



March Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Ann Canedy, Chairman Whitney Hatch, Melissa Harper, David C. Murphy, Vivian Ortiz, Alvin L. Reynolds, Jr., Dennis Smith, Nate Walton

Council Members Not Present: Heather Clish, Michelle Hanss,

DCR Attendees: Stuart Connor, Stephen Doody, Joe Rotondo, Leo Roy

Welcome and Call to Meeting

Chairman Hatch called the meeting to order at 11:02 am. It was announced that Councilor Walton would be providing the Finance Committee update as Councilor Clish would be absent. The Chairman then ran through the agenda, which included: A discussion regarding the February orientation the Councilors received, a review of the Stewardship Council enabling legislation, deliberation about new Stewardship Council committee concepts and review of the Asset Management Modernization Project report that DCR submitted to the Legislature.

Chairman Hatch invited Commissioner Roy to present the Commissioner Report (available online upon approval of minutes).

When asked about the recent DCR field operations restructuring and new assignments, Commissioner Roy stressed that helping employees strike a proper life/work balance is a priority; commutes and proximity to work location are taken into consideration.

Chairman Hatch suggested that a future meeting be scheduled for Martha's Vineyard so councilors can get exposure to the Manuel F. Correllus State Forest.

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE & LETTER TO LEGISLATURE MOTION

Councilor Walton provided a Finance Committee update on behalf of Councilor Clish. Positive budget news for FY19 was covered and suggested figures for FY20 was discussed. Full-time employee statistics were reported on, and in addition, it was stated that funding would be available to fill critical positions in Water Supply Protection.

Councilor Reynolds and Chairman Hatch initiated a discussion on the benefits and challenges of DCR's retained revenue funding model.

Commissioner Roy remarked that the agency closely tracks spending and income throughout the year. There was also a discussion about parking revenue/fees and the fairness of its application. Commissioner Roy stated that he strongly supports the Governor's budget.

Councilor Canedy asked about the amount of funding dedicated to beaches; Commissioner Roy explained the diverse funding mechanisms that get channeled to address beach needs.

Councilors Smith and Harper initiated a dialogue about DCR's role in the budget formulation process. In light of the DCR budget allocation conversation, Chairman Hatch brought forth a motion to have the Finance Committee draft a letter to the Legislature regarding FY20 DCR funding. It was proposed that Councilor Clish would circulate a draft of the letter to the entire Stewardship Council for feedback and she would act as a "hub" on changes and revisions. The motion passed by a voice vote.

WORCESTER ORIENTATION

Discussion then turned to the February orientation session that the Councilors observed in Worcester. The orientation was very well-received. Councilor Murphy said he found the DCR presentations to be quite "informative and productive." Councilor Reynolds said it helped him grasp all that DCR does. Councilor Smith said that despite being on the Council for three years, he learned a lot and believes that similar orientation presentations should be done annually; Councilor Reynolds agreed.

ASSET MANAGEMENT AND MODERNIZATION PROJECT

The next topic was DCR's Asset Management Modernization Program (AMMP) report to the Legislature. Chairman Hatch said the effort is critical to DCR. He is anxious to see GIS tied into the Tririga system. Commissioner Roy noted that there has been great progress of late due to personnel additions and that all 16 dedicated FTEs will soon be on board; he is very pleased with overall progress. Chairman Hatch said "dashboard for monitoring" would be a welcomed development.

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL ENABLING STATUTE & COMMITTEE CONCEPTS

The membership took a fresh look at the Stewardship Council enabling statute. Councilor Harper pointed out the emphasis on the word "control" and a discussion ensued about the interpretation and practicality of applying control in various forms. Councilor Harper also pointed out that there are elements of the legislation that have not been implemented.

Councilor Ortiz raised the issue of attendance requirements/expectations by councilors at Stewardship meetings. Councilor Harper said she believes it's important that future individuals under consideration for appointment to the Council be briefed on the frequency of meetings and attendance expectations. Commissioner Roy thanked the Councilors for their commitment and dedication, then suggested quarterly meetings might be more in-line with the volume of business transacted by the Council.

Additional potential reforms or changes to the Council included: Vote for a Chair annually (or based on frequency of meetings), term limits for Chair, electing a Secretary, meeting jointly with Fisheries & Wildlife Board on occasion, active committee meetings to complement quarterly meetings, removal of oversight of two DCR management positions and the impracticality of DCR budgetary oversight. Councilor Smith thanked Chairman Hatch for initiating the discussion on these topics.

Commissioner Roy stated that he believes the April Stewardship Council meeting should be brief so that Council members can mix with DCR staff at the Leadership Academy gathering in Leominster. He said as the April agenda is being set, proper notification to the public about how the meeting is structured will be made clear in advance.

Chairman Hatch invited members of the public to approach the microphone with their questions. Bill Boles of the New England Mountain Biking Association said his group would be advocating vigorously for the forthcoming DCR budget. A representative of the Boston Cyclists Union delivered a letter and petition regarding Jamaica Way and Arborway safety concerns. The Friends of Wompatuck State Park described ongoing enhancements to the Park and their enthusiasm for continued engagement with DCR. Commissioner Roy described his collaboration with the State Police to learn from past cycling accidents. He also mentioned past public meetings on cyclist/pedestrian safety and the enormous challenges posed by the Arborway/Jamaica Way configuration. Commissioner Roy invited speakers to approach him individually after the meeting to discuss any additional concerns.

Before closing the meeting, Chairman Hatch announced that his term on the Stewardship Council expired in June of 2018 and he recently learned that he will not be re-appointed. If he receives an official letter indicating he won't be reappointed, today's meeting will be his last. If he does not receive official notification, he will chair the April meeting.

Chairman Hatch closed the meeting at 1:22 pm.

