

Draft Hartford Energy Commission notes

July 23, 2026

Present in person; Jesse Pollard, Lynn Bohi, Esme Cole; guests: Eric Francis, Alexis Kades, Gwen Tuson, Tad Montgomery, Brian from Two Rivers Regional Commission

Present Virtually: John Reid, Jen Durgin, Lee Michaelides

Priorities

Public engagement: Ev expo, Block Party **Municipal operations:** wastewater treatment

Geothermal: Hotel Coolidge, logistics & technology **Hazardous materials:** culvert crawlers

CAST: Is contemplating a name change to "Climate Action and Hazard Mitigation Committee." They would be responsible for Climate Action Plan and the yearly functions of the plan. Erik Krauss has asked them to delay this vote until more people can meet. They have 2 choices: postpone until there is a clear decision from the Selectboard or adopt the proposal subject to modification from the Selectboard. CAST plans to get the plan back from the State. Resilient Hartford can not work on the plan due to issues with getting quorum in meetings and CAST played a large role in the recent update and hopes to continue to work on the plan. Jesse moved and Jen seconded that CAST change the name subject to Selectboard approval. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.

There is not an HEC quorum

Coordinator's report:

- WABA architects site visit for the capital improvement assessment happened recently. They will send a plan. They were asked about putting solar on the roof. The answer is no. Neither the roof nor the walls can support both snow load and panels.
- Powerwall were installed at cell towers.
- Window Dressers need more people to sign up. Dana will talk to JD and also ask P&R to put in the Parks & Rec newsletter
- Dana will be gone for 2 weeks starting August 26.
- Richard's term was researched and ends January 2027

Public Comment;

- Gwen has been attending committee meetings to decide which one to join
- Alexis has applied to join HEC and has a meeting with the Selectboard August 4

- Tad said there has been a Climate Soiree which was for municipal employees only. It has recently become open to all and run by Upper Valley Adaption group and meets the second Tuesday at 4:30pm.
- Tad is meeting with Representative Elizabeth Burrows, who is running for a Windsor County Senate seat, to discuss her climate and energy priorities

Affordability discussion

In a list of items often named as unaffordable, the one that relates to HEC is fuel for cars and houses.

HEC has discussed EV, bikes and bike racks, buses and offsite parking to open up downtown parking and zip cars.

HEC has done a bit of discussion on plug in solar, fuel clubs, heat pumps, COVER, SEVCA funds, GMP low-income program, LIHEAP, and listing cost of different fuels. WE have not discussed heat pump water heaters. Lynn made a list of 9 Vermont groups that provide help to low income people and suggests it be put on the Hartford website. HEC has also been involved in Hazardous Mitigation Plan and, for 5 years, coordinated Window Dressers

The Housing committee is looking into manufactured homes.

Planning Commission is forming a bike rack group and wants a HEC volunteer. Alexis said YES. The meeting is Monday, August 3. The parking study is kicking off very soon (this or next week).

Town aggregate Plug in solar- HEC could look into.

Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission Plan and Town Plan:

Plan needs to think about adding:

- Capital fund
- Major upgrades for energy, water and sewer, buildings

HEC question- energy storage, are there mandates for it to be in the plan? Answer- yes for large energy generation only- not storage. HEC question- can the Town support areas for storage in the plan? Answer- yes, but advisory only. See sections 248 and 248A.

Forest definition #1 from ANR- In Vermont, forests are defined as upland communities with continuous tree canopy, distinct from woodlands (25-60% canopy) with categories like Northern Hardwood forest (sugar maple, beech) and Spruce-Fir-Northern Forest (colder sites) reflecting soil moisture, elevation, and dominant trees, all part of a larger system

classifying 80 types of plant/animal assemblages. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept classifies these as Upland or Lowland (wetland) communities, focusing on specific tree species (e.g. Cedar Swamps, Hemlock forests) tied to unique physical settings.

Forest definition #2 Forests Parks and REcreation:

Definition of Forest

A forest is a biological community dominated by trees but also consisting of other plants, animals, and microorganisms, their associated physical environment (namely soils, bedrock, water, and air), and their combined interactions and processes. Forests are characterized by a more or less dense and extensive tree cover often consisting of stands varying in characteristics such as species composition, structure, age class, and associated processes; and commonly including meadows, streams, fish, and wildlife (SAF 2011).

Forests can take many forms depending on climate, soil quality, and available genetic supply for the dispersion of plant species. Forest stands range from very tall, heavily dense, and multi-structured to short, sparsely populated, and single-layered. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program defines forestland as land that is at least 10% stocked by trees of any size or land formerly having been stocked and not currently developed for non-forest use. The treed area must be at least 1 acre.

In terms of solar, HEC should use the solar policy devised with Vermont Law and Graduate School several years ago.

HEC can't say no to energy generation. The policy can deal with dams or turbines.

The meeting then ended.

Lynn Bohi, Clerk

Sarah Kelly Sept 2026

Richard Otis January 2027 Cathy Geiger 2027

Lynn Bohi 2027

Jesse Pollard 2027

Esme Cole 2028

Laura Simon 2028