**February 28, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Committee Members Present**: Jennifer Wilson, Jeff Collins, Ann Canedy

**Other Councilors Present:** Dicken Crane, Jack Buckley

**DCR Staff Attendees** Matt Perry, Paul Cavanagh

**Call to Order and Welcome – Committee Chair Jennifer Wilson**

Councilor Wilson welcomed the councilors and DCR staff and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

The committee considered the December 6, 2022 and February 2, 2023 meeting minutes for approval.

Chair Wilson made note of changes she sent to Matt Perry.

Councilor Collins made a motion to approve the minutes with the minor amendments.

Councilor Canedy seconded the motion.

**Roll Call on Approval of Minutes**

Councilor Collins: Yes

Councilor Canedy: Abstain

Councilor Wilson: Yes

The minutes were approved.

**Resource Management Plans (RMPs)**

Chair Wilson invited Paul Cavanagh, Resource Management Planner, to speak on the progress of RMPs.

Mr. Cavanagh began by asking the committee if they preferred to receive written updates on RMPs before the full council meeting or before the committee meeting. The committee agreed that before the committee meeting was best.

Mr. Cavanagh gave an update on changes that have been requested by DCR staff after review and that RMPs were no longer allowed to include state listed species as they had in the past.

Councilor Buckley noted that DCR has a positive relationship with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program at Mass Fish and Wildlife and that it would be good to have a meeting with them about this. He said he would like to see the policy in writing.

Mr. Cavanagh said that there are two types of species that the Heritage Program tracks, regulatory and non-regulatory. He said that in the past, they have gotten exclusively regulatory species, and this time they have received both with no way of knowing which is which. He said that they are in touch with the Heritage Program to sort this out, but that it will add about a month to the timeline.

Chair Wilson noted that since the Stewardship Council approved the new template for RMPs, any changes that are occurring should be shown to them.

Mr. Cavanagh said that he will get something in writing about any proposed changes and will get it to Mr. Perry to distribute to the committee.

Councilor Buckley commented that RMPs are dynamic documents, and that perfection cannot be the enemy of the good. He said that the process has to keep moving.

Councilor Canedy suggested that the RMPs should be released and then modifications can be considered.

Mr. Cavanagh stated that he no longer has aspirations that all 200 RMPs will be the same and that DCR changes are trying to reflect current initiatives of the agency that have developed since the template was approved.

Councilor Collins said that all sites will be managed by future adopted policy no matter what, even if a forestry moratorium is approved.

Councilor Buckley asked for a clarification about whether a moratorium was in effect now.

Mr. Cavanagh suggested that the committee speak with Peter Church, Director of Forestry Stewardship for more information. He added that the goal is still to get the RMPs done as fast as possible and that as a group, the RMP team sees 30 RMPs per year as a sustainable pace.

**Landscape Designations**

Chair Wilson asked if there was an update to the Landscape Designation process.

Mr. Perry replied that he had not spoken to the Landscape Designation team so did not have an update to provide.

Chair Wilson noted that the committee is still waiting on public comments from the team.

**Natural Resources Committee**

Councilor Crane created a committee charge for the proposed Natural Resources committee that he shared with Mr. Perry. The committee will look at the charge and provide feedback to Councilor Buckley for presentation at the full council meeting.

**Open Seat on Council**

Councilor Collins reported that he was working on contacting the groups listed in statute to fill the open environmental seat on the council.

**Review of Strategic Oversight Plans**

Committee members were provided with copies of the Stewardship Council Strategic Oversight Plans from 2015-2016 and 2018-2020.

Councilor Collins reported that he is currently working on a new Strategic Oversight Plan for the council and that it is important for everyone to know that it is not a strategic plan for DCR, but a strategy for the Stewardship Council.

He presented headers for the new document based on what was included in the old documents: Budget and Finance, Land Stewardship, RMP Process, Climate Change, Partner Engagement, and Council Structure and Role.

Councilor Crane suggested looking carefully at the Special Commission Report and the Strategic Readiness Initiative and the public input that was reported for those two documents to be included.

Chair Wilson said that this is an opportunity to bring certain areas in to focus. She noted that the Council has been in a defensive mode because of other initiatives that have been going on and that now is a chance to talk about what is important to them.

Councilor Canedy asked if a section should be added in for Forestry.

Councilor Collins responded that that topic fits under land and asset management.

Chair Wilson said that the calendar being created should be added which will allow the council to become more predictable and understandable for the public.

Councilor Collins said that the document should be reflective and aspirational and that it should be kept short. The policy committee will continue working on an outline and will ask the chairs of the other two committees to work on different sections and paragraphs as needed.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00am.