Department of Conservation and Recreation Stewardship Council Meeting Via Video conference January 13th, 2022 - 9am to 11am

**Council Members Present:** Jack Buckley, Ann Canedy, Esq., Jeffrey Collins, Dicken Crane, Melissa Harper, Susan Smiley, Dennis Smith, Chairman Nate Walton, Jennifer N.S. Wilson, Esq.

**Council Members Not Present:** Vivian Ortiz

**DCR Staff Attendees:** Paul Cavanagh, Nick Connors, Stephanie Cooper Stefan Skalinski

**Public Attendees:** Glen Ayers, Sarah Freedman, rest not listed

**Call to Meeting-Chairman Nate Walton**

Chairman Nate Walton opened the meeting with reflection on his time as Chairman and as a member of the council for the last three years. This is Nate Walton’s last meeting as Chairman. He hopes to be remembered as empowering the individual members of the Council. He highlighted the achievements of the three standing committees. The finance committee has been able to work with DCR on the budget and the council now plays an active role on budgets. Since he’s been Chairman, RMPs are now starting to be finished in a timely fashion. The Stakeholder committee has been able to work with DCR and hold joint meetings with other groups on projects. The Edgewater Project has been something the council has worked to get done under his leadership. During his time there was the formation of the DCR Commission and report. He went on to thank the stakeholders' groups, Commissioner. Cooper and the DCR staff, and each of his fellow council members.

**DCR Report-Stephanie Cooper, Acting Commissioner**

Acting Commissioner Cooper opened by thanking Nate for his work on the council and for all the work he has been able to accomplish. She moved on to her report.

* The cold temperatures and snow have meant we have entered the winter season. It is one of the most challenging times of the year. Snow removal went well after the first major snowstorm of the season. It was the first one she experienced as Commissioner. She went on to talk about first day hikes, that stretched from the Blue Hills to Mount Greylock. With the weather turning cold and snowy, skiing has opened at the Blue Hills and cross-country skiing has opened at other DCR locations. In addition to first day hikes, winter solstice hikes were able to resume this year. Events took place at Harold Parker SF, Walden Pond, and Mt. Greylock.
* On the capital projects front, the $6.7 mil Kasabuski rink rehabilitation project was completed and a celebration was held at Foss Park.. Also at Foss Park, the pool/bathhouse are being redone. During the summer, there was a focus on water safety at DCR water fronts. This upcoming summer DCR is working to recruit lifeguards and seasonal staff.

*Project updates*

* Edgewater has a 25% design meeting coming up on 1/27. There was a recent site walk at Doyle Playground; there is also a public listening session that will be scheduled next month.

*RMPs*

* Myles Standish RMP is the last legacy one. DCR is aiming to have a public meeting on that soon. There will be public meetings coming up on the Southcoast RMPs. DCR will give updates and prepare for the next steps.

*Year in Review:*

* Greening the Gateway cities tree plantings.
* 30,000th tree planted in Westfield.
* 14 Urban Challenge grants.
* Rangers worked with state police and environmental police on search and rescue.
* Highlighted pollinator gardens.
* Firefighters went out west to help assist in fighting the wildfires there..
* Summer Nights program was expanded.
* The Parkway Master Plan was released in June.
* Office of Green transportation.
* $200,000 for moorings of Peddocks island.
* $1.7 million in improvements at Fellsway east and Highland Ave.
* Tide gates at Morrissey Blvd.
* Arthur Fiddler Bridge completion.
* JP Skate Park improvements.
* $1.4 million for Windsor SF.
* Cape Cod Rail Trail Wellfleet extension.
* Walden Pond trails.
* $4.7 Million project at Halibut Point.
* Otter exhibit rehabilitation at the Blue Hills.
* Kasabuski rink improvements.
* Worked to get events with friends' groups.
* Summer Concerts.
* Water safety training days.

Acting Commissioner Cooper ended the report by thanking Nate again for his leadership and what he accomplished. DCR appreciates his time.

*Q&A*

Jack Buckley had asked the Acting Commissioner if the year in review presentation could be shared. Ann Canedy suggested putting it on the DCR website. Melissa Harper asked about expanding beer gardens at DCR locations and asked about the status of RFPs for other properties. Nick Connors said that they are still waiting on RFPs for the Esplanade and Herder Park..

**Regular Business I**

The council members thanked Chairman Nate Walton for his service the past few years. Ann Canedy and Dennis Smith presented a picture of the gift that they had got for Nate on behalf of the Council.

Chairman Walton invited members of the public for comment, which was offered by the following:

* Glen Ayers regarding forestry practices.
* Sarah Freeman regarding the Arborway project.

**Regular Business II**

*Committee Meeting Breakouts and Updates*

*Finance report:*

The committee expressed the need for a set schedule. They hoped to tap into Federal Covid Funding for DCR that could help with the deferred maintenance. They also wanted to focus on Forest policy in future.

*Policy and Operations:*

Regarding the RMP update, DCR will be presented the last legacy ones in coming months. The committee expressed the need for offline meeting times and hope to have them every 2-3months. The committee could then go back to council for recommendations.

*Stakeholders Report:*

There is an upcoming Friends group meeting 1/18 with Jenny Norwood The committee had a desire to keep this group together and continue to work with DCR after Chairman Nate Walton leaves.

**Adjournment**

Jack Buckley takes over as Chairman at the conclusion of this meeting