# December 6, 2024 Stakeholder Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Susan Smiley, Ted Dooley, Laura Jasinski, Dennis Smith, Vivian Ortiz, Melissa Harper

Other Councilors Present: Jack Buckley

DCR Staff Attendees: Matthew Perry

Members of the Public: Alexis, Jun Seung Lee

## Call to Order – Committee Chair Susan Smiley

Chair Smiley welcomed the attendees, took attendance of Councilors, and went over the meeting agenda.

Update from Council Chair Buckley: Councilor Buckley said that he was looking forward to seeing everyone at the State House next week for the council meeting. He said that EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper will be there before the meeting for a photo with the council.

## Partnership Presentation Requests

Mr. Perry reported that there were no new requests to present from outside partners. He said he is working to have the groups that have been discussed by the committee submit the form for consideration and will also continue outreach to other groups.

## 2025 Council Meeting Schedule

At the November Stewardship Council meeting, the council approved the 2025 meeting calendar and locations. Mr. Perry is finalizing the in-person meetings and will keep the committee updated.

## Public Comment Responses

The question was raised about a response to the group Save King’s Beach which has made public comments at recent Stewardship Council meetings regarding concerns about bacteria levels at King’s Beach, Nahant Beach, and along Lynn Shore Drive, and whether they received a response from DCR.

Mr. Perry said that he worked with DCR’s engineering staff to get a response to them and that the group wrote back with more questions that they will respond to again.

Chair Smiley asked who the head of engineering is.

Mr. Perry said that it is Patrice Kish, but that Robert Lowell is the person who oversees the issues being addressed.

Councilor Dooley said that he spoke with Commissioner Arrigo about this issue and that he is working with Mr. Lowell to identify the outfalls that are causing issues in the areas the group has mentioned.

Councilor Harper asked about the status of the Partnership Matching Fund which was brought up at the public comment portion of the last Stewardship Council meeting. She said that there has been discussion of not knowing where funds were, how they were spent, and what the balances are. She said that she wants to make sure that DCR is properly keeping track of these funds.

Chair Smiley said that she wants the Commissioner to address this at the next meeting and then the committee can take it on based on what information is given.

Mr. Perry shared what he knew about the status of the program and said that the Commissioner would give a more thorough update at the December 12 meeting.

Councilor Buckley said that Councilor Jasinski has been working with advocacy groups to show up in-person at the December 12 council meeting. In addition, a letter has been written in support of DCR. He said that they are showing positive support for the agency.

Councilor Jasinski said that they thought it would be good to show support and that they have been working with the group Mass Parks for All to distribute the letter and invite people to attend the meeting.

## Councilor Terms

Councilor Harper updated the committee on her work addressing the upcoming expiration of 10 councilor’s terms in 2025. She said she has spoken with everyone whose term is expiring and that five would like to renew for another seven years, two would like to finish their terms and not renew, and three would like to extend until their seat is filled by a new councilor. She said that they should prioritize the two communities that will have terms finish, but that they should keep in mind the three others that will be open. The two immediate openings are for the Urban Park Norfolk seat and the At-Large Seat that currently is based in Barnstable County.

Councilor Harper said that historically, the council hasn’t lead the conversations about filling open seats, but that they can discuss a way to do that going forward.

Councilor Smith said that in the past, the Governor’s office has worked independently, but that they can suggest to people to submit their names to the Office of Boards and Commissions to be considered for appointment. He said an application is available on the Mass.Gov website. He said that they can encourage people but that they might already have people in mind that they are not aware of for these seats. He suggested that Councilor Harper be the point person on this.

Councilor Buckley suggested having a conversation with the Commissioner about this as well.

Chair Smiley said that since it is through the Governor’s office, what can the council do to influence the appointment of new councilors.

Councilor Harper said that in the past, council positions were filled when the council has pushed the Governor’s office to fill them. She said that if attention isn’t brought to the open seats, then they will stay unfilled. She noted that they are at a full complement and that they want to stay that way and that she will work with Mr. Perry to meet with Commissioner Arrigo and the Governor’s office about this.

Councilor Jasinski asked if they can make suggestions to the Governor’s office even if the decision is up to them.

Councilor Harper said yes that they can help put people to the pipeline even if they may not be chosen for the seat.

Councilor Jasinski said that they should consider what they’re looking for in a councilor and that she is happy to help Councilor Harper.

Councilor Smith said that the first step is getting prospective candidates to fill out the application online, adding that in the past, when the seat is open, it’s been word of mouth to get it filled and there haven’t always been a lot of candidates.

Councilor Harper said it will be easier to fill the seats if they can find candidates and that they should look at the five locations of the seats that will be open to see if there is anyone that they may already know that would want to be on the council. She said that councilors can send her the names and she can help candidates navigate the Governor’s process.

Councilor Dooley asked if Urban Parks seats had to be from specific communities within the counties they represent.

Councilor Smith said yes, and that he would share those communities with the committee.

Mr. Perry mentioned that Councilor Wilson spoke with the Governor’s Office on Boards and Commissions recently and that he would connect her and Councilor Harper to exchange the contact information for the office.

Councilor Smith said that people who have connections to the Governor’s office that are looking to get on a board will often submit applications for multiple boards and commissions and that the Governor’s office may reach out to ask current councilors to give applicants background on responsibilities and what it’s like to serve on the council.

Councilor Harper said that this was helpful and that she will reach out to councilors whose seats are expiring to they can start thinking about potential successors. Mr. Perry will share general information about the council with her that can be sent out to those who are interested. Councilor Harper added that the end of terms for those who wish to renew ranges from April to November and that she will work with those councilors to make sure they go through the reappointment process before their expiration.

## Adjournment

Councilor Smith moved to adjourn the meeting.

Councilor Dooley seconded the motion.

Chair Smiley thank everyone for their attendance.

The meeting was adjourned.

*Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings.* [*https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council*](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council)