# 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, Dan Cushing, Paul Cavanagh

## Public Attendees: Chris Redfern, Chris Sumner

## 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 made a motion to approve the April 30, 2024 meeting minutes.

Councilor Collins seconded.

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

Councilor Collins: Yes

Councilor Canedy: Yes

Councilor Doherty: Yes

Chair Wilson: Yes

The April minutes were approved.

## Resource Management Plans

Resource Management Planner Paul Cavanagh joined the committee to discuss the progress of RMPs.

Mr. Cavanagh said that the public meeting process has changed because of Secretary Tepper’s Environmental Justice Program, so now outreach needs to be done in other languages and translation needs to be available during the meetings. He said that he was working with Dan Cushing to resolve this and asked Dan if he had anything to add.

Mr. Cushing said that they are working on language access and have had some meetings. He said for capital projects, it is usually the job of the consultant that is working on the project to help with translation. He said that they are working to get a formalized process in place.

Chair Wilson asked about why other projects are moving forward with translation services while RMP meetings are on hold.

Mr. Cushing said that there needs to be coordination with EEA to rectify language issues and that his job is working with project coordinators internally to coordinate projects and public meetings.

Mr. Cavanagh said that the RMP program does not have consultants the way that capital projects do, and that is what allows these other meetings to move forward. When those projects go out to bid, language services are required. He said that Mr. Cushing has been great with the process and helping the RMP program figure it out.

Councilor Buckley asked if EEA has done anything to assist with the translation services where there is no contract to cover it.

Mr. Cavanagh said that EEA has created an umbrella policy and that it is up to the individual agencies on how to handle it. He said that DCR has some funding for translation services but that they are still in the process of figuring out what the specific steps are.

Councilor Buckley asked who runs the program at EEA.

Mr. Cavanagh said that he is not sure and added that they are implementing this in the spirit and the requirements of Environmental Justice and want to make sure that they get it right.

Mr. Cavanagh also spoke about the movement of the plans and other issues that they have faced. He said that there have been changes proposed as to how RMPs get reviewed. He said that a signoff sheet has been created for each department to sign off on before it is ready to move forward, and that some departments are more engaged than others so when it is time for the signoff, these other departments want more time to review before signing. Going forward, where it would just be Deputy Commissioner Geigis would review, it is now a core team that will review and make sure that all comments are taken into account. He said that they don’t want to send something out that is not the agency’s official position, and that they are doing everything they can to make sure they get participation from all departments at the agency.

Councilor Canedy asked if the document is fluid once it is signed off on, or if there is room for change?

Mr. Cavanagh said that the RMPs capture a moment in time and that the information from the plans are added to the Stewardship Map. He added that the copy reviewed by the council is the only one that has approval.

Councilor Buckley said that the Council had wanted to have a “light process” compared to how the old RMPs were prepared because they wanted them to be able to change over time.

Mr. Cavanagh said that once the plans are added to the Stewardship Map, that’s the part that changes as part of the GIS layers, etc. He said that they have an incredible hurtle in front of them with 200 plans needing to be done. He said for some of the properties, this will be the only document that comes before the Stewardship Council, but others will need to be updated more frequently.

Chair Wilson said that Mr. Cavanagh may not be the person to address the committee’s frustrations with the process, adding that the goal was to get plans in place for all properties so the council could then focus on implementation and monitoring. She said that the frustration is when one plan is held up, there is a ripple effect that holds up everything.

Councilor Buckley offered that the council can bring their frustrations to the Commissioner and ask him about where he sees the program going. He said that he talks to the Commissioner every two weeks and can ask him questions the committee has.

Mr. Cavanagh said that there is a desire in the agency for everyone to see and approve the plans, and that the intent is to provide the most accurate information to the commissioner, council, and then the public.

Councilor Buckley said that they need to strike a balance.

## Rodenticide Usage on DCR Properties

Councilor Collins said that Eric Seaborn, Director of Natural Resources at DCR, and some of his colleagues at Mass Audubon are prepared to give a presentation about rodenticides to the council.

Chair Wilson asked if the presentation would come to the committee before going to the full council.

Councilor Collins said yes, they would have the presentation and then prepare a recommendation for the agency. He said the goal is to elevate the issue at the right pace for the Commissioner to weigh in, and so that they can study it and hand over a policy or at least recommendations for changes. He said he has spoken with Mr. Seaborn to lay the groundwork.

Councilor Crane said that it is an important issue to understand and to see what other options there are for rodent management. He said that what DCR does can be picked up by other agencies.

## Be Kind

Chair Wilson said she wanted to follow up on where things were left off with the Middlesex Fells caucus related to the Be Kind campaign. She invited Chris Redfern, Executive Director of the Friends of the Fells to speak.

Mr. Redfern said that the Friends of the Middlesex Fells and the Friends of the Blue Hills are coordinating and branding stewardship events as “Be Kind” events. He said that the group Mass Parks for All helped to launch a new friends group at Callahan State Park and that they are looking to integrate them into the campaign. He said that they are committed to working with DCR to keep things moving.

Chair Wilson thanked Mr. Redfern for the update.

## Councilor Comments

Councilor Collins said that he will reach out to Mr. Seaborn and see if he is able to meet with the committee on July 30 or August 7.

## Adjournment

Chair Wilson thanked 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)