# **May Meeting Minutes**

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Jennifer Wilson, Dicken Crane, Melissa Harper, Susan Smiley, Vivian Ortiz, Dennis Smith, Jeff Collins, Ann Canedy, Phil Doherty, Kevin O’Shea

Council Members Absent: Ted Dooley

DCR Staff Attendees: Brian Arrigo, Kim Hanton, Chloe Gotsis, Matt Perry, Nick Connors, Don Kent, Priscilla Geigis, Rob Lowell, Dan Wright, Bill Salomaa

Public Attendees as Registered**:** Chris Redfern, Bill Boles, Chris Egan, Chuck Anastas, Denis LaForce, Doug Pizzi, Glen Ayers, Janet Sinclair, Jen Ryan, Maria Lyons, Sarah Freeman, Sean McCanty, Steve Engel, Susan Wilkinson, Suzanne Gall Marsh

## Call to Meeting, 9:00am – Chair Jack Buckley

Chair Buckley welcomed everyone to the meeting and did a roll call of councilors. He welcomed Commissioner Brian Arrigo to DCR and said that he had a chance to speak with him on the phone and is looking forward to working with him. Chair Buckley spoke about the creation of a new organization called Mass Parks for All which was created by the Mass Conservation Voters and will raise funds to match grants from DCR. He also mentioned that the June meeting will include a one-hour meeting with the Fisheries and Wildlife Board and that he has spoken with Board Chair Steve Sears to plan the meeting. The meeting will be held on June 8 from 4pm-5pm with the Stewardship Council meeting following from 5pm-7pm. He also went over the guidelines for public comments, and said he had the opportunity to speak to a class at UMass Amherst about the Stewardship Council. Chair Buckley then invited Commissioner Arrigo to update the council.

## DCR Report – Brian Arrigo, Commissioner

Commissioner Arrigo thanked the Council and chair for inviting him to speak. He said he looks forward to meeting everyone in-person and working with the Council. Commissioner Arrigo said that he comes to DCR from the City of Revere, and that his time as Mayor and as a partner with DCR through Revere Beach has prepared him for this position. He spoke about getting out and seeing the properties across the state and invited the Stewardship Council to join him. Commissioner Arrigo shared his vision for DCR, and thinking about how DCR properties sit at the intersection of climate, public health, equity, and economic opportunity, and how quality of life improvements can be made for Massachusetts residents at DCR parks.

Commissioner Arrigo invited chief of staff Kim Hanton to introduce herself to the council. Ms. Hanton said that she is very excited to be working with the council and looks forward to their journey together.

Commissioner Arrigo invited Communications Director Chloe Gotsis to introduce herself to the council. Ms. Gotsis said that she is thrilled to be at the agency and that she was able to start with Commissioner Arrigo and Ms. Hanton. She is excited about the work that they are going to be able to do together at DCR.

He then gave an update on recent activities at the agency.

### Park Serve Day

Park Serve Day was held on April 22 and was a great success this year. Almost 4000 volunteers spent their Saturdays picking up trash, removing invasives, planting flowers and trees, and doing various other projects to get our parks ready for the busy spring and summer seasons. Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll attended the event at Breakheart Reservation and helped plant a maple tree that will one day be tapped for their annual maple sugar program. She also took time to visit and take pictures with volunteers and staff, and had some pizza provided by the Friends of Breakheart. Commissioner Arrigo thanked all of the staff that worked hard to make this annual event so rewarding for our parks and volunteers.

### Leadership Academy

Commissioner Arrigo spoke about the Leadership Academy that happened on April 25, 2023 that more than 220 DCR staff members attended to share ideas and learn skills relevant to their positions in the agency.  Those in attendance shared thoughts about our Core Principles and learned from workshops on diversity equity and inclusion, climate, research, de-escalation, waterfront safety, conservation, maintenance sensitivity, and leadership. The keynote speaker was former Florida State Parks Director Donald Forgione. Commissioner Arrigo thanked the team that put together the event and said that it was an exciting way to spend his second day as Commissioner.

### Forestry

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) provided the following update concerning a forestry moratorium in Massachusetts:

“The Healey-Driscoll Administration is currently reviewing the forest management planning process and meeting with stakeholders to better implement climate-smart practices in forest management. The Administration is committed to open and transparent communication as Massachusetts works to ensure our natural and working lands are managed to maximize carbon sequestration and mitigate climate harms.”

### Lifeguard Recruitment

Commissioner Arrigo reported that DCR is ramping up its efforts to recruit lifeguards for state pools and beaches, adding that lifeguard recruitment messages are on billboards thanks to MassDOT, who is running electronic recruitment messages in more than 40 communities. Radio PSAs are also in the works. Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll who posted a video on social media about her own experience lifeguarding as a summer job. LG Driscoll also made an appearance on Magic 106.7 to talk about lifeguarding opportunities.

### Seasonal Position Recruitment

In addition to lifeguard jobs, Commissioner Arrigo said that there are open seasonal positions across the state that DCR is looking to fill before summer. The agency created the page [mass.gov/dcr-employment](https://www.mass.gov/dcr-employment) that provides information about seasonal opportunities and links to the listings on the Mass Careers website. DCR and EEA staff attended the MassHire job fair on May 18 in Quincy to promote the open positions.

### Move Update

DCR is officially out of its space at 251 Causeway Street and currently, many staff are working out of 100 Cambridge Street on the ninth floor which is a shared space for the agencies under EEA. Others in the agency are working remotely full time, and spaces at parks have been made available for meetings. The agency is scheduled to move into 10 Park Plaza at the beginning of June.

Commissioner Arrigo said that he has been blown away by the amount of energy and passion the staff at DCR has and that he is looking forward to the great work that is ahead.

Chair Buckley thanked the commissioner and welcomed him again. He said that many people attending the meeting are focused on supporting the parks so he is not alone in his job.

## Legislative Update – Matthew Perry, Manager of Stewardship Programs and Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Perry presented the Senate Committee on Ways and Means budget recommendation to the council and compared it to the House budget and Governor’s budget recommendation.

**2800-0100 – Operating Costs**

Gov: $6,630,306

Final House: $7,188,306 ($558,000 in earmarks, actual funding $6,630,306)

Senate W&M: $6,543,734

**2800-0101 – Watershed Management**

Gov: $2,136,595

Final House: $2,086,594 ($150,000 in earmarks, actual funding $1,936,594)

Senate W&M: $1,566,595

**2800-0401 – Stormwater Management**

Gov: $499,762

Final House: $3,249,761

Senate W&M: $3,249,762

It is higher because that money was moved to different lines in H1.

**2800-0500 – Beaches**

Gov: $965,282

Final House: $1,405,231

Senate W&M: $965,282

**2800-0501 – Seasonals**

Gov: $24,385,117

Final House: $25,435,117 ($50,000 earmark)

Senate W&M: $24,325,119

**2800-0700 – Dam Safety:**

Gov: $675,676

Final House: $735,676 ($60,000 earmarks)

Senate W&M: $675,676

**2810-0100 – Division of Parks and Recreation**

Gov: $107,632,351

Final House: $103,087,782

Senate W&M: $104,882,351

**2810-0122 – Special Projects**

Final House: $3,560,000

Senate W&M: $100,000

This line is specifically for earmarks.

**2820-0101 – State House Rangers**

Gov: $2,692,063

Final House: $2,692,063

Senate W&M: $2,692,063

**2820-2000 – Park way lights**

Gov: $4,330,000

Final House: $4,330,000

Senate W&M: $3,730,000

After Mr. Perry presented, Chair Buckley commended the Governor for the increased funding that was recommended for the agency in her proposed budget.

## Regular Business I

### Presentation on the DCR Research Office, Don Kent, Director of Research and Daniel Wright, Research Coordinator

Mr. Kent and Mr. Wright gave a presentation updating the Council on the DCR Research Office and the work that is being done to organize and promote DCR’s research efforts.

### After the presentation concluded, Councilors were given the opportunity for questions and comments.

Councilor Crane asked if the dashboard that was talked about was available for DCR staff only.

Mr. Kent responded yes, and said they could look into making it available to Councilors.

Councilor Crane said that he is glad that the dashboard is being created and that it looks like a really valuable tool to access current and past research.

Councilor Wilson commented that the programmatic focus on research is exciting, and that it would be great to share it with the public when appropriate. She said that there is an opportunity to promote the people doing the research at DCR as experts who are focused, curious, and open minded.

Mr. Kent responded that there has been talk about doing that and doing things like story maps and other communications to let people know what the office is doing. He added that DCR would like to be a preferred partner for academics and a good partner for its sister agencies.

Councilor Collins said that he directs similar work at Mass Audubon and that he recognizes the benefits and challenges of putting together all the information. He said that he will be reaching out to learn more about the dashboard and to see if Mass Audubon can collaborate with DCR.

Mr. Kent said that the thinking is to develop deep relationships with key partners and that Mass Audubon is high on the list after DCR’s sister agencies in state government.

### Presentation on the DCR Office of Dam Safety, Bill Salomaa, Office of Dam Safety Director & Rob Lowell, Deputy Chief, Design & Engineering

Director of the Office of Dam Safety Bill Salomaa gave a presentation giving an overview of the Office of Dam Safety.

### After the presentation concluded, Councilors were given the opportunity for questions and comments.

Councilor Collins asked about the office removing dams for ecological value and if there is more that can be done to encourage dam removal.

Mr. Salomaa said that they work closely with DER on dams that are high hazard and can be removed, but that there are many state parks where the dam is the anchor of the park because it provides a waterbody for recreation. He said that they struggle with removal vs. repair, but that doesn’t mean that they don’t want to remove small dams to restore streams, and that when dams on the high hazard list are dilapidated, they recommend that the dam gets removed.

Councilor Collins also requested that the GIS data related to dams be updated.

Mr. Salomaa said that they are working on that and will be keeping removed dams on the map noting that it has been removed instead of erasing it completely.

Councilor Wilson asked if Mr. Salomaa could comment on practices or policies that it takes when it inspects its own dams.

Mr. Salomaa said that any dam at DCR that needs repair is immediately added to the capital project list and that there is separate staff that handles the regulatory piece and the management piece of dams.

Councilor Smiley asked if dam information is in the AMMP system.

Mr. Salomaa said that currently it is not and that the data in GIS needs to be updated for that to happen.

Mr. Lowell said that is an ongoing conversation and that they are working with the AMMP program to integrate the data.

Councilor Crane asked if it would be possible for the council to see a list of dams and where they are and to share that list with the public.

Mr. Salomaa said that they can put that information together through the DCR public records request.

### Approval of Minutes

The approval of the April meeting minutes was postponed until the June meeting of the Stewardship Council.

### Public Comment

[Guidelines for Public Comment are available on the DCR Stewardship Council website.](https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcr-stewardship-council-public-comment-guidelines/download)

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

* Janet Sinclair, Buckland
* Sarah Freeman, Jamaica Plain
* Glen Ayers, Greenfield
* Bill Boles, Sandwich
* Chris Egan, Mass Forestry Alliance
* Maria Lyons, Dorchester
* Doug Pizzi, Mass Conservation Voters

## Regular Business II

### Committee Updates

Policy

The committee is working on drafting the Strategic Oversight Plan and has been in touch with the other committees regarding it. There will be a public comment period for the document once it is drafted.

Stakeholders

The committee discussed the Strategic Oversight Plan and received the list of DCR partners and friends which they are looking at and refreshing. They would like to see the SRI focus on partnerships relit and are looking to influence the further expansion of the FTE cap to expand the partnerships office.

Finance

The committee will be holding a budget forum on May 25, 2023 from 6pm-8pm. The forum is to get input on things that should change in the DCR budget for FY2025. It serves as an opportunity for people to weigh in on the budget. Councilor Buckley said a letter was sent to House Ways and Means about the budget and asked if they should send a letter to Senate Ways and Means as well.

### Letter to Senate Ways and Means

Councilor Wilson moved that the Council send a letter to Senate Ways and Means asking for increased funding for DCR.

Councilor Smith seconded the motion.

The motion passes and a letter will be drafted and sent.

### Councilor Comments

Councilor Wilson noted that she really appreciates having in person meetings and feels that it makes the process and engagement easier and friendlier. She knows it is not as convenient but she appreciates being able to meet in person.

Councilor Smith asked about the meeting next month now being scheduled for 4pm.

Chair Buckley said that the meeting with Fish and Wildlife will run from 4:00pm-4:50pm with a 10 minute break before the council meeting.

Councilor Smith suggested that councilors arrive at 3:45 and that there be coffee for a chance to socialize before the meeting.

Councilor Crane said that he is having knee replacement surgery the day before the meeting but he hopes to attend remotely. He asked if it would be possible to get a list of amendments and numbers so a note can be sent to State Reps and Senators.

Councilor Collins said that he hopes that Commissioner Arrigo and the Office of Dam Safety can use their leverage to help folks lean in to dam removal. He said it is an important part of biodiversity goals.

Councilor O’Shea welcomed Commissioner Arrigo and said he is excited to meet him in person soon.

## Adjournment

Councilor Collins made a motion to adjourn.

Councilor Smith seconded the motion.

The Council adjourned until their next meeting on June 8 at 5pm at 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.

Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council>