

## **MCTF Policy Structure Subcommittee Meeting Minutes 12 09 21**

### **Minutes for the Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century (MCTF) Task Force Meeting**

#### **Subcommittee Meeting: Policy Structure**

December 9, 2021, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

#### Meeting Topics:

- Meeting Open, Welcome and Roll Call (Chair)
- Housekeeping Notes (EEA Representatives)
- Vote on Meeting Minutes, Meeting Purpose, Agenda (Chair and Facilitator)
- Presentation on Florida's Mosquito Control Program (Brad Mitchell)
- Final Discussion of Best Practices from Other States
- Review Recommendation Ideas and Process for Recommendation Development
- Discuss and Identify Recommendations
- Wrap Up and Next Steps (Facilitator)
- Closing Remarks and Vote to Adjourn (Chair)

#### **Meeting Open, Welcome & Roll Call, Housekeeping Notes:**

The subcommittee meeting was initiated at 12:04 by Stephen Rich. Roll call was conducted and a quorum was established. Meeting members in attendance included Heidi Ricci, Russell Hopping, Richard Pollack, Julia Blatt, and Brad Mitchell. Stephen Rich brought up the topic of a subcommittee meeting co-chair. Diana mentioned that the subcommittee could change meeting times if needed through polling subcommittee members on availability going forward in 2022. These topics would be revisited at the end of the subcommittee meeting.

#### **Presentation on Florida's Mosquito Control Program – Brad Mitchell:**

Brad Mitchell discussed the nature of FL mosquito control and noted the State program is municipal or district based and fairly independent. Brad discussed the Florida Coordinating Council on Mosquito Control and noted the group seemed to be centered around policy and creation of guidelines. Brad commented that there were several research centers and believed they were all public. Brad mentioned one of the key points was that the Coordinating Council worked closely with the municipal and district mosquito programs. Brad noted that the Coordinating Council did create a white paper and is on their third edition. The white paper illustrated how mosquito control worked in FL and the intricacies of the other groups that are involved. Brad commented that there was a mission statement, and the subcommittee group may want to look at that mission statement in some detail.

Richard Pollack agreed a clear mandate and statement of purpose in MA was warranted. Richard wanted to point out the last line that was highlighted in the document that was shared on the screen regarding nuisance and vector. Richard noted that any mosquito that approaches a person in Florida is likely a target of mosquito control. Brad noted that tourism was also a factor in play. Heidi Ricci asked if FL had standardized threshold for action, any management of wetlands, and if they had any efficacy or non-target information? Brad noted that the white paper may have some information listed. Richard encouraged the group to look at and review the state of FL mosquito management program on-line. The group discussed topics regarding mosquito control and potential impacts on tourism. Russell Hopping asked if there was a crosswalk of protecting the environment. Brad responded yes that FL looked at non-target impacts. Russell noted that he would be interested to see how the state of FL handled that. Brad again encouraged the group to read the white paper to get additional deep dive information.

#### **Final Discussion of Best Practices from Other States:**

Heidi Ricci observed that several of the states had involvement from public health agencies, ecological agencies, and outside influence. Brad pointed out that all those entities are involved with mosquito control in MA and agreed that information needs to be formalized for communication and distribution. Stephen noted the involvement of academic partners as a plus for the FL programs because it brought another dimension of understanding. The group discussed the importance of defining a mission statement to help drive policy and reinforce what is being done related to mosquito control. Jessica Burgess noted that given the age of MGL 252 and what it intended mosquito management to be, that it would be best to think forward on what the group wanted the future of mosquito management to look like in MA. Jessica also mentioned that there is a purpose section in legislative drafting which introduces what the legislation is and what the overall goal is.

Stephen noted there is not a lot of cooperation with academic partners from DPH and he viewed that as a missed opportunity. Brad mentioned the need for a purpose section and starting to identify which academic programs would be helpful to mosquito control in MA. The group discussed the importance of defining a purpose and goal statement. Heidi Ricci noted that it may be difficult to reach consensus and she would not support a goal statement that called for nuisance control statewide. There was added discussion regarding flexibility for municipalities to get the services they want, specific to the protection of public health and there was group consensus that academic institutions across the state could be tapped into as a resource for a mosquito control program.

#### **Review Recommendation Ideas and Process for Recommendation Development:**

The recommendations were divided by directive (v) *assessing the need to update the composition of the state reclamation and mosquito control board*; and directive (x) *identifying the challenges, including but not limited to financial barriers, facing municipalities in joining a regional mosquito control project or district*.

Starting with Directive (v) Recommendation 1 was centered on thinking about how a process would work to have revised legislation. Recommendations were made for the legislature to rewrite and framework legislation around science-based mosquito control. Recommendation 2 noted reform to the composition of the SRB and renaming the board to reflect its goals. Recommendation 3 noted a reconstituted SRB led by DPH and other entities involved with representatives from Fish and Wildlife. The next set of recommendations discussed the need for the SRB to have more centralized guidance regarding preferred approaches to mosquito control, such as salt marsh management and adulticiding to guide decision making on the MCD level and creating consistency ensuring the structure of the SRB at a policy level had a mechanism and structure for review of pesticides for efficacy, human, and environmental health impacts. Diana noted that Heidi had sent a recommendation setting a policy framework that allowed for the creation of a mosquito borne disease management plan.

The group conversation then moved to the few recommendations that related to Directive (x). Recommendation 1 discussed a baseline of services across the state that would allow municipalities to have services similar to a menu-based approach. The group also recommended revising the funding structure for mosquito control and MCDs, so it was more uniform across the state. Group conversations continued towards the design of a framework and the need to make DPH responsible for statewide surveillance.

#### **Discuss and Identify Recommendations:**

Stephen noted conversations about other state programs and asked if it made sense to have people from other states on our boards for outside guidance. Richard noted that he was not currently aware of out of state participants on boards. Brad mentioned that he was still struggling with the level of independence and oversight with the MCDs and he was not sure of the correct balance. Brad noted that more coordination and consistency amongst the MCD's was needed. Heidi Ricci agreed and noted that a reconstituted board would be responsible for setting the overall approach and would have goals and thresholds for action. Heidi commented that the new board could account for regional differences and have the option of baseline services such as education, surveillance, and

intervention during EEE outbreaks. Brad noted that he in general agreed but commented that we are being too prescriptive. Brad noted that oversight of the MCDs is important, but he would not dismiss administrative services. Brad also noted that oversight of MCDs should be ensuring that taxpayer money going into mosquito control should be used for mosquito control; ensure appropriate use of resources.

Jessica added context on the function and services that MCDs perform. Jessica noted that currently there is language in MGL 252 that addresses administrative oversight. Jessica noted that the MCDs are state entities and the need to be mindful of how the MCDs are set up. For example, the MCDs must follow state procurement and hiring policy. Jessica noted to the group that recommendations should keep in mind that the MCDs still be able to be set up in a way to function and perform all the things that the subcommittee wants the MCDs to do without forgetting that MCD's are state entities and need to perform functions consistent with state process.

The group discussed Mass Wildlife and DPH having statutory roles and jurisdiction in a newly reconstituted SRB. Heidi Ricci asked Jessica if the regional planning agencies are state agencies. Jessica responded that the MCDs sit within the Executive Branch of State government and employees of MCDs are considered state employees. Jessica compared the MCDs as having a similar structure as DCR and DEP with regional offices that provide regionally specific services. MCDs provide regional services at a local level but within a state structure. It was also noted that Regional Transit Authorities (RTA) are created through special legislation. Legislatively they have a lot of specific roles in how they function. Brad commented that if the SRB is reconstituted there should be representation from the Mass Municipal Association (MMA).

Julia noted that it would be useful to do a periodic review of effectiveness or how well the program is meeting its goals of public health and ecological protectiveness. Heidi Ricci commented that her vision would include what Julia stated. Heidi noted that the program would be designed to evaluate efficacy and impacts annually with periodic public input. In addition, there would be annual reporting for the whole program to quantify efficacy and impacts.

There was group agreement that DPH and Fish and Wildlife should be involved on some level, but Brad also commented for a larger oversight board that a Commissioner should be responsible for appointing members. Brad commented that the group should not be too prescriptive for a larger oversight board and it should be up to the Commissioner to make this decision. Diana asked the group if they agreed there was a need for formalized roles for DPH and Fish and Wildlife on a reconstituted board and everyone in the subcommittee group agreed.

Russell commented that the group should think about the first recommendation on the list related to the revision of MGL 252 to assist in defining the purpose of the SRB to put a finer point on the goal of the recommendation. Russell noted the need for clearly defined goals and purpose of mosquito control. Jessica commented on all the enabling legislation as well related to the repeal of MGL 252. Jessica emphasized that the reference to the revision of MGL 252 would also encompass all enabling legislation. Brad commented that there would need to be a detailed meeting on the goal and purpose of mosquito control, as there was not enough time in the current meeting to delve into that topic. Julia commented that she liked the first recommendation as well and noted that it may make sense to go through the information of what should be incorporated into the legislation in relation to all the recommendation content that has been documented. Julia noted that she would like to put in ecologically sensitive as science-based, as it is not just about human health. Heidi Ricci asked a question of Jessica about enabling legislation if they are in the ERG report or had they been given some other way? Jessica noted because of their age you cannot access them but if the subcommittee would like we could get copies. Heidi Ricci thought it was important for the subcommittee to have all the enabling legislation. Jessica commented that she believed she gave them to ERG, but we should be able to provide that information.

Diana noted that she had the document that Heidi Ricci had drafted around framework and would distribute it to the group as a reference. Brad commented on the first recommendation that he though it made sense, but it was

not going to work the way the recommendation was drafted in the Legislature. Brad noted he would rather ensure that the MCDS are following best practices on wetlands management

**Wrap Up and Next Steps (Facilitator):**

Diana recapped and noted that it sounded like the subcommittee wanted to come up with a revised framework for MGL 252, what that looks like, and to develop a clear purpose. Diana asked for a virtual show of hands of how many members want to carve out a large chunk of time in an upcoming meeting to have that conversation. Everyone on the subcommittee agreed to that approach. It was noted that it would be best to table that discussion until the first meeting in the new year so all subcommittee members could be in attendance.

**Closing Remarks and Vote to Adjourn (Chair):**

Diana asked the group if anyone would want to volunteer as a co-chair and Julia Blatt volunteered to be the co-chair. Richard Pollack made a motion, which was seconded by Heidi Ricci to nominate Julia Blatt as the co-chair. Stephen Rich conducted roll call and all subcommittee members in attendance voted aye in agreement to nominate Julia Blatt as the Policy Structure subcommittee co-chair. Seeing no other questions or comments from the group Stephen Rich took a motion to adjourn from Brad Mitchell, seconded by Heidi Ricci. All in favor said aye. The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 pm.