



November Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Jennifer Wilson, Vivian Ortiz, Dicken Crane, Jeff Collins, Susan Smiley, Ted Dooley

Council Members Absent: Melissa Harper, Ann Canedy, Dennis Smith

DCR Staff Attendees: Nick Conners, Matthew Perry, Doug Rice, Paul Cavanaugh, Julie Martin, Mary Cardwell, Sarah White, Jessica Rowcroft

Public Attendees as Registered: Janet Sinclair, Miriam Kurland, Sarah Freeman, Glen Ayers, Suzanne Gall Marsh, Chuck Anastas, Lizzie Roach, Chris Redfern, David, Laurel Facey, Bill Boles, Julia Obrien, Neil Good, Lynne Man, Roderick McLean

Call to Meeting, 9:07am – Chair Jack Buckley

Chair Buckley welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He informed the councilors present that Councilors Harper, Canedy, and Smith would not be able to attend and took an attendance roll call to ensure that a quorum was present. He spoke about a walk he took in the Middlesex Fells with Friends of the Fells Executive Director Chris Redfern in October and informed the council that later in the meeting, they would be creating a nominating committee for the purpose of selecting officers for the next year.

DCR Report – Doug Rice, Commissioner

Commissioner Rice thanked the council and its chair. He congratulated Governor Elect Healey and Lt. Governor Elect Driscoll on their election victory and said that DCR is excited to be a partner in a transition from the Baker administration to the new administration. Commissioner Rice proceeded to give the following updates to the council:

Veteran's Day

Keeping with a longstanding tradition, waived parking fees on November 11 for all veterans and park users in recognition of Veteran's Day.

Head of the Charles Regatta

An estimated 200,000 attended the event to watch the 11,000 athletes from around the world who came to compete. The three-day event was also assisted by 1,700 volunteers and dozens of DCR staff.

Ernestina Morrissey

Built in Essex in 1894, the Schooner Ernestina Morrissey (originally named Effie M. Morrissey) was a Grand Banks fisher, an Arctic expeditionary vessel, and a World War II survey vessel and was voted as “the official vessel of the Commonwealth” in 1982. DCR’s predecessor agency, DEM, was charged with her stewardship.

The historic wooden schooner was officially transferred through legislation (Ch.116 of the Acts of 2020 – An Act to Preserve the Schooner Ernestina Morrissey) from DCR to Mass Maritime Academy (MMA) on July 8, 2020. Since that time, and prior, DCR has been managing a multi-year and multi-million-dollar contract to restore her so that she may sail again and be used as an education and training vessel for MMA. MMA now assumes contract administration for the remainder of the restoration at Boothbay Harbor in Maine with an expected return to Massachusetts before winter.

Strategic Readiness Update

DCR’s FTE count has increased by 42 new employees since June. This is the highest FTE count (910) the agency has experienced since the early retirement incentive program in 2015 (966 in 2015, 895 in 2016). 49 of the 50 Long Term Seasonal conversion positions have been filled and nearly 40 of the 50 critical positions are currently posted to Mass Careers so it is anticipated that count to continue to grow. A recruitment campaign is being highlighted on DCR social media and with a video on our YouTube channel.

DCR is creating a research office, meeting one of the goals of the Strategic Readiness Initiative. The team is conducting a staff survey to find out what research is already being done, and what research staff would like to see done in the future. In addition, on December 6 from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, DCR will be holding its first ever Research Symposium virtually. Matt Perry will be sending the Save the Date with more information about this event.

Landscape Designation Process

The process will not be ready for presentation at the December Council meeting, but an update will be giving on timing and plans.

Northeast State Park Association Annual Meeting

Massachusetts hosted the annual meeting of the Northeast State Park Association where the Directors and members of their senior team were invited to join other northeast states to exchange ideas and to share challenges and opportunities with each other. 25 people attended representing 11 states. The meeting included topics such as: experience economy, visitor experiences, diversity equity and inclusion, great ideas instituted during covid, recreational trends and more.

Go Green on Black Friday

On the day after Thanksgiving, DCR is presenting “Go Green on Black Friday” with a number of guided hikes happening at parks across the Commonwealth including Blue Hills Reservation in Milton, Borderland State Park in North Easton, Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls, Harold Parker State Forest in North Andover, and Nasketucket Bay State Reservation, in Mattapoisett. We are also currently planning our annual First Day Hikes and I will share those locations with you at our next meeting in December.

Charles River Speedway Award

The 1899 Charles River Speedway, preserved in partnership with Architectural Heritage Foundation (AHF) through DCR's Historic Curatorship Program, was honored by the Boston Preservation Alliance with their annual award, which was presented at a ceremony at the Speedway's Garage B on October 20th. This award, following a statewide award from Preservation Massachusetts earlier this year, highlighted DCR's role in developing public private partnerships that exhibit the agency's commitment to its cultural resource preservation mission. Kevin Allen and Grace McCabe represented DCR at the ceremony.

Economic Development Bill

DCR received \$210,000 for improvements to the John Boyle O'Reilly monument plaza in the Fenway, \$75,000 for the development of a landscape management plan for the Charles River conservation area between route 9 and route 16 in Newton, \$1,000,000 for the Leo J. Martin Memorial golf course in Weston, and \$333,000 for special projects in Parks and Recreation.

Audit from the State Auditor's Office

In an audit released on November 3, the State Auditor determined DCR was not ensuring that its contractors complied with the workforce participation goals and business ownership goals under state law. DCR is working to address this issue by creating policies and procedures to ensure that all contractors comply.

Doyle Park

DCR will receive 75% design submittal on 11/14, and after internal review, will start the environmental permitting process. DCR is also in conversations with neighbors and stakeholders about a public art piece that, in concert with the park's mural, will act as a landmark and create an inviting and playful character for the park.

Edgewater Park

DCR will receive the 75% Design Submittal for Edgewater Park at the end of December/beginning of January. Tree assessment is complete, and the design team is reviewing data. DCR is preparing the NOI for the archaeological survey which is a requirement of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. A public meeting is anticipated in early spring to update residents and stakeholders on the permitting progress and project schedule.

Councilor Questions and Comments

Chair Buckley asked for more details on the Research Office to be presented to the council in a future meeting. He asked how the funding given to DCR through the Economic Development bill aligns with DCR priorities and asked if they don't, do they take precedence over current priorities because the legislature passed them? Chairman Buckley then asked for an update on the Office of Green Transportation.

Deputy Commissioner Nick Connors answered that the Green Transportation Office is Dan Driscoll and is part of the Parkways Master Plan.

Chair Buckley also stated that he has received inquiries about the elimination of the Park Host Program from the public and would like more information about the program and why it was eliminated.

Councilor Jennifer Wilson asked for a snapshot of what the public comment has been like so far for the Landscape Designation process. She asked that the council be informed when DCR moves on to the next phase of the process.

Councilor Wilson also asked about information on forthcoming list of where eBikes are and are not allowed on DCR properties.

Councilor Vivian Ortiz spoke about the Pumpkin Parade event that happened at Pope John Paul Park in Dorchester on October 27 that Commissioner Rice also attended. Councilor Ortiz asked that in addition to hikes on Black Friday, could the program be expanded to include walks on DCR multi-use trails for those who live close to trails and not parks. She also expressed concern about the upcoming winter and wanted to make sure there was a plan for the clearing of paths.

Commissioner Rice informed the council that conversations about snow and ice removal have been ongoing, and that a meeting with the Governor on the topic is scheduled for November 17.

Regular Business I

Presentation from Sarah White, Director of Climate Resilience at DCR

Ms. White gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the DCR Office of Climate Resilience which provides support and expertise across DCR's Divisions and Bureaus ensuring climate change considerations are incorporated into department initiatives and projects.

The Office supports existing efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, leads the Department's Working Group charged with mitigating DCR's greenhouse gas emissions through the reduction or elimination of fossil fuel, electrification of heating systems and vehicles, installation, and expansion of renewable energy, among other elements, and works on statewide and agency level climate adaptation planning and policy. The Office serves as the primary liaison to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) related to the statewide climate assessment and State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (SHMCAP).

Ms. White also highlighted projects being undertaken by the office, including the DCR Statewide Heating System Decarbonization Initiative, a resilience strategy to improve Town Line Brook and Linden Brook in the cities of Revere, Malden, Everett, and Melrose, the DCR Parkways Vulnerability Assessment, and the Belle Isle Marsh Environmental Inventory, Coastal Modeling, and Restoration Assessment.

After the presentation concluding, Councilors were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Councilor Dicken Crane asked about the strategy of reducing the impacts of climate change through mitigation as opposed to focusing on greenhouse gas emission reduction, and how climate mitigation and carbon storage are balanced with wildlife management.

Ms. White responded that it is important to think about climate change mitigation and adaptation as occurring simultaneously, and that one cannot happen without the other. She noted that DCR has committed to reducing fossil fuel use through the Net Zero group that it is a part of, but that the

reduction is not easy because many critical operations, including snow removal, rely on fossil fuels, and that DCR is thinking of the best ways to buy down the costs of carbon.

Councilor Crane responded that he is concerned about land use and the conflict of land use goals as they relate to climate change, but he is glad to hear that DCR is really focused on using less fossil fuels.

Councilor Jeff Collins asked about the Belle Isle Marsh assessment and what their results might be. He asked about the conflicts between conservation and mitigating climate change while also making sites available to the public and recreational purposes.

Ms. White responded that there will be places where conflicts are found, and that the agency needs to work together across departments and not in silos in order to respond to those conflicts. She noted that everything being done is in a work group model, and although this makes things move slower, it creates a better result. Ms. White then gave the example of shorebird protection on Horseneck Beach in Westport, a beach that gets very busy over the summer months but where a group of shorebird spotters check for the birds everyday to make sure they are not affected by the recreational activities occurring on the beach. She noted how the recent meeting with the Northeast State Parks Association was a great opportunity to talk to other states about how they are handling the same issues we face in Massachusetts.

Councilor Ortiz commented that she is excited about the Parkways Vulnerability Assessment, especially as it relates to Morrissey Boulevard. She also commented that she would like to see park rangers on trails transition to using bikes instead of trucks noting that the space is too tight for trucks and that riding bicycles is a good way to build community. Councilor Ortiz would like to see DCR as an agency that is setting an example on climate change and asked what can be done to give park users tips and steps that they can take, as well as giving the idea to emphasize not taking cars to DCR properties by adding bike racks and directions to places via public transit.

In response to Councilor Crane's question about climate change mitigation and wildlife protection, Chairman Buckley suggested asking someone from MassWildlife to come and present on how they are working as an agency to manage climate change.

Approval of Minutes – September 26, 2022 meeting and October 13, 2022 meeting

Councilor Wilson said that she has contacted Matt Perry about minor typos she found and moved to approve the minutes.

Councilor Collins seconded the motion

Roll Call on Approval of Minutes

Councilor Wilson: Yes

Councilor Ortiz: Yes

Councilor Crane: Yes

Councilor Collins: Yes

Councilor Smiley: Yes

Councilor Dooley: Yes

Chairman Buckley: Yes

Discussion and Approval of Transition Recommendations

Chairman Buckley presented a document he created that outlines suggestions for the transition between the Current Baker administration and in the incoming Healey Administration. He asked if there was any discussion related to the document.

Councilor Wilson commented that the enabling legislation for the Council should be looked at and that it was being considered and was put on hold for the Special Commission and Strategic Readiness Initiative. She noted that the council has certain statutory responsibilities that are currently not being met, and that there is a need for the missions of the Council and DCR to be more aligned so that the council can meet its statutory goals and become a resource for the agency.

Chairman Buckley responded that governance and interactions between the council and the agency are critical, but that the issue might not fit into the document being considered. He suggested that the conversation could begin with the policy committee.

Councilor Crane commented that the enabling legislation of the council is mentioned in the special commission report and that this might be used as motivation to continue the work of changing it.

Councilor Wilson moved to approve the transition recommendations.

Councilor Ortiz seconded the motion.

Roll Call on the Approval of the Transition Recommendations

Councilor Wilson – Yes

Councilor Ortiz – Yes

Councilor Crane – Yes

Councilor Collins – Yes

Councilor Smiley – Yes

Councilor Dooley – Yes

Chairman Buckley – Yes

Public Comment

[Guidelines for Public Comment are available on the DCR Stewardship Council website.](#)

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

- Janet Sinclair, Buckland, MA Resident
- Sarah Freeman, Boston, MA Resident

- Miriam Kurland, Goshen, MA Resident
- Glenn Ayers, Greenfield, MA Resident

Regular Business II

Committee Updates

Finance – The Finance Committee had no updates.

Policy – The Policy Committee had no updates.

Stakeholders – The Stakeholders Committee met on November 4 and offered the following updates from their meeting:

- Matt Perry introduced himself and spoke about the work he has done to support the committee
- The committee discussed the Director of Partnerships position at DCR, currently held by David Burnes, who has taken on the duties of former DCR employee Jenny Norwood.
- Council meetings for 2023 were discussed and Councilor Smiley will be sending a survey out to the council to gauge interest in how meetings should be held going forward.
- Presentation requests from outside groups were reviewed and Matt Perry is reaching out to the groups that were chosen to present to schedule them.

Creation of a Nominating Committee for the Selection of Officers

Each year, the Council must select a nominating committee to choose the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary of the Council for the upcoming year. The Committee meets between the November and December meetings and presents its nominees to the council at the December meeting where the slate is voted on. The Chair and Vice Chair serve as ex officio members of the committee, and two other councilors are needed to create the four person committee.

Councilor Collins and Councilor Smiley volunteered to be the additional two members of the committee.

Councilor Wilson moved that Councilor Collins and Councilor Smiley be made members of the Nominating Committee.

Roll Call Vote on Approval of Councilor Collins and Councilor Smiley becoming members of Nominating Committee

Councilor Wilson – Yes

Councilor Ortiz – Yes

Councilor Crane – Yes

Councilor Collins – Yes

Councilor Smiley – Yes

Councilor Dooley – Yes

Chair Buckley – Yes

Councilor Comments

Councilor Crane commented that he hopes the new administration will take comments and suggestions going forward seriously and that he hopes the Council can do the job the way it was intended.

Councilor Smiley asked if there was a way to get a more in depth update on the Strategic Readiness Initiative progress.

Chair Buckley commented that he also hopes the new administration will take the comments seriously and that he is looking forward to working with Governor-elect Healey and the new EEA secretary. He wished everyone a great Thanksgiving and said he will see them December 8 at the State House.

Adjournment

The council adjourned the meeting at 10:45am until December 8, 2022.

Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council>