# May 2, 2025 Stakeholder Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Susan Smiley, Laura Jasinski, Dennis Smith, Vivian Ortiz, Melissa Harper

Other Councilors Present: Dicken Crane

DCR Staff Attendees: Matthew Perry, Cindy Dalton, Paul Fahey

Members of the Public: Alexis

## Call to Order – Committee Chair Susan Smiley

Chair Smiley welcomed the attendees, took attendance of Councilors, and went over the meeting agenda.

## **Update from Council Chair Dicken Crane**

Councilor Crane said that he has worked with Senator Paul Mark to file a budget amendment that would change councilor term lengths from seven years to five years.

Councilor Ortiz asked if a member of the House of Representatives needs to be contacted.

Mr. Perry said that since it is being submitted into the Senate budget, a member of the house is not needed, and if it is passed by the Senate, it will be included in the Conference Committee negotiations.

## Approval of Minutes

Councilor Jasinski moved to approve the January 24, 2025 meeting minutes.

Chair Harper seconded the motion.

The January minutes were approved.

## Introductions from Paul Fahey and Cindy Dalton

Director of Partnerships Paul Fahey and North Region Legislative and Partnership Coordinator Cindy Dalton introduced themselves and spoke about their roles. Mr. Fahey noted that the partnerships team is almost completely filled out with new positions coming on board.

Chair Smiley thanked them for being there. She said that she was able to attend the Leadership Academy and met the West & Central Region Legislative and Partnership Coordinator Mackenzie Greer while she was there. She said that going forward, they would like to coordinate one of the Council’s meetings with the academy so the whole council can attend and meet with staff.

## Partnership Presentation Requests

Mr. Perry reported that they received a request from the Friends of Fairsted, a group associated with the Frederick Law Olmsted Fairsted property in Brookline. This property is part of the National Parks Service.

Councilor Harper asked what the connection to DCR is.

Mr. Perry said that the only connection is historical, and has to do with Frederick Law Olmsted’s role in the creation of the state park system in Massachusetts.

Councilor Jasinski suggested that their presentation could focus on how their partnership could be beneficial to DCR in the future.

Councilor Harper added that it could speak to how their work relates to DCR in a holistic way and how their work complements what DCR does.

Chair Smiley agreed saying that they can find out how they can all work together.

Councilor Jasinski said that as Mr. Fahey and Ms. Dalton do their work and find common themes that come up, how can the Stakeholders Committee highlight that work and make it part of DCR’s priorities. She asked if there is a way to be strategic about which kinds of presentations get put forward.

Mr. Fahey said that they are looking at the partnership process from an agency perspective and want to present it to the committee at some point in the future. He said that they want to be supportive of the committee’s role and that it’s an ongoing conversion that they’ll be having.

Councilor Crane said that Frederick Law Olmstead was very important in the public lands movement in the turn of the 20th century and that there is a relationship between his work and what DCR is working on now.

Councilor Smith said it was difficult and asked if this was the only partnership presentation currently on the list.

Mr. Perry said that Boston Harbor Now will be presenting at the June meeting on Peddocks Island.

Councilor Smith asked if the Friends of Fairsted are really a DCR partner.

Mr. Perry said no that it is more of a grey area.

Councilor Smith said that he hopes the partnership staff will be helpful in getting presentations that are helpful to the council.

Councilor Jasinski said that she likes the idea of associating the space where they are meeting with the presentation like they are doing for the Harbor Islands. She asked if for the upcoming meeting in Amherst if they could do the same.

Councilor Crane said that he might know of someone who would be good for a presentation at that meeting.

Chair Smiley asked if Mr. Perry and Mr. Fahey could work together on working with this organization to see if they can highlight the concerns that the committee has.

Mr. Fahey said that his concern is what their purpose of coming to the council is, and that if they are looking for a partnership, they should be contacting him and his team initially. He said that they are looking to change the way they work with partners by highlighting certain locations where partners are needed and instead of people approaching DCR and saying, “this is what we’d like you to do,” the agency can highlight what is needed instead.

Chair Smiley said that she is getting anxious to hear from Mr. Fahey and his team to know what their goals are and where the program is moving. She said it would be a wonderful presentation to the full council.

Mr. Fahey said that he feels they are not ready for a presentation yet as they are still filling out the team. He said that they would like to continue having the conversations and working through the process.

Councilor Jasinski said she appreciates what Mr. Fahey is saying but also seconds what Chair Smiley said. She said they’d like to get an update on what has been happening and connect it to the work that partners are doing in the field that can apply to partner groups across the state.

Mr. Fahey clarified that what Councilor Jasinski was asking for is a kind of progress report about where they are and the schedule of work.

Councilor Jasinski said yes, that there are a lot of questions including about partnership matching funds, and that they’d like to hear the progress of what is happening.

Councilor Ortiz said that there has been a long conversation about memorandums of understanding and many groups are wondering if that is something that is happening, so a check-in on something like that would be helpful. She said that she loves the idea of DCR letting partners know what they are looking for in a partnership.

Chair Smiley thanked Mr. Fahey and said that the committee’s activity hinges on what is happening with the partnership team at the agency and that they’d like to work with them to structure it together.

Councilor Harper said that she hears Mr. Fahey’s concern about presenting in a public environment when everything is not ready, but that she hopes that he thinks of the committee as part of his team and as a resource to him. She asked if there could be a more informal progress report that happens at the committee meetings before a larger presentation to the full council which will help keep things moving. She added that on the Fairsted presentation, if there is not an immediate relevant topic, they could accept the offer of having the property host a future meeting and have them give the history then. She said it could help build the relationship with DCR without putting too much pressure on it.

Chair Smiley said that she thinks it would be good for Mr. Fahey to speak with them and come back with a revised time and discussion point.

Councilor Harper agreed.

Mr. Perry and Mr. Fahey will contact the Friends of Fairsted.

## Councilor Terms

Mr. Perry met with Commissioner Arrigo and Deputy Chief of Staff Gianni Hill to discuss term renewals. Anyone who wanted to have their term renewed has been sent to the Governor’s office for review. Mr. Perry created a document outlining the Council’s role that can be given to prospective new councilors.

Chair Smiley asked how many councilors are up for reappointment.

Councilor Harper said that five have been submitted to the Governor.

Councilor Smith noted that there are five up for reappointment, three whose terms do not expire this year, and five open seats.

Councilor Harper clarified that not all five whose terms are up are immediate vacancies, three councilors said they will continue to serve until their seats are filled.

Councilor Smith said that he was very concerned about this six months ago, but that Councilor Harper and DCR staff have done a great job of taking care of it.

Councilor Harper said that if there is anyone that would like to be nominated that councilors to talk to, they can get in touch with her and Mr. Perry to help add them to the pipeline.

## Other Business

Chair Smiley said that because the June meeting has been moved to June 26, it would be good to move the July meeting to a later date as well so they are not meeting twice in three weeks.

Councilors Smith and Harper agreed that July 24th would be a good date.

Councilor Smith said that he thinks it would be helpful to have some kind of org chart that can be used to know staff and where they sit in the agency. He said it would be helpful especially with new councilors coming on.

Mr. Perry said that he will bring what he has to the committee.

Chair Smiley spoke about the Leadership Academy and the potential for holding a meeting at it so the entire council can attend.

Councilor Smith said that he agrees and that it was done like this in the past. He said it would be great for them to have interactions with the staff at the academy.

Chair Smiley said that if anyone is interested in chairing the committee to let her know.

## Adjournment

Councilor Smith moved to adjourn the meeting.

Councilor Ortiz seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned.

*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)