



May Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Ann Canedy, Esq., Melissa Harper, David Murphy, Alvin L. Reynolds, Jr., Esq., Dennis Smith, Nate Walton

Council Members Not Present: Vivian Ortiz

DCR Attendees: Lisa Barstow, Paul Cavanagh, Stephen Doody, Karl Pastore, John Roberts, Leo Roy

Public Attendees: Charles Anastas, Mass. Conservation Voters; Everett Philla, Friends of Freetown State Forest; Faye Philla, Friends of Freetown State Forest; Bill Boles, NEMBA and Friends of Wompatuck State Forest; John Bescherer, Friends of Myles Standish

Welcome and Call to Meeting

Acting Chairman Dennis Smith called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. and announced the meeting would be primarily a “business meeting.” He also said the Council is in a time of transition and over the next few months things will become more organized.

Commissioner’s Report

Commissioner Roy reported on the ceremonial planting of the 20,000th tree in the Greening the Gateway Cities Program with Governor Baker last week in Quincy and the ecological and energy benefits of planting trees.

He noted that Secretary Beaton is stepping down for a post in the private sector and Katie Theoharides will be coming in as Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, offering praise both for Secretary Beaton’s significant accomplishments and Undersecretary Theoharides as a brilliant choice of successor by Governor Baker.

Commissioner Roy announced that Summer Nights will be expanded this year with heightened support by the Governor. This successful urban outreach program, now in its fourth year, gives youth educational and recreational opportunities to keep them safe and enriched. He also noted upcoming ribbon cuttings celebrating Holyoke Heritage State Park’s new spray deck, an improved entrance at MacDonald Torbert State Park in Medford, an extension and new bridge over the Bass River at the Cape

Cod Rail Trail and the grand reopening of Wellfleet Hollow (formerly Paine's) Campground in Wellfleet, with a new contact station and ADA compliant bathrooms.

Commissioner Roy concluded his report with good news that lifeguard recruitment is ahead of schedule.

Following the Commissioner's Report, Councilor Canedy asked to be kept abreast of future DCR press events on Cape Cod and also asked if MassDOT and Eversource possibly could be integrated into DCR's tree planting and Wood Bank program. Commissioner Roy said he would raise the issue at the next coordination meeting he attends at MassDOT.

Councilor Reynolds asked for more details on the Adopt-a-Tree aspect of the Greening the Gateway Cities program. Councilor Buckley asked if the net, tree-planting results of the Greening the Gateway Cities program could be used in the dialogue about DCR's forest management activity. Commissioner Roy was responsive to the suggestions from both councilors.

Special Business

Acting Chairman Smith moved to the election of officers. He asked the members if they agreed Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are the slots that should be filled. After some deliberation about the responsibilities of each position, all agreed to proceed with the nomination process.

Councilor Canedy offered herself as a candidate for Secretary. Acting Chairman Smith motioned to accept her nomination and Councilor Reynolds seconded. All in favor, the motion was approved unanimously by a voice vote. Regarding responsibilities, it was stated that the Secretary may take an active role in reviewing the official Council minutes going forward.

Acting Chairman Smith asked if there were nominations or self-nominations for Vice Chair. Primary duties would be to act as Chair when necessary and help develop the monthly agenda. Councilor Harper nominated herself for Vice Chair and the motion was quickly seconded by Councilor Canedy. The Council unanimously approved Councilor Harper as Vice Chair by a voice vote.

Acting Chairman Smith then asked for nominations or self-nominations for Chair. Councilor Canedy commented that she was hesitant to nominate anyone without previously having a conversation with them. Acting Chair Smith stated that he had no interest in becoming Chairman—he then nominated Councilor Walton for Chair. Councilor Reynolds emphasized that all members are here to serve the common good, encourage diverse viewpoints and think strategically and in nuanced ways on issues. Councilor Walton followed by saying the Governor was counting on all councilors to be responsible stewards. He also noted the council has a mission as outlined in the Oversight Strategy document. Acting Chairman Smith motioned to elect Councilor Walton as chair, the motion was seconded, all in favor and Councilor Walton unanimously was elected by voice vote.

Commissioner Roy provided the membership an update on upcoming Stewardship Council appointments: Jennifer Wilson has been appointed by Governor Baker to fill the seat previously held by

Michele Hanss. The process is in motion to fill the Berkshire County seat. There is a recruitment effort underway for the Worcester seat. The two environmental seats are in various stages of momentum.

Committee Structure

Having accepted an assignment to review the committee structure, Councilor Harper led the discussion reviewing roles/responsibilities of the four committees entitled: Finance, Operations, Policy and Stakeholders. She emphasized the importance of matching individuals with committees they are excited about. Councilor Harper said she believes any more than four committees would be stretching the membership too thin; she also would like to see the RMP process become less cumbersome.

Councilor Reynolds asked if one person would serve as the chair of each committee, to which Council Harper said yes.

Councilor Walton raised the point of Operations having a disproportionate burden based on his past experience. Councilor Harper said that the council as a whole would set priorities for each committee to address the distribution of labor.

Acting Chair Smith initiated a discussion with the Council on language regarding the Stakeholder Committee and whether identifying constituent groups by name may leave some feeling excluded. Councilors Reynolds and Buckley shared the opinion that open language such as “external stakeholders” would appropriately capture the mission and spirit of the committee to engender broad and nourishing relationships.

After Acting Chair Smith spoke of the importance of keeping accurate minutes, Commissioner Roy informed the Council that over 100-years Agency minutes are available online thanks to DCR Archivist Sean Fisher.

Councilor Reynolds moved to approve the committee structure document, all in favor, the motion carried by voice vote. A sheet was circulated to councilors by Councilor Harper to designate their interest in a specific committee.

Special Business II

Finance Committee Report

Councilor Walton provided a finance committee update. He reported that, as contemplated previously, a letter was never sent to the Legislature from the Stewardship Council advocating for a specific budget outcome. A lengthy discussion ensued about the proper timing of budget advocacy with the Legislature.

Councilor Canedy asked Commissioner Roy when the best time to reach out to the Executive Office of Administration and Finance on the budget, to which he replied December. Councilor Harper offered to share her notes from the recent DCR Leadership Academy, where DCR Administration and Finance Director provided a budget timeline.

Review Enabling Legislation

Acting Chair Smith asked Councilor Canedy to lead a discussion on the Stewardship Council's enabling legislation. The Council chose to refer this topic to the Policy Committee for deliberation.

Curatorship Program

Acting Chair Smith asked Councilor Reynolds to speak first on the Curatorship issue. Councilor Reynolds said he knew this was an issue important to former Chairman Hatch – and it was also putting DCR curators in a very difficult position. He suggested that the substance of Senator Tarr's previous legislative efforts on the Curatorship matter be examined for intent. Councilor Buckley said the timing would be right to approach Senator Tarr for potential state senate action.

Councilor Murphy asked if municipalities were "double-dipping" on the issue; Commissioner Roy appreciated the question and said he would work to gain clarity on Councilor Murphy's question.

Councilor Reynolds noted that the notion of municipalities classifying DCR land is a larger issue than just the Curatorship program. Councilor Murphy motioned that the matter be referred to the Policy Committee; Councilor Reynolds seconded the motion, all in favor, the motion carried.

Future Meeting Schedule

The concept of bi-monthly or quarterly Stewardship Council meetings was raised. However, citing the law, Councilors Buckley, Reynolds and Walton said they currently favor the continuation of monthly meetings. Commissioner Roy said he believes the demands of meeting monthly have contributed to the high rate of turnover on the council. Councilor Murphy restated that monthly meetings can be a strain on DCR staff. Various strategies to streamline the logistical challenges of monthly meetings were raised and debated.

The June 6 meeting in Westborough will run from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The first two hours will be dedicated to committee meetings. At 10:30 a.m. the regular Council meeting would commence. The next meeting was set for Thursday, July 18 at the Dillaway-Thomas House in Roxbury at 8:30 a.m.

Special Business III

Friends Network Discussion

Acting Chair Smith invited Sharl Heller of the Friends Network to give a presentation on the mission and background of the Friends Network. At the conclusion of her presentation, she informed the Council that Myles Standish State Forest is the subject of an application to the National Park Service (NPS) for a National Natural Landmarks designation. Councilor Canedy suggested that the Council submit a letter of support to NPS at the appropriate time.

Other Business

Approval of Minutes

The Council voted to approve meeting minutes of the February, March and April meetings. Councilor Buckley abstained from voting on the February and March minutes as he was not serving on the Council at the time.

Public Comment

Acting Chair Smith invited members of the public to speak. Bill Boles of the New England Mountain Bikers Association and Friends of Wompatuck offered praise for Park Serve Day and favored the Council keeping an open public comment period.

Acting Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on June 6, 2019 at MassWildlife, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westboro at 8:30 a.m.