# May 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Susan Smiley, Vivian Ortiz, Dennis Smith

Other Councilors Present: Jack Buckley

DCR Staff Attendees: Matthew Perry, Nick Connors

## Public Attendees as Registered: Bill Boles, Glen Ayers, Celeste Venolia, Judy Lehrer Jacobs, Jack Carr, Buzz Constable, Laura Jasinski

## Call to Order – Committee Chair Susan Smiley

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

## Approval of Minutes

The committee deferred the approval of the April meeting minutes until the next meeting.

## Stewardship Council Planning Matrix

Chair Smiley asked the committee if they had any other items to add to the Stakeholder Committee portion of the Stewardship Council Matrix that is being prepared. The committee did not have any additions.

## Partnership Update

The Committee Members were provided with a list of DCR partners and friends groups prior to the meeting.

Chair Smiley asked what the difference between partners and friends is.

Mr. Connors responded that there was no real difference, that both engage in volunteering and supporting DCR land and take part in stewardship activities.

Councilor Smith asked if the list was up to date.

Mr. Perry responded that the list he provided predates his time with DCR so he is not sure how accurate it currently is, but that he will work to update it.

Councilor Smith suggested adding a sentence or two about each group on the list.

Chair Smiley added that a date should be kept on the list so that it is clear when it was last updated.

Councilor Smith asked if the list could be added to the website where comments for improvement or changes could be solicited.

Mr. Connors responded that there is a plan to create a Smartsheet that would allow each group to update their own information.

Jack Carr, a member of the public, asked whether this list is a public document.

Mr. Connors responded that DCR is updating the document before it is made public so all of the information is correct and up to date.

## Update on Strategic Readiness Initiative and Office of Outdoor Recreation

Chair Smiley asked for an update on the Strategic Readiness Initiative and the Office of Outdoor Recreation.

Mr. Connors responded that the idea is now that the Strategic Readiness Initiative has been operationalized so there won’t be any more scrums happening. Because of that, there was no substantive update to give at this time. In addition, there was no update on the Office of Outdoor Recreation which is an EEA initiative.

Chair Smiley said that many good things came out of the Strategic Readiness Initiative and that the committee is interested in the progress going forward.

## Stakeholder Budget Recommendations

In response to the Finance Committee’s Budget Forum being held on May 25, Chair Smiley said that a priority of the Stakeholders Committee is ensuring funding for jobs within the Partnership Office and that the committee will help with any opportunity that they have to be a proponent for this.

Mr. Connors said that one issue with filling the roles is the agency’s FTE cap. He noted that at the current rate of hiring, DCR is getting close to reaching it and that it will have to be raised again.

Councilor Buckley said that this is the third year of budget recommendations made by the Stewardship Council. He asked that councilors look at the last two years of recommendations and see what can be added or changed.

Chair Smiley added that there used to be annual or biannual friends meetings and that she would like to see that happen again.

Chairman Buckley shared details about the budget forum.

Chair Smiley asked Mr. Perry to add “Contributions to the Annual Budget” to the Stakeholders portion of the Council Matrix.

## Presentation Requests

Mr. Perry reported that no new requests had been submitted, the only one is the outstanding request from CRWA about the Watertown Dam and that DCR is waiting for the Commissioner to meet with CRWA and be briefed on the subject before there is a presentation at the meeting.

Councilor Buckley said that he spoke with Jen Ryan from CRWA and said that a presentation from the group should be about the breadth of the partnership and how they work with DCR.

Member of the public Bill Boles expressed interest in having the New England Mountain Bikers Association (NEMBA) present at a meeting.

Chair Smiley asked if Don Kent, head of the DCR research office would be presenting at the May Stewardship Council meeting.

Mr. Perry said yes, and the Office of Dam Safety would also present.

## Public Comment Period at Meetings

Councilor Smith said that the work the committee did on the public comment period at Council meetings and that he thought it went well during the previous meeting.

Councilor Buckley agreed and said that the timer he used worked.

Councilor Ortiz said that the Council can also receive written comments and asked if they do receive them.

Mr. Perry responded yes and gave the example of the recent Riverbend Park comments that were submitted in writing.

## New Business

Councilor Smiley said that she has been asked to provide information for the Strategic Oversight plan that is being created by the Policy Committee.

Mr. Perry said that he would send committee members of the latest oversight plan from 2020.

Chair Smiley asked about DCR’s policy with electric bicycles.

Mr. Connors responded that there is a map on the DCR website that shows what trails eBikes can be used on, adding that the trails need to be paved in order for eBikes to be permitted. The website and map are available here: <https://www.mass.gov/e-bikes-on-dcr-property>.

## Public Comment

Glen Ayers of Greenfield commented that he and his wife are involved in a DCR funded program to plant trees in urban areas, and that his wife may be interested in presenting to the full council about this program.

## Adjournment

Councilor Smiley thank everyone for their attendance and said the next Stakeholders meeting would be on June 2.

It was noted that before the June 8, 2023 Council Meeting, the Fish and Wildlife Board will hold a joint meeting at 4:00pm.

Chair Smiley 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)