



October Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Jack Buckley, Melissa Harper, Ann Canedy, Jennifer Wilson, Vivian Ortiz, Dicken Crane, Jeff Collins, Susan Smiley, Ted Dooley, Dennis Smith

DCR Staff Attendees Nick Conners, Matthew Perry, Doug Rice, Paul Cavanaugh, Julie Martin, Mary Cardwell, Dan Cushing, Lindsay Nystrom, Carolyn Assa

Public Attendees as Registered: Lawrence Tucker, Bill Boles, Monique Doherty, Shaka Johnson, Jeff Miller, Sarah Freeman, Marcy Ostberg, Chris Egan, Chris Redfern, Chuck Anastas, Ashley McCoy, Maddie Morgan, Suzanne Gall Marsh, Steve Engel, Buzz, Lizzie Roche

Call to Meeting – Chair Jack Buckley

Chair Buckley opened the meeting with greetings and instructions for virtual meeting format. He asked that councilors focus on transition plans as they meet in their committees later in the meeting. Chair Buckley stated that the board would like a monthly update on deferred maintenance from DCR to track how it is going. He mentioned reading about an Office of Green Transportation at DCR and requested more information about the office and what it does. He welcomed Commissioner Doug Rice to provide the DCR Report.

DCR Report – Doug Rice, Commissioner

Commissioner Rice thanked the council and its chair. He stated that he was not familiar with office of Green Transportation at DCR and will look further into it, and that he will work to incorporate deferred maintenance into future reports.

New Staff Member

Commissioner Rice welcomed new staff member Matthew Perry and introduced him to the council. Matthew Perry joined DCR from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners where he served as a Communications Specialist and will be supporting the work of the council as a liaison to DCR and through administrative support for the group. He asked Matthew to say a few words and he thanked the Commissioner and introduced himself letting the Councilors know he will be in touch with them soon.

Borderland State Park Anniversary

Mr. Rice talked about the 50th Anniversary of Borderland State Park in Easton that was held on October 8, 2022. It was celebrated in conjunction with the Friends of Borderland. He gave a brief history of the park, noting that there have only been four park supervisors in the fifty years of the park: Roger “Pete” McNamara (1971-1980), Robert Babineau (1980-2003), Ellenor Simmons (2003-2018), and Andrew

Buckley (2018-current). He thanked them all and their colleagues past and present for the tremendous work they have done.

Archaeology Month

Mr. Rice informed the Councilors of two events that will be happening in celebration of Archaeology Month:

October 21, 2022 1:00pm-1:30pm - Middlesex Fells: Spot Pond Archaeological District Walking Tour and Talk with Jonathan Ruane, DCR Archaeology Assistant

In honor of Archaeology Month 2022, this walk will explore the history and archaeological resources of the Middlesex Fells Reservation. Spot Pond was an integral part of the colonial development of this region of Massachusetts and even appeared on one of the first maps sent back to Europe. As factories replaced agriculture during the early 19th century, the site became an industrial center focused on the production of shoes. This led to the local development of new technologies in the manipulation and use of rubber. In addition to the site's history, the talk will focus on recovered artifacts and how archaeologists use them to tell the stories of places. Themes explored will include the site's connections to the development of new rubber technologies, Nathaniel Hayward and Charles Goodyear, and the Converse shoe brand. Meet at 1 Woodland Road.

October 27, 2022 7:00pm-8:00pm - Utopia Revisited: Bringing Brook Farm into the Future through the Past...

Brook Farm Archaeological Overview and Planning Assessment Archaeological Panel Presentation and Discussion. Sponsored by New Brook Farm with participation by DCR Office of Cultural Resources, the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., and the Boston City Archaeology Program. Location: Theodore Parker Church, 1859 Centre Street, West Roxbury, MA <https://www.tparkerchurch.org/>

DCR is pleased to participate in this panel discussion sponsored by DCR partner and nonprofit, New Brook Farm. NBF partnered with DCR to fund the archaeological investigation at the property in 2021-2022.

Excellence in Interpretive

The Department of Conservation and Recreation, Interpretive Services Program is committed to excellence in the fields of education, interpretation, and visitor services. The annual DCR Interpretive Services Awards and Citations Program was established to recognize outstanding achievements and to showcase the successes of interpretive staff in advancing the delivery of services and materials in the Massachusetts state parks system. The awards were given out recently and Mr. Rice took the opportunity to again congratulate the winners.

Climate Week

Climate week occurred during the third week of September and DCR held many events to celebrate. Commissioner Rice attended events throughout the state including in Brighton at the Riley Skating Rink where flexible solar panels have been installed that can fit to the curved roof of the rink.

Councilor Questions and Comments

Chair Buckley clarified that he read the reference of the Office of Green Transportation in a “StreetsBlog Mass” post from June 14, 2021. It said that in the Parkway Master Plan, DCR revealed that they created an office of Green Transportation. He also said that he is very pleased that there is a staff person on board to work with the Council and believes it will make the work of the council go more smoothly.

Councilor Canedy welcomed Matthew to DCR.

Councilor Ortiz stated that she was glad to be back meeting with everyone and introduced herself to Commissioner Rice. She said that she lives in Mattapan and has been monitoring the situation around the Ryan Playground and converting a wading pool there into a spray deck. She said that she is personally in favor of it and there is some misinformation circulating about the project. She asked the Commissioner if DCR would be moving forward with the spray deck and said it there is a great opportunity for DCR to send out some messaging to make sure moving forward won’t have resistance that is currently happening.

Commissioner Rice responded that he was at a public meeting last week where DCR shared plans to convert the wading pool into a spray deck and said that because of the input received from the community the project is currently on hold. DCR feels operationally that the spray deck is a better alternative to a wading pool because of lifeguard staffing, operational concerns for chemical balancing, and because spray decks can be open longer during day and season. Mr. Rice had a meeting with State Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley who spoke with community members and was told why wading pool was important to the community. DCR is now taking all input about what was proposed about playground, spray deck, and whole community and will go back to drawing board. This will take up to 24 months. The design process will incorporate the public about what will be best for the location going forward.

Councilor Collins said he is excited to see research into care of natural resources as part of the strategic readiness initiative, mentioning that having staff to do that and utilizing DCR properties for research are important. He asked Commissioner Rice about the Motus network which are stations worldwide that track migration of wildlife regionally. Currently MassWildlife hosts three Motus stations on DCR properties, and there have been talks about one for October Mountain State Forest. He asked if there was any update on the proposed use of the State Forest for one of the stations.

Councilor Smiley wanted to know what skating rinks that solar panels were installed on, saying that it was a long term initiative that has been worked on.

Commissioner Rice said the Riley Rink in Allston-Brighton, and Deputy Commissioner Nick Connors said the Murphy Rink in South Boston.

Councilor Smiley thanked them and asked if councilors could know about events in advance so Councilors so they can attend. Thinking of Borderland fiftieth anniversary. Nice things to celebrate.

Chair Buckley mentioned the Middlesex Fells event is October 21 at 1pm, Brook Farm October 27 7pm and that Matt will get specifics on those events to councilors.

Regular Business I

Presentation from the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts

Lawrence Tucker, member of the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM), gave a PowerPoint presentation to the council about the group and their relationship to DCR. He hoped that the presentation would allow councilors to have a better understanding of the sport of snowmobiling.

Mr. Tucker noted the popularity of the sport in the state of Massachusetts and the northeast region and showed the map of trails that the organizations oversees and cares for. The trails are on a mix of public and private land and SAM keeps them up for use during the winter months. Mr. Tucker noted that there were two areas where trails were incomplete and where connections could be made on DCR land. He asked that the council and agency consider working with SAM to help make the connections and complete the trails.

After the presentation, Mr. Tucker and Jeff Miller, President of SAM took questions from the council.

Councilor Smith noted how other states and provinces have great trails for snowmobiling and asked how much of a benefit it is for them locally and how much of these other areas come back to Massachusetts?

Mr. Miller said that there is a great relationship with the other New England States, saying that snowmobiling is a unique area where they all work together. One of the biggest motivators for them is that states have realized that this is a money generating hobby for their state or province and are able to promote snowmobiling as a money generator for them. There are monthly regional meetings to talk about how states can help each other. He noted that SAM is looking for connectivity, not looking to go thousands of miles on properties, adding that many businesses that rely on the winter season and without trail connections, areas cannot be accessed by snowmobilers.

Councilor Wilson asked what a snowmobile costs.

Mr. Miller responded that it was a good question, and that snowmobiles were getting incredibly expensive to get, nowadays costing in the \$15,000 range. Because snowmobilers spend a lot of money to use them and want to get the most bang for their buck, they have to go to New Hampshire or Vermont to do riding. He stated that if SAM can make a few important connections to their trails, it will be possible to go from Worcester County to the New York border on snowmobiling trails.

Councilor Wilson followed up to ask about compatible uses and safety, specifically what other activities can be done on snowmobile trails safely in the winter.

Mr. Miller responded that one of the things important with the snowmobile trail is that its wider, and that there is a lot of signage. He gave the example of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail in Vermont that the snowmobile association there did a lot of funding for and has lots of different uses including mountain biking, walking, and cross-country skiing. He said that as long as trail is wide enough, safety is non issue as long as there is signage and speed limits.

Councilor Collins asked about multi-season use of snowmobile trails and how much SAM does with other user groups to encourage use during different seasons.

Mr. Tucker stated that a contingent of land owners want trails closed during summer and that SAM built gates on their properties to ensure that. Some landowners will encourage activities like mountain biking but don't want ATVs or horses.

Mr. Miller added that in years past SAM hasn't partnered too much with other user groups but wants to do that going forward because other groups are facing the same issues that SAM is.

Chair Buckley brought up the issue of trail users going off trail into areas that landowners may not want them to be in and asked how SAM works to prevent that.

Mr. Tucker spoke about gate installation and clear signage that helps to keep users on the trails. In addition, they do education and have a good method of contacting almost all snowmobilers in the state.

Mr. Miller noted that SAM is currently working with Fish and Wildlife to create signage that indicates where the trail is state property or a sensitive area. The group has an extensive GIS map system and believes that members should know where they are and where they shouldn't be.

Councilor Crane said that he has a good relationship with one of the Western Mass snowmobile clubs that rides on his property, adding that one of the biggest differences that can be made to keep people on the trail is grooming because sleds want to stay on groomed trails.

Mr. Miller agreed that one of the biggest problems faced in most states and provinces is riders going off trail and that they are finding ways to prevent that.

Councilor Smith asked if SAM membership the 30 clubs or individual members, how many members are there, and what are the dues are?

Mr. Miller said that the organization is made up of both the 30 clubs which makes the board of directors, and the individual members. It is \$75 a year for trail pass and they have 4-8 thousand members a year depending on how much snow there is.

Chair Buckley thanked SAM for their coming, presenting, and answering questions.

Approval of Minutes – July 23, 2022 Meeting

Councilor Smith said that he reviewed the minutes and found one minor error on page 6. He will communicate it to Councilor Canedy for correction. Councilor Smith moved to approve the July minutes. Councilor Harper seconded the motion.

Chairman Buckley called the roll on the adoption of the minutes, as indicated for virtual meetings:

Councilor Harper - Yes
Councilor Canedy - Yes
Councilor Smith - Yes
Councilor Wilson - Yes
Councilor Ortiz - Abstain
Councilor Crane -Yes
Councilor Collins - Yes
Councilor Smiley - Yes

Councilor Dooley – Abstain

Chair 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:

- Chris Egan, Massachusetts Forest Alliance
 - Sarah Friedman, Arborway Coalition
 - Jeff Miller, Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts
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Regular Business II

Committee Meeting Breakouts and Updates

Finance – The Finance Committee listed their priorities for transition:

- Increased funding for DCR operations
- Increased funding for capital projects and more transparency around them
- The importance of supporting work of special commission and strategic visioning process
- Strive for DCR to be somewhere in the middle when it comes to nationwide parks funding

Policy – The Policy Committee listed their priorities for transition:

- Continuity of leadership and governance
- Reliable filling of vacancies on the council
- Increased funding for DCR
- Continuing strategic planning for the future
- looking through recommendations of strategic council
- Urging science-based decision making for land management
- Thinking of other types of land management beyond forests, i.e. salt marshes, meadows, etc.

Stakeholders – The Stakeholders Committee listed their priorities for transition:

- Continued focus and details on strategic readiness
 - Continued focus on stakeholders and friends, as well as other valued partnership
 - Finding a way to include stakeholder groups that are not “friends” groups, but still work with DCR.
 - Heightened transparency
 - Continuing to improve reputation, outreach, and cultural community response.
 - Budgeting
 - Planning future meetings ahead of time
 - Adding info about who the councilors are somewhere on website
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December 2022 Meeting

Chair Buckley asked Councilors about their ability to attend an in-person Stewardship Council meeting on December 8, 2022, at the Massachusetts State House. He asked for a role call on whether or not councilors can attend:

Councilor Harper - Yes

Councilor Canedy - Maybe

Councilor Smith - Yes

Councilor Wilson - Yes but expressed concern about the meeting being near holiday season and potential for increased COVID-19 numbers. Stated that the council will need a backup plan.

Councilor Ortiz - Maybe, agreed with Councilor Wilson's concerns

Councilor Crane - Yes

Councilor Collins - Maybe

Councilor Smiley - Yes

Councilor Dooley - Yes

Chair Buckley - Yes

Adjournment

Councilor Smith moved to adjourn the meeting; Chair Buckley seconded. The council adjourned until November 8, 2022.

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

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