Appeal, where host Danny New conducted an exclusive live broadcast from the park for the grand opening. Other parks recently featured in a live broadcast by Mass Appeal’s Danny New are Quabbin Reservoir, and Mount Greylock State Forest. Chicopee Memorial State Park will be featured later this month as well.

Otter Exhibit Groundbreaking

- The Baker-Polito Administration recognizes the importance of improving wildlife habitat, and educational centers in our Commonwealth’s state parks.
- The Trailside Museum sees over 500,000 visitors each year and serves as a gateway to the Blue Hills Reservation. DCR will overhaul the Otter exhibit,

constructed in 1961, to improve safety, public education, and otter habitat with the intention of educating visitors about the playful animal and its habitat.

- Larger, more natural living area;
- Boulders and basking logs;
- Waterfall;
- Sandpit; and,
- Native plants.

15th Annual Adaptive Recreation Fair

- On Saturday, June 1, 2019, DCR's Universal Access Program hosted its 15th annual Adaptive Recreation Fair. DCR offers invaluable programming and unique activities to increase access within state parks for all to benefit from. Enjoying recreational green space considerably improves a person's health and wellbeing. DCR's Universal Access Program works to achieve accessibility through site improvements, specialized adaptive recreation equipment, and by providing year-round adaptive programs. The fair brings together a variety of adaptive recreational organizations to support accessible and inclusive activities while raising awareness for state parks with universal access.

Schooner Ernestina Visit

- Commissioner Roy provided an update to his visit to Boothbay, ME to oversee the work on the Schooner.

Environmental League of Massachusetts – Earth Day

- Commissioner Roy described his participation in the program on Climate Policy with ELM and its partners from business and government.
 - [ELM "Codcast" of Program](#)

Robinson State Park Day

- As a state agency that manages over 450,000 acres of park land, land that is often right in people's back yards, it is crucial for DCR to support local communities.
- In support of the Agawam community, DCR will waive all parking fees for visitors at Robinson State Park in honor of this year's Robinson State Park Day, Saturday, June 15, 2019. If you are in the western Massachusetts area later this month, I encourage you to stop by the park. During the upcoming celebration, programming will be offered by the Friends of Robinson State Park. Additionally, visitors are encouraged to participate in self-guided walks and hikes throughout the park.

Summer Nights Initiative

- Commissioner Roy remarked that for the fifth consecutive year, Governor Charlie Baker will be kicking off his Summer Nights Initiative in the coming weeks. 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, DCR was able to increase the number of partner organizations, who provide specialty programming, from nine to fourteen.
- By working together, these partnerships allow today's kids to build memories, stimulate their minds, and spend valuable time outdoors. Stay tuned for the official kick off with, partnership announcements, neighborhood locations, programing details, and extended hours announcements.
- In closing, Commissioner Roy stated that DCR appreciates the continued dedication of this council, its efforts do not go un-noticed.

Commissioner Roy restated news of the appointment of new Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary, Katherine Theoharides. She was the first to bring together the state's climate action plan and hazard mitigation plan. Wildfire, drought, explosion, earthquake--bringing those two plans together acknowledges the elevated concern of climate change. FEMA is asking other states to follow Massachusetts' lead.

Councilor Buckley brought to the Council's attention a [New York Times article about the relevance of state parks.](#)

Special Business

Chairman Walton opened the floor to feedback on the updated Committee document.

Councilor Smith said he would be willing to chair a committee on a temporary basis.

Councilor Buckley asked if we have heard back from environmental groups [on their nominations to the council]?

Commissioner Roy said he reached out to Appalachian Mountain Club and their letter is ready for signature. Also, a candidate for the Berkshire seat awaits background checks and the search continues for Worcester County seat.

Councilor Ortiz said she would serve on stakeholders and/or policy committees. Discussion ensued about the number of committees on which a member could serve, current representation and that the list is reflective of who signed up. Chairman Walton said he would serve as an ex-officio member of all.

Councilor Buckley noted that whether or not a member is on the stakeholders committee, each member should interface with stakeholders where they have relationships and share information. It was discussed among members how the stakeholders committee could take

advantage of the relationships of each member and work that into experience all would rely upon.

Chairman Walton offered a motion to accept the committee structure document; the motion was seconded, all in favor, the motion carried.

Chairman Walton proposed honoring past members whose terms have expired: Walter Bickford, Elisa Campbell, Heather Clish, Melissa Hanss, Wayne Klockner, Antonia Pollack and Jim Van Dyke, noting the current council builds on the service and strength of these past members. He asked for a motion to approve a letter of thanks from the council to outgoing Chairman Whitney Hatch, who served on the council for 15 years—seven as chairman—citing as admirable his unwavering advocacy for DCR and “big shoes to fill” as chair. The motion was seconded all in favor, the motion carried.

Chairman Walton shared with the group a Governor’s citation honoring Whitney Hatch. Councilor Canedy asked for a copy of the letter to be incorporated into the minutes.

To inform the discussion Chairman Walton reviewed key areas of the [Oversight Strategy](#) document in terms of statutory responsibilities, other functions and requirements yet to be met. He opened discussion on goals for quarterly meetings and mapping out key goals.

Councilor Canedy suggested much of the agenda falls to policy arena and a discussion with Commissioner Roy for clarification would be helpful.

Chairman Walton suggested that the seven year terms, some seats staggered some not, can lead to a rapid drop in institutional memory. Councilor Canedy noted the process of environmental appointments is a challenge and suggested a better way be considered.

Councilor Buckley noted the need for committees to continuously communicate with the entire body and everyone should be involved, suggesting instead of being efficient it could fracture the body, a point Councilor Wilson applauded and echoed.

Approval of Minutes

Councilor Smith moved to accept the minutes of the meeting of June 6, 2019. The motion was seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Public Comment

Ellen Arnold spoke as co-founder of the MA Forests and Parks Friends Network on the issue of DCR’s volunteer policy as it has been legislated. She is disturbed that board members of Friends Groups are not covered as uncompensated employees as are individual volunteers and believes the current policy does not live up to the intent of the legislation. The cost of insurance for many small friends groups is onerous, and she would like to see this policy changed as the council and DCR’s Partnerships Office currently reviews the MOU policy.

Ms. Arnold also would like the committee to consider filing legislation to have the appointments of the council become staggered and to consider shorter terms to enable greater institutional memory.

Councilor Canedy said she is interested in looking at staggered and shorter terms. Vice Chair Harper said it will be a long process to change the legislation, but we acknowledge the needs.

Ms. Arnold recognized that there are varied needs and issues with the parks that the council represents and offered her help in bringing attention to issues.

Bill Taylor from Friends of Upton State Forest came to welcome new council members and introduce them to one of the friends groups. He provided background on his group, the history of the Civilian Conservation Commission property within Upton SF and shared on a number of improvements and partnerships the group contributed over the years. He praised DCR's extremely committed park staff and encouraged the council to take advantage of what the friends do.

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



Finance Committee Update

Councilor Buckley provided an update from the Finance committee session. Plan to develop an annual schedule for 2021 budget and interact early on with A&F to develop our own priorities. To get a detailed understanding of DCR budget to better advocate, the committee members will arrange a sit down with the DCR A&F Director. Develop a fact-based, advocacy strategy on budgetary matters, working closely with the Commissioner but, not carrying water for the agency. He noted that as a citizen group, we have ability to attract attention from a different place.

Stakeholders Committee Update

Councilor Smith noted that they had stakeholders involved in their meeting. They discussed the definition of stakeholder—any group or individual from friends and equestrian groups to various sporting groups and watershed groups and commercial forestry.

There was discussion on what a group needs to do to become a friends group. It was noted that the [DCR has documentation defining that](#). Councilor Smith requested that be provided to council members. They discussed ways stakeholders can communicate, could go through DCR but could have a way to communicate directly to the council.

Councilor Ortiz raised the question of external communications and how groups access a permit to use a park—not friends groups just ad hoc groups.

Commissioner Roy noted that this year's Annual Friends Network Gathering is planned for Saturday, November 9, 2019 in West Boylston.

Policy Committee Update

Secretary Canedy noted she spent time with the Commissioner to discuss tweaks in the enabling legislation. She will share those notes with Councilors Ortiz and Reynolds and bring them back to the next full meeting. She also noted asked for ideas from members on improvements to the enabling legislation.

Secretary Canedy was disappointed to learn not all RMPs had been finished and RMPs are not particularly followed—item for further discussion.

Operations Committee Update

Vice Chair Harper is open to merging Policy and Operations committees due to subject matter overlap, for discussion/approval at the next meeting. She will reach out to missing members about committees on which they would like to serve. Committee will revisit the content and approval process of RMPs to make them more functional, usable and beneficial to DCR, not just to comply with statute.

Other matters of this committee will be oversight and implementation of AMMP, inbound and outbound communication—how we share the wealth of operations DCR provides to the public, managing constituent issues and helping to evaluate what is an appropriate staffing level for what DCR needs to do, vs. what the state provides as a budget.

Chairman Walton suggested that merging Policy and Operations is a logical plan to help with overlapping. He invited discussion on this.

Councilor Smith agreed but suggested we take up a vote on the matter at the next meeting. He raised the issue of doing a better job of publicizing our meetings, sending a news release or identifying target groups. He drafted something for stakeholders; we have a new council and new committees.

Chairman Walton queried for objection in sending out a press release.

Councilor Ortiz suggested letting various networks know we have openings for qualified applicants. Secretary Canedy echoed with ensuring we let friends network know when we change partnership directors.

Chairman Walton asked if any objection to he and Vice Chair Harper putting together a schedule of meetings through January/July 2020. He laid out a plan for meetings going forward:

- **Four Quarterly Meetings** with no committee breakouts held in **April, June, September, December**. These meetings would showcase DCR properties around the state.

- The remaining monthly meetings would focus on Committee work and be held near Worcester. All meetings would have a public comment element.

He noted it would be beneficial to have the Commissioner at all if schedule permits.

Councilor Smith suggested it would be best to take a formal vote on this at the next meeting.

Chairman Walton motioned to close the meeting; the motion was seconded, all in favor, the meeting closed at 11:40 a.m.