

MCTF Policy Structure Subcommittee Meeting Minutes 01 06 22

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

Subcommittee Meeting: Policy Structure

January 6, 2022, 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)
- Recap and Wrap Up Discussion Regarding MCD Responses to Questions
- Refine Recommendation to Revise and/or Repeal and Replace MGL C. 252
- Review Suggestions for Additional MCD Recommendations
- Wrap Up and Next Steps (Facilitator)
- Closing Remarks and Vote to Adjourn (Chair)

Meeting Open, Welcome, Roll Call, and Housekeeping Notes

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Rich at 12:02. A roll call was conducted and subcommittee members in attendance included Julia Blatt, Russell Hopping, Brad Mitchell, Richard Pollack, and Heidi Ricci. The meeting agenda was shared and discussed with the subcommittee group. Alisha Bouchard provided a standard housekeeping update.

Vote on Meeting Minutes, Meeting Purpose, Agenda (Chair and Facilitator)

A vote was proposed for meeting minutes from the 12/9 subcommittee meeting. Richard Pollack made a motion to accept the minutes as amended with stated corrections, seconded by Brad Mitchell. A roll call was conducted, Julia Blatt (aye), Russell Hopping (aye), Brad Mitchell (aye), Richard Pollack (aye) Heidi Ricci (aye) Stephen Rich (aye). The meeting minutes were accepted with the recommended changes.

Dian Pietri discussed goals and logistics for upcoming subcommittee meetings in January and February. It was noted that the Best Practices subcommittee would also be scheduling additional meetings and there was a school vacation week in February, so subcommittee member availability may be a challenge. Heidi Ricci commented on the timing of the public listening session and noted that ideally it would be good for subcommittee members to have time to review the public comments. Caroline Higley discussed the calendar timeline and ability of the public to enter comments via the portal. It was noted that the intent was to post everything online as soon as edits were made, and documents were prepared for the task force.

Recap and Wrap Up Discussion Regarding MCD Responses to Questions

MCD questions were displayed to allow for commentary for the subcommittee members that were not present at the last meeting where the MCD answers were discussed. Brad Mitchell commented that there may be some bias on the part of MCDs related to what residents want. Brad asked the subcommittee group for their perception on the consistency of MCD practices. Heidi Ricci agreed with Brad's comments and noted that there was a need for some standardization but also acknowledged that there are some regional differences within the state that need to be taken into account. Heidi Ricci discussed the answers in relation to salt marsh management and added education and surveillance being baseline, but there was also a need for input on source control and ecological based management. Heidi noted that it was beneficial to have the MCDs involved in certain ecological projects as they are exempt from the wetlands protection act. Russell Hopping discussed the benefit of centralization to determine clear thresholds, how decisions are made, and how polices are being followed. Richard Pollack noted

that there was a benefit to standardization but asked the group for ideas of what those are and added that flexibility in mosquito control was also a benefit. Richard Pollack encouraged the subcommittee members to reach out to their local MCD Commissions and attend their meetings to understand what went into the decision-making process. Brad Mitchell discussed the Northeast MCDs response on water management and noted that there was a significant difference in process between the Cape MCD and the Northeast MCD. Brad added that the Cape didn't use adulticiding but every other MCD did, and he did not see a lot of consistency or it well explained. Brad noted that some of his perspective may be based on old information and bias.

Stephen Rich discussed the variability that was seen in different MCDs. Stephen noted that he did trust that the MCDs have peoples' best interest in mind and the decisions of how they determine these processes were good. Stephen added that he thought the group should be thinking about policy not practices related to who was going to make the decision on how mosquito control gets done. Heidi Ricci responded and discussed the public interest in natural resources and how they may be impacted by some of these practices. Subcommittee members also discussed the need for a more centralized process to ensure the MCDs are using the most current and effective techniques.

Refine Recommendation to Revise and or Repeal and Replace MGL C. 252

Content was shown to the subcommittee that provided an overview of the rationale and what was discussed for recommendation 1 related to board composition, funding, scientific opinion, and representation from other states. Diana addressed the feasibility portion of the template and what would be handled by MDAR. Richard Pollack, Brad Mitchell, and Russell Hopping commented that they approved of the content but also wanted to ensure there was still an opportunity for conversation to ensure things were still subject to change. Heidi Ricci noted that the key points were synthesized and asked about the process of what gets moved forward. Diana addressed the timeline and process to incorporate thoughts and feedback before finalizing recommendations for final vote. Jessica Burgess commented that the goal was to provide comments and ideas so ERG could refine to the extent that anything was talked about today it could be incorporated into another version.

Heidi Ricci thought the recommendation was great and well written and wanted to ensure it captured wetland management and input for funding related to a new data system to be able to better track and report on operations, results, and the opt out process. Julia Blatt, Brad Mitchell and Stephen Rich also supported moving the recommendation forward. Diana mentioned that some minor changes would be made based on the current discussion and the recommendation would move forward.

The group moved to recommendation 2 and Richard Pollack provided an overview and his thought process on amending the MA stormwater handbook. Heidi Ricci noted that she was in agreement with Richard Pollack and mentioned documentation she had provided and noted that DEP was in the process of updating the handbook and moving in the direction of low impact development. Subcommittee members discussed maintenance as a potential issue in relation to the recommendation. Diana addressed the subcommittee directives with the group and noted that this may best fit on another subcommittee. The group discussed to which subcommittee the recommendation related. Julia Blatt thought this was a great recommendation for whatever subcommittee ended up with it and noted that it may be useful putting this on a fast track otherwise the opportunity may be missed.

Stephen Rich commented that this recommendation was a challenging fit for the Policy Structure subcommittee and was not sure how it fit into the composition of the SRB. Richard Pollack noted the task force preferred that the subcommittee offer our best recommendation and that this recommendation could come through Best Practice or Policy Structure, but it seemed that it was a better fit on Policy Structure. Heidi Ricci referenced the subcommittee charge and noted that storm water management was listed. Heidi Ricci added discussions on maintenance standards and low impact development. Diana mentioned the understory questions and how recommendation could fit within the understory questions. Diana asked for a show of hands to move this recommendation forward and all subcommittee members agreed.

Review Suggestions for Additional MCD Recommendations

The first recommendation topic (recommendation #3) that was reviewed related to revising the funding structure of MCDs to ensure uniformity across MA and to allow for towns to join MCDs at a lower cost. It was discussed that this recommendation created flexibility for towns to join MCDs and potentially supported a menu-based approach to mosquito control services. Stephen Rich discussed his thought process on policy versus practices and noted that the change of MGL 252 was what the group should be discussing. Heidi Ricci thought the recommended draft language needed some modification and discussed how the enabling legislation has limited what the MCDs can do. It was mentioned that the MCDs should be set up under a newly reconstituted board to flesh out the details with a unified system with essential services for communities. Richard Pollack discussed a bi-phased approach that came out of tax dollars that ensured a centralized program that would carry out surveillance for pathogen carrying mosquitos, and if necessary, an appropriate response. Funding would also include sources for research and education. The second component for communities that desire to have more larviciding, adulticiding, and local stormwater management could still be funded off the cherry sheet.

Subcommittee members discussed the best way to approach potential reframing or treatment as a standalone recommendation. Alisha Bouchard mentioned that it may be best to handle as a standalone recommendation for voting purposes. Jessica Burgess provided perspective on the development of a newly reconstituted board and recommended keeping it broad but identifying the areas that a new board would need to address. Diana noted that the full task force was a great place to bring up and address these issues. Julia Blatt commented that when a recommendation is standalone, it carries more weight. Stephen Rich mentioned that one way to create impact is to discuss who should be on the board, as it would have more long-term policy consequences. Jessica Burgess noted that when you repeal and replace MGL 252 there would be a need to create a new oversight board and define how the oversight board conducts mosquito control. Currently, the SRB is the oversight body of MCDs and it would need to be restructured in a way so the MCDs fit in the new oversight body. There would need to be a clear way to demonstrate MCD structure, set up, and reporting still exist in the newly SRB-like structure.

Heidi Ricci noted that it was a point very well taken and what needed to happen was a transitional process where the MCDs could be transitioned into a new organizational framework. There could be an opportunity for expansion and new regions to be created. There was a show of hands for the recommendation to be moved forward to the full task force and all subcommittee members agreed.

The next recommendation (establishing baseline services, recommendation #4 under directive X) was presented to the group and a show of hands was requested to move the recommendation forward to the task force. All subcommittee members agreed with the caveat that the recommendation language be fleshed out a bit more.

The third recommendation (topic 3 under directive X, specific to surveillance) was discussed with the subcommittee and Heidi Ricci mentioned that this has come up under the Best Practices subcommittee. Diana asked if the team was ok removing this outline recommendation from the table for now. Heidi Ricci asked that the group come back to this and noted that this was also a policy issue around a unified surveillance process that was scientific and transparent to the public and was important to the policy conversation.

Wrap Up and Next Steps (Facilitator)

Diana noted that the draft outline recommendations that were discussed and agreed upon would be revised and sent to the task force. There would also be a follow up communication with the subcommittee group to determine dates for rescheduling meetings and distribution of homework items related to draft outline recommendation issues and wording.

Closing Remarks and Vote to Adjourn (Chair)

Stephen Rich made a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Richard Pollack and seconded by Julia Blatt. All those in favor said aye. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.