# Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Wilson, Jeff Collins, Ann Canedy, Phil Doherty

Other Councilors Present: Jack Buckley, Dicken Crane

DCR Staff Attendees: Matthew Perry

**Public Attendees as Registered:** Chuck Anastas, Celeste Venolia

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

Chair Wilson welcomed the attendees and went over the meeting agenda.

## Approval of Minutes

Councilor Canedy moved to accept the April 26, 2023 meeting minutes.

Councilor Collins seconded the motion.

## Roll Call on Minutes Approval

Councilor Canedy: Yes

Councilor Collins: Yes

Councilor Wilson: Yes

Councilor Doherty: Yes

The minutes were approved.

## Resource Management Plans (RMPs)

Chair Wilson reviewed the update provided by Paul Cavanagh and said that they were very positive.

### Questions and Comments about RMPs

Councilor Crane said that Mr. Cavanagh mentioned that forest management is being taken out of RMPs in response to the administration’s moratorium. He asked if that was still happening.

Councilor Buckley said that he would find that troubling since large areas being reviewed for RMPs are comprised of forest.

Chair Wilson said that forest management is an essential part of RMPs.

Councilor Canedy asked if they could have an answer before Thursday’s Council meeting. Mr. Perry said he would ask Paul and get the committee an answer before then.

## Strategic Oversight Plan

Chair Wilson thanked Councilor Collins for all of the writing he did preparing the draft of the strategic oversight plan, and also thanked the Finance Committee, Councilor Susan Smiley, and Councilor Dennis Smith for their contributions.

She added that she is not sure the finance budget recommendations should be included in the Strategic Oversight Plan as they do in the draft, saying that the recommendation includes its own goals that are redundant in the Strategic Oversight Plan. She recommended pulling it out of the plan since it will be a standalone document which allows them to take out the redundancy.

Councilor Buckley said that this was a good point, and that the Council’s web presence can include both the recommendations and the oversight plan.

Chair Wilson asked if a list of priorities should be included in the front of the document. The list would be DCR’s role in climate change and biodiversity, working to improve the RMP process, and stakeholder engagement.

Councilor Canedy said that they should include an executive summary which was previously discussed. She added that she doesn’t think that the finance portion should be taken out, only that redundancies should be removed.

Councilor Buckley said that there should be a link to the finance recommendations and a note that they are done annually. He said that because of the different timelines, the documents don’t sync up. He added that one thing he thinks is missing from the draft is Council advocacy of funding for DCR. He agreed that the points Chair Wilson brought up should be an executive summary.

Chair Wilson noted that there is a bullet point that says “advocate for DCR resources and funds.”

Councilor Canedy expressed worry about having to move between two documents in order to see the financial recommendations.

Chair Wilson gave an example of the difference in priorities between the two documents and how they also overlap.

Councilor Canedy asked if the link would provide more specific information on the finance information in the Oversight Plan.

Chair Wilson said yes, and that there will be new budget recommendations next year that won’t be reflected in the Strategic Oversight Plan.

Councilor Crane mentioned that there was supposed to be a consultant hired for the capital project backlog and that has not happened yet. He said that this would be something worth mentioning in the oversight plan since it is multiyear and not just an annual budget.

Chair Wilson asked for clarification for the purpose of the RFP that Councilor Crane referred to.

Councilor Buckley said that the purpose is to construct a dashboard to access how projects progress. He added that the Council should figure out how to highlight some of the things that are being discussed as priorities for the Commissioner.

Councilor Crane asked if there was a name for the RFP.

Mr. Perry responded that he will check the Finance Committee meeting minutes and will ask Patrice Kish for a status update and will report back.

Councilor Doherty said that he agrees with Councilor Buckley that a link back to the website will make it easier to read the budget recommendations.

Councilor Collins said it is important to separate out the detail and reflect on the power of the document as a strategic plan for the council without getting into the weeds. He said that there is big stuff that they would like to see addressed over the next couple of years, and that they should keep focus on the role of the document.

Chair Wilson said that she asked Councilor Buckley about talking to Commissioner Arrigo about Oversight Plan.

Councilor Buckley said that he did, and that he will bring it up with him again saying that he wants him to have a heads up and doesn’t want any surprises. He said that he speaks with the commissioner every two weeks and that it is constructive.

Chair Wilson asked Mr. Perry if he had any word on the public comment process.

Mr. Perry shared his screen and showed the committee the DCR public comment website and said that they could collect comments through there. (<https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>)

Chair Wilson asked if there was anything else that the committee would like to discuss.

Councilor Crane said that he was confused about when Councilor terms expire, saying he was surprised that his end date was not further in the future.

Councilor Canedy suggested that he may have taken over for someone who left before their term was up.

Councilor Buckley agreed, saying that he took over a five-year term.

Chair Wilson said that all councilor’s terms currently expire in 2025 except for Councilor Smith. She noted that they put in the document that this was a risk to the Council and that it needs a legislative fix.

Councilor Crane asked if you can be reappointed.

Councilor Buckley said yes, saying that Councilor Smith was.

Chair Wilson wondered if anyone from the Office of Boards and Commissions knows that this is going to happen.

Councilor Collins suggested that one of the strategic objectives should be to work with the Office of Boards and Commissions to create a five-year plan to fix the problem.

Chair Wilson said that the fix needs to come from the legislature because the terms are in statute.

Councilor Buckley said that they need legislation to stagger the terms.

Chair Wilson said that they were working on legislative changes for the Council but lost momentum. She also said that they should add a bullet point that the Council supports all of the Strategic Readiness Initiative and its full funding, and that they would like updates on it going forward.

Councilor Crane said that although they support all of it, they should note that they need to prioritize.

Chair Wilson said that they would like an opportunity to hear about how it’s being prioritized and to express views on that.

Councilor Buckley commented that the council should make a point that while the Strategic Readiness Initiative and the Special Commission Report create a roadmap, from that roadmap there needs to be priorities.

Chair Wilson asked if the committee would like to see another draft before it goes to the full council on Thursday, July 13.

Councilor Canedy said that she thinks it is more important to send to the full committee for discussion on Thursday and if there are objections, they can be talked about then.

Councilor Buckley said there were some style issues but it should be okay to send.

Chair Wilson asked if there were any other changes, that they be sent to her by noon, and that she would work with Mr. Perry to get it to the whole council.

Councilor Buckley said that there should be something in the introduction noting that the council is appointed by the governor, and that it is a venue for the public to comment on DCR.

Chair Wilson said that she thought it would be better to move data and information about parks being good for wellbeing to the top of the document, and that the data needs a citation.

Councilor Buckley said that one source is the Special Commission Report. He added that he is interested to see what the public thinks about it.

Councilor Crane said that it weaves the history of the council and the forward goals of the council very well.

Councilor Buckley said that it lays out important progress that they’ve made in terms of schedule, budget, and trying to be as transparent as they can be.

Chair Wilson said that she is excited to get it out to the full council and that it reflects a lot of work by everyone.

Councilor Collins asked what the request to the full council is related to the document.

Chair Wilson said that it will depend on what the extent of the comment is.

Councilor Collins said that if they created a deadline for Councilors, would two weeks suffice.

Chair Wilson said that if they want to approve it at the September 14 meeting of the council, the latest they can start the public comment period is August 11, so two weeks seems reasonable.

Councilor Collins asked if the public would be commenting on the version that they had, or if councilor comments would be integrated into the public version.

Chair Wilson said that if comments are light, they can approve it for release with the small changes. If there is a larger dispute, she said they can slow down the process and revisit it.

Councilor Buckley said that he thinks they can take a vote to include any significant changes that are made. He said they could approve the substance and accept editorial changes as they go along. He added that he thinks that they need a short paragraph at the beginning to say what the Strategic Oversight Plan is and what it is for. He said that the public may want to include items that don’t necessarily belong there. He said it should be clear up front what is being commented on.

Chair Wilson asked Mr. Perry to prepare a cover letter outlining the purpose of the document for the public.

## Councilor Comments

Councilor Collins told the committee that the letter to the commissioner about the open environmental seat would be going out after one more signature is added. He asked about the Natural Resources Committee and if after the last seat was filled, if there would be capacity for it.

Councilor Buckley said that the Council can create whatever committee it wants and that after the appointment is done, they can revisit it. He said he has some questions about how it will work, noting that he needs people for the finance committee.

Chair Wilson said that the Natural Resources committee could be an extra committee for councilors, and that members would have to serve on one of the other committees as well.

Councilor Crane said that he enjoys being on the Finance Committee and that he does not want to give it up.

## Adjournment

Councilor Canedy made a motion to adjourn.

Councilor Collins seconded.

Chair Wilson thank everyone for their attendance 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*](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council)