# **February 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Council Members Present: Dicken Crane, Susan Smiley, Ann Canedy, Jack Buckley, Jeff Collins, Phil Doherty, Laura Jasinski, Kevin O’Shea, Vivian Ortiz, Susan Smiley, Dennis Smith, Jennifer Wilson

Council Members Absent: Melissa Harper

DCR Staff Attendees: Brian Arrigo, Matthew Perry, Jorge Ayub, Belle Procaccini, John Daly, Paul Cavanagh, Wendy Pearl, Priscilla Geigis, Paul Fahey, Jessica Rowcroft, Cindy Dalton, Chloe Gotsis

Public Attendees as Registered: Thomas Bik, Suzanne Gall Marsh, Sarah Freeman, Pete Sutton, Nicole Freedman, Lawrence Tucker, Michael Toomey, Jonathan Ruane, Galen Mook, Denis LaForce, Chuck Anastas, Christine Liu, Chris Redfern, Buzz Constable, Bill Boles, Marc Albert, Laura Ludwig, Fritz McGirr, Alankrita Narang, Chip Jones

## Call to Meeting, 9:00am – Chair Dicken Crane

Councilor Crane welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. He did a roll call of councilors.

## DCR Report – Commissioner Brian Arrigo

### Snow and Ice Operations

Commissioner Arrigo highlighted the work DCR has been doing with snow and ice operations this winter. He said that storm operations are facilitated by Emergency Management Resource Coordinator Dennis Fitzpatrick, who presented at the November council meeting, and his team. They, along with the operations, forestry, and engineering teams, and have received several recognitions from community members and local elected officials praising efforts to keep parkways and sidewalks safe.

### Mass Municipal Conference

On January 23 and 24, DCR staff worked to spread the word about the agency to more than 1,500 local leaders from across the state at the Massachusetts Municipal Association’s (MMA) annual conference. Commissioner Arrigo said that part of their goal at the conference was to highlight the lifeguard recruitment efforts for this year.

### The MA DCR Forest Health Aerial Survey Results

Every year DCR’s Forest Health Program flies over the entire state mapping any abnormalities in the forest canopy.  Using this aerial survey, forest health staff labeled areas with forest health threats like spongy moth or white pine needle disease. Commissioner Arrigo reported that the team has created a new web experience that shows the last three years of aerial survey results in an interactive manner. Using this tool staff and the public can now filter by year, view graphs that show the threats in percentage or by acreage, view bookmarks that highlight threats in various locations around the state with photo examples and access the MA Forest Health Storymap to gain more information on specific threats. [This new tool is currently available online](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/e5b7c2ea343d49d195d29efb69810bcb/).

### Save the Date: Park Serve Day 2025

Park Serve Day 2025 will be held on Saturday, April 26.  Park Serve Day is our largest day of stewardship, and every year DCR welcomes people into the parks to help with various projects like cleaning, painting, and planting. Commissioner Arrigo said that there will be more details available soon.

### Teamwork in Action: A Successful Rescue at Moore State Park

Last July, a hiker was injured in the remote and rugged terrain of Moore State Park. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of DCR park rangers along with Paxton firefighters, police and dispatchers, the woman was safely rescued and has since made a full recovery. A few weeks ago, Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early Jr. presented the TEAM Award to the 12 responders who worked together to carry out this difficult rescue, includingRanger Lt. Rebecca Baronoski and Forest and Park Supervisor Shane McCaffrey.The collaboration, especially in such challenging conditions, was crucial to the successful outcome, and Commissioner Arrigo said that he was proud of the DCR team for their quick thinking, tireless work, and dedication to public safety.

### State House Annual Safety Fair

The members of the State House Security Program (SHSP) participated in the annual Life Safety Fair held at the Massachusetts State House. The event offered an opportunity for those working in and around the building to learn about the lifesaving capabilities available within the state house. SHSP members demonstrated vital techniques, showcased the equipment they use, and answered questions, highlighting the important role they play in keeping everyone safe. They play a critical role in maintaining safety at the state house, with one of their key responsibilities being first responders in medical emergencies.

### Research Symposium

Earlier this week, Commissioner Arrigo participated in DCR’s third annual Research Symposium held by the Research Office. This two-day conference was full of information on the work being done at DCR. The keynote was given by Kevin Powkowka on Red Pine research. The symposium also featured a SLAM!, which is a fast-moving way to share ideas and gather real-time feedback. The Commissioner gave a shoutout to Councilor Laura Jasinski who presented about the Charles River Conservancy’s work with volunteers along the Charles River Reservation.

### Org Chart

Commissioner Arrigo reported that the agency has been working to compile org charts for its many departments, which has been a large undertaking given the size of the agency. The team working on this has made great strides and once they are completed, they will work on a way to share them with the council.

### Councilor Questions and Comments

Councilor Collins thanked the Commissioner for encouraging staff to put together the research symposium. He said that he attended some sessions and that they were very well done and informative.

Councilor Jasinski said that she seconds what Councilor Collins said, and that she was glad to see it was so well attended by DCR staff. She asked how there is work being done so people outside of DCR know about the research being done and if there is talk about making the information more broadly available.

Commissioner Arrigo said that it is something that he is thinking about too and that one of the takeaways from the symposium for him is how can they highlight or take pieces of what is presented to celebrate it more publicly to get to a point where there is more of a public face to the event.

Councilor Buckley asked about the agency’s brand refresh.

Commissioner Arrigo said that they’ve connected with stakeholders including members of the Stewardship Council in conversations and that they have initial findings from the consultant that they are working with that were presented to senior staff, and that an employee team is helping to facilitate and work through some proposals and other items. They’ve wrapped up getting feedback from senior staff on the presentation that they were given and will be sharing it with the consultant, and then will be reengaging with stakeholders on the work that is being done.

Councilor Buckley asked if focus groups are being done to find out what DCR means to the public.

Commissioner Arrigo said that they received feedback from several hundred people from stakeholders and other people and they are working on going through the information to move forward. He said that the work being done includes logo design, signage, and uniforms among other things.

Councilor Buckley raised that they are heading towards a new bond bill and that it would be helpful to get an overview. He said that he would work with the finance department as part of his work with the Finance Committee.

Commissioner Arrigo said that the bond bill is still in development but that he is happy to facilitate conversations with the council to give an update.

Chair Crane asked if recordings of the research symposium sessions can be shared with people outside of the agency that might be interested.

Commissioner Arrigo said that they are working on ways to edit the recordings and share them and that they are a good way to highlight what DCR staff does.

Chair Crane asked about the executive orders that are affecting staffing and funding at the federal level and how much of an impact it will have on DCR going forward.

Commissioner Arrigo said that most of the work that DCR does is funded by operating dollars in the state budget, and that although there is some reliance on federal funds in the forestry and conservation and resource divisions, it is only a few million dollars. He said that they have being doing work to find where federal funds are used and have a working team that’s working with EEA to monitor the day to day changes happening at the federal level, and that there is no risk of losing staff at this time because the majority of money that the agency uses is from the state.

## Regular Business I

### Presentation on the Boston Harbor Outer Islands Clean Up – Jorge Ayub, Senior Coastal Ecologist, and Belle Procaccini, Director of Operations at the Boston Harbor Islands

Mr. Ayub and Ms. Procaccini, joined by Marc Albert from the National Parks Service, Laura Ludwig from the Center for Coastal Studies, and Alankrita Narang from Boston Harbor Now, presenting on the week long cleanup of the Boston Harbor Islands that happened in September 2024.

### After the presentation concluded, Councilors were given the opportunity for questions and comments.

Councilor Wilson said that this was a very inspiring presentation and asked where else in Massachusetts can the lessons from the work that was done be exported to get similar projects done.

Laura Ludwig responded that this type of work can be done anywhere, and that the Center for Coastal Studies has done similar work on the island of Cuttyhunk, in Gloucester in partnership with US Fish and Wildlife Service, and in New Hampshire and Maine. She said that they find locations that need to be remedied and find stakeholders that care about the properties to work with, and that the data that they collect is driving the next steps that they take, documenting the processes and outcomes, and helps to tell the story.

Councilor Wilson said that they should share the presentation and video of the cleanup with the legislature to show that DCR is worth the funding especially when it comes to conservation and climate resilience.

Councilor Collins asked how they can take everything the group learned through this process and apply it to other projects like invasive control, trail maintenance, and other projects that need to be done at DCR properties.

Mr. Ayub said that this kind of cleanup is not for everyone, but they learned how they could be inclusive and have an open call for help by dividing up tasks by skill level. He said that everything needs to be planned ahead of time because they don’t know who is going to show up, and that Center for Coastal Studies has trainings that helped prepare people for the work that they would be doing. He said that the biggest takeaway is that they don’t need to send all debris collected to the dump, that it can be recycled and reused.

Councilor Buckley said that the cleanup is similar to Park Serve Day which is a smaller scale, and that some of the lessons learned can be applied. He said that DCR should make an effort to document Park Serve Day in the same way as this project was.

Mr. Ayub said that they plan on putting together a package of videos to share with the Council and the Legislature.

Chair Crane said that the added value of all the pieces that were put together is incredible, and that you can see how much more comes out of a cleanup like this than just trash removal.

Mr. Ayub said that the next step is in the spring to go back and do mapping of the trash that was removed, and that they want to do a big cleanup like this every five years with maintenance in between.

Ms. Ludwig mentioned that Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has a volunteer strike force that provides a short burst of effort to clean up and that she is happy to connect DCR to other states or municipalities that do similar work.

### Approval of Minutes

Councilor Canedy noted that she sent a slight revision to Mr. Perry that he will include.

Councilor Wilson moved to approve the January meeting minutes as amended.

Councilor Buckley seconded the motion.

#### Roll Call on the Approval of the Minutes

Councilor Smiley – Yes

Councilor Canedy – Yes

Councilor Jasinski – Yes

Councilor Wilson – Yes

Councilor Ortiz – Yes

Councilor Collins – Yes

Councilor Dooley – Yes

Councilor Doherty – Yes

Councilor O’Shea – Yes

Councilor Smith – Yes

Councilor Buckley – Yes

Councilor Crane – Yes

The January 16, 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

### Public Comment

[Guidelines for Public Comment are available on the DCR Stewardship Council website.](https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcr-stewardship-council-public-comment-guidelines/download)

Chair Crane invited members of the public for comment. The following members of the public gave comments:

* Sarah Freeman, Jamaica Plain
* Lawrence Tucker, Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts
* Galen Mook, MassBike

## Regular Business II

### Approval of Blackstone Complex Resource Management Plans

Councilor Wilson moved to approve the Blackstone Complex Resource Management Plans.

Councilor Buckley seconded the motion.

#### Roll Call on the Approval of the Blackstone Complex Resource Management Plans

Councilor Smiley – Yes

Councilor Canedy – Yes

Councilor Jasinski – Yes

Councilor Wilson – Yes

Councilor Ortiz – Yes

Councilor Collins – Yes

Councilor Dooley – Yes

Councilor Doherty – Yes

Councilor Buckley – Yes

Chair Crane – Yes

The Resource Management Plans were approved.

Councilor Wilson thanked Paul Cavanagh for his work on the RMPs and for meeting with the policy committee.

Chair Crane seconded what Councilor Wilson said, adding that Mr. Cavanagh is very generous with his time. He said that as Mr. Cavanagh and his team move on to work on the Pittsfield Complex RMPs, he hopes that they get a lot of input from friends and partners and that they can help spread the word about process.

Councilor Buckley complemented Mr. Cavanagh on the work that he has done and said that he hopes the additional investment in RMP staffing means that this is the first of many approvals to come. He added that for the Pittsfield Complex, friends groups are very tuned in and he is confident that they will show up and be a part of this process.

Councilor Smiley recommended having more than one public meeting for the Pittsfield Complex given that it is a large area and that they want to make sure there is enough opportunity for the public to be heard.

Councilor Buckley said that in addition to the meetings, people also have the opportunity to respond to Mr. Cavanagh in writing.

### Letter to Commissioner Arrigo Advocating for Vision Zero

Councilor Buckley said that even aspirationally, it is important for the agency to get the message that Vision Zero is important, and that it is the role of the council to say that the agency should take this seriously. He said that he hopes DCR would be amenable to the suggestion.

Councilor Collins said that he agrees with Councilor Buckley, and that they heard a great presentation from Dan Driscoll at the January meeting about DCR’s efforts to enhance safety and that Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and major injuries. He said that crashes are inevitable to some extent and that streets must be designed so mistakes are not fatal. Vision Zero is mentioned in the Parkways Master Plan and behind a lot of design principles, but its not official policy but the Council can express to the Commissioner that it should be and ask for updates in the future on updated traffic safety data.

Councilor Ortiz said that Boston has adopted Vision Zero for many years and that changes have been made including lowering the speed limit in the city, and that DCR should look to other places to see how Vision Zero has been accomplished.

Chair Crane asked if they should vote on this or draft a letter first and then approve at the next meeting.

Councilor Buckley said that he will work with Mr. Perry on a draft and bring it to the next meeting for approval.

Councilors Ortiz and Collins said that they will help with drafting the letter.

### Committee Updates

#### Policy Committee

Councilor Wilson said that the committee had a productive joint meeting with the Conservation Committee to hear about landscape designations from Peter Church and Jessica Rowcroft, and about SGAR use on DCR property from Rob King who said that they are meeting with the City of Boston about their work eliminating SGAR use in the city. She said they also heard from Paul Cavanagh about RMPs and that the public meeting for the Pittsfield Complex is on February 25, 2025.

#### Conservation Committee

Councilor Collins said that once the state’s biodiversity goals are released, the committee will ramp up its work. Chair Crane added that during the joint meeting with the Policy Committee, they learned more about the Forest Reserve Science Advisory Committee.

#### Stakeholders

Councilor Smiley said that the next meeting of the Stakeholders Committee is on Friday, February 21 and that they are anxious to see the new hires that will be working with friends and partners and will discuss councilor terms.

#### Finance

Councilor Buckley said that he would like to start a dialogue with DCR’s finance department within the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Perry introduced Paul Fahey, DCR’s Director of Partnerships, who spoke about his background and his new role at the agency.

## Adjournment

Councilor Ortiz moved to adjourn the meeting.

Councilor Buckley seconded the motion.

Councilor Crane thanked everyone for joining and adjourned the meeting.

Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council>