



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
Water Supply Protection Headquarters
180 Beaman Street, West Boylston
November 9, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. to 10:25 a.m.

November Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Ann B. Canedy, Esq., Vivian Ortiz, Nate Walton, Jennifer N.S. Wilson, Esq.

Council Members Not Present: Melissa Harper, David C. Murphy, Alvin L. Reynolds, Esq., Dennis Smith

DCR Attendees: Lisa Barstow, Stuart Conner, Alec Gilman, Acting Commissioner Jim Montgomery, Jennifer Norwood, Joe Rotondo

Public Attendees (from sign-in sheet): Bill Boles, NEMBA/Friends of Wompatuck; Chuck Anastis, Mass. Conservation Voters; Sarah Freeman, Arborway Coalition; Elisa Campbell; Cliff Mulligan S.A.M.

Call to Meeting – Chairman Nate Walton

Chairman Nate Walton opened the meeting, announced the Council would go into committee and reconvene at 9:25 a.m.



Welcome – Chairman Nate Walton

Chairman Walton welcomed the opportunity to again join with the Friends Network and thanked the Friends of DCR parks and reservations for the work they do that enhances the DCR mission.

Chairman Walton pointed out changes in the Council structure since the last meeting together; with a full business meeting once a quarter with DCR staff presenters, while remaining monthly meetings would be focused on committee work. Today's session was primarily dedicated to committee work. All meetings afford public comment opportunity.

Chairman Walton noted the Council's priority on hearing from DCR stakeholders, highlighted that he has reached out to dozens of external stakeholders and that the Council has established a Stakeholders Committee.

Commissioner's Report – Acting Commissioner, Jim Montgomery

The report is attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Post Committee Meeting Reports

Finance Committee

Councilor Jack Buckley reported for the committee. He said they have a meeting scheduled with Secretary Theoharides to articulate their finance goals, looking at outdoor as a recreation as an economic driver. Other issues: retained revenue should stay in the park where it's generated, not contribute to the general fund in of the Commonwealth. They also will articulate the need to move into social media more aggressively, and he noted Friends groups, will play a critical role in the success of social media. He concluded that in Massachusetts, we take parks for granted, but we can't.

Policy and Operations

Councilors Jennifer Wilson and Ann Canedy reported for the committee. We had an excellent presentation from Paul Cavanagh on Resource Management Plans (RMPs), which are statutorily required to be approved by this council. There is very little statutory guidance what is needed in them. They are needed for all parks but as an ongoing challenge they are time consuming and intensive to prepare. Yet, they are an excellent tool for the DCR employees and stakeholders. It will be a decade before all are prepared. We discussed trying to streamline them. We are looking for DCR for guidance on process and content needs for a streamlined version.

In response, Acting Commissioner Montgomery noted that while the RMPs contain great information, we can find relevant, useful, and more feasible information with our new asset management system which is gathering great information. He noted that DCR is looking at outside consultants to do some data collecting. He asked the council what they want as DCR assess its needs to develop a quality document and noted we're working already on a balance. I hope to have a draft in December and January a final.

Councilor Wilson said we will have a healthy back and forth during a time-consuming but important public process.

They also reported they plan to do a review on composition of the council/ors and look at staggering our terms to improve the longevity of the council.

Stakeholder Committee

Councilor Vivian Ortiz reported for the committee. Stated that our session was more information gathering. Learned from snowmobiling group about communicating very well and using social media. They have an MOU that works really well. Our committee wants to look into those who are not, how can we communicate to the entire state and be able to share that knowledge with other groups. Trail connectivity, multi-use trails, signage to improve communication within parks about [dog walking] policies and how to get in with DCR are all issues we are viewing.

Councilor Jack Buckley asked if there any movement on nominating candidates from the environmental groups. Lisa Barstow responded that immediate past commissioner Leo Roy submitted names to the Governor's office.

Public Comment

Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck and NEMBA. He stated it was great that the Stewardship Council and the Friends Groups are in the same room at the same time and said we need to be working together for the betterment of DCR. He said Friends groups can be a real asset to DCR at budget time because we actively engage our legislators. He asked why active Friends groups aren't are on the DCR webpage. *[NOTE: DCR Partnerships Office maintains a website in coordination with the Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network, which includes contact information for active Friends group <https://dcrfriendsnetwork.org/>. For additional information, contact lisa.barstow@mass.gov.]*

At the last meeting, Mr. Boles noted Wompatuck was "overrun with deer." The deer population exploded. As a pro-active measure, Friends of Wompatuck were asked by Fisheries and Wildlife to count deer found dead in the forest. *[NOTE: The issue was taken up at DCR Senior Staff meeting.]*

Susan Smiley spoke on behalf of the Snowmobiling Association. She was happy to be here and looks forward to engaging with new Stewardship Council.

Elisa Campbell, long-time member of the Stewardship Council and its predecessor body on DEM said she, “found it distressing how few SC members there are.” She said, “we need to pressure the Governor to nominate members from throughout the state.” She said she supports the deer hunt in the Blue Hills and has been active in Quabbin for 30 years and stressed the importance of the deer hunt.

Sarah Freeman, from Boston representing multiple advocacy groups along the Emerald Necklace—“a linear park but with several breaks.” She thanked DCR for completing the [Arborway road safety audit](#). Sarah mentioned the closing of Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, relocating half of the current occupants to another site. “We see this as a once in a lifetime opportunity” to engage this for parkland. Sarah praised the Boston Cyclists Union for making every day cycling safer for everyone. Noted she went to college with the woman who was killed on Park Drive and this was a difficult issue for her. Sarah expressed optimism that 2022 marks the 200th birthday of Frederick Law Olmstead and many groups are planning birthday parties. She would like to use this bi-centennial to honor the man who started this movement.

Ellen Arnold – Upton State Forest. Currently undergoing the RMP for Blackstone—She attended initial meeting; asked about areas designated Zone 1. Was told that was part of a Forest Management Plan and that that hasn’t been done for our area. Asked how can you produce an RMP that’s complete without a Forest Management Plan? What is the schedule? Also said the Interpretive Plans should be part of the RMP. She had with her a document signed by a former commissioner as a result of a collapsed building at Upton; eight of nine stipulations have been met. Waiting for the ninth.

Tony Francette (sp?) – Spencer Open Space committee, Spencer Economic Development Committee. Spoke of communication challenges with web-based assets. With the corporatization of the media, local outlets don’t cover local issues robustly and citizens must be active on social media to get local news [on parks]. He suggested using electronic message boards on the Mass Pike for important messages like algae blooms. He also stated, “the CCC legacy got wiped out in the DCR website transition.” [*Note: The Baker-Polito Administration revamped the entire “Mass.gov” website based on usage metrics and universal accessibility. The link below remains active on Mass.gov. For additional information, contact lisa.barstow@mass.gov.*]

[Civilian Conservation Corps MA & DCR Archives](#)

My name is Gia Neswald (sp?) – Wendell State Forest Alliance. Said she has been involved in timber harvesting at Wendell since 2016. Offered a (rhetorical) question, “How are operations happening in a district with no management plan.”

Adjournment

Chairman Walton offered 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 Friday, December 6, 2019 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Fall River Heritage State Park, Davol Street, Fall River.