# October 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes

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

DCR Staff Attendees: Matthew Perry

Members of the Public: David Altman St. Pierre

## Call to Order – Committee Chair Susan Smiley

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

Public Comment: Chair Smiley asked if any members of the public would like to make a comment.

### *Comments were offered by the following:*

David Altman St. Pierre, Beverly

## Approval of Minutes

Councilor Smith moved to approve the July 26, 2024 and the September 6, 2024 meeting minutes.

Councilor Dooley seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved with Councilor Ortiz abstaining.

## Recap of August 12, 2024 Listening Session

Councilor Harper said that she reviewed the listening session and wrote a recap of it for the committee and that she will send it out to everyone after the meeting. She said that for the most part, the feedback given is consistent with what they heard at other listening sessions and what has been discussed at Stewardship Council meetings. She said that there were no immediate next steps or take aways that can be reported.

Chair Smiley said that after their first listening session, they sent out a thank you letter to participants as a follow up. She said she thinks that they should do the same thing for this session to thank them and promote and highlight the Trails Conference that is coming up at the end of October. She asked the committee if any other messaging should be included in the thank you letter.

Councilor Harper said that they should let people know how the information is being utilized, such as the Finance Committee using the first listening session as a basis for the council’s budget recommendation. She said they should include that the Stakeholders Committee is reviewing all of the comments that were made and assessing how they can be taken into the committee’s work. She thinks it’s important to let people know how their input is being used.

The committee agreed with Chair Smiley and Councilor Harper. Mr. Perry will draft a thank you letter for them to review and then send out to participants.

## Partnership Presentation Request

Mr. Perry said there were no new requests from outside groups to present at upcoming meetings. He said that the October meeting will feature a presentation about the Forests as Climate Solutions initiative, the November meeting will feature a presentation about rodenticide use on DCR property, and December will feature a presentation on DCR’s Summer Nights program.

Chair Smiley asked if Mass Parks for All had been contacted to present.

Mr. Perry said that he spoke with Council Chair Buckley about it and that he said he would contact them.

Chair Smiley also mentioned hearing from Emergency Management Resource Coordinator Dennis Fitzpatrick about his work.

## 2025 Meeting Schedule

Councilor Smith said that it is time to put together a meeting schedule for 2025 and suggested that they discuss locations for in-person meetings. He said that there is an opportunity to go to Western Mass for a meeting and that the forestry issue has been a hot topic out there. He said it was an interesting opportunity to go to Swampscott and meet in a facility that was not a DCR facility, but that in the past, they’ve taken the opportunity to tour DCR properties after meetings. He suggested that the Boston Harbor Islands may be a good place to meet. He asked the committee if they are still interested in having four total in-person meetings, and if so, what locations they think would be good for those meetings.

Chair Smiley asked if the committee thought it was successful having in-person meetings.

Councilor Harper said that they could gauge it based on councilor attendance between in-person and virtual meetings. She said that if there is a drop-off for in-person meetings, it might be something they want to reconsider.

Mr. Perry said that for the most part, attendance is consistent between the in-person and the virtual meetings.

Councilor Ortiz said that it is important to make in-person meetings hybrid. She asked if the public was allowed to make comments virtually during in-person meetings.

Mr. Perry said that they can’t right now, but that it is something they can revisit.

Councilor Ortiz said it is also important to consider start times and what works best for everyone to get to the meeting on time.

Councilor Dooley said that he agreed about considering start times, but that he likes having the four in-person meetings. He said that Zoom allows for broader participation, but that in-person allows them to get out and see the facilities and DCR staff.

Councilor Smith asked if there were suggestions for meeting locations.

Councilor Ortiz suggested Lawrence Heritage State Park.

Councilor Dooley seconded Councilor Smith’s suggestion about the Boston Harbor Islands.

Chair Smiley suggested the Mountainside Bakery and Café or the Ski Lodge at Mt. Wachusett.

Councilor Smith said that they have gone to Heritage State Parks including Lowell and Holyoke in the past for meetings.

Chair Smiley said the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls would also be a good location.

Councilor Ortiz said that they should make sure that transit info is put into meeting notices for the locations.

Councilor Harper said that they should be mindful about the specific locations that they are thinking of for meetings and to make sure that they are dispersed regionally.

Chair Smiley asked if they want to keep the State House as an annual event.

Councilor Smith suggested that they see how the December meeting goes before they make a decision on that.

Councilor Harper said that it is important for all meetings to make sure that they are helping to drive the turnout.

Chair Smiley agreed and said that the councilors need to be the ones driving attendance. She said it is the best way to do their jobs effectively if they know what the challenges are at different properties.

Councilor Ortiz suggested that if they do a meeting at the Boston Harbor Islands, it could be later in the afternoon and that they could invite a group like Boston Harbor Now to do a presentation and join them at the meeting. She said it is relatively easy to get out to the islands from Boston and Hingham.

Councilor Smith asked that if they do the Harbor Islands, should they also consider the State House since they would both be in Boston. He also asked if they want to have a discussion with the full council like they are having now.

Councilor Dooley said that he thinks the State House meeting is important and that they should consider having a meeting there and on the Harbor Islands in the same year.

Chair Smiley said that the committee can formulate a list of options and present it at the November meeting of the Council.

Councilor Smith will work with Chair Smiley and Mr. Perry to get the list together and distribute to the councilors.

## Other Business

Councilor Harper said that she has been working with the ten councilors whose terms expire next year to gauge their interest about remaining on the Council or having their terms expire and leaving the Council. She said that three would like their terms to end, two are still deciding, and five would like to be reappointed for another term. She mentioned that there are geography requirements for the different seats.

Chair Smiley said that she had someone reach out to her about the requirements of getting on the council. She asked if there was a deadline for councilors to let Councilor Harper know their decision. She said it was important to share and promote the open seats to those who may be interested once it is known which ones will be open and to work with the Governor’s office to fill those seats.

Councilor Smith said that on the Governor’s website there is a section for Boards and Commissions where you can submit an application and in some situations, the Governor’s office will choose to not do anything once a term expires so the person can continue to serve.

Councilor Harper said that what Councilor Smith is describing is good for those who want to stay, but not for those who don’t. She said that they can give guidance to those who would like to be reappointed. She will continue to work to get feedback from the last two councilors she is waiting to hear from, and can present at the November meeting.

Councilor Ortiz spoke about a recent death of a cyclist on Memorial Drive in Cambridge and that the council should be prepared for it to come up at next week’s meeting.

## Adjournment

Councilor Ortiz moved to adjourn the meeting.

Councilor Harper seconded the motion.

Chair Smiley thank everyone for their attendance.

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)