

**Draft Minutes of the
Resilient Hartford Clifford Park Food Forest Meeting
February 10, 2023**

Resilient Hartford Members Present: Earl Hatley (4/4/25), Dylan Kreis (11/30/23) and chair Kye Cochran (11/30/23).

Resilient Hartford Liaison Members Present: Planning Commission Liaison John Reid.

Staff Present: Matt Osborn, Town Planner.

Others Present: Cat Buxton, Ruth Fleishman Karen Ganey, Claudia Marieb and Janelle Sahutski.

A hybrid Resilient Hartford Clifford Park Food Forest Meeting was held on Friday, February 10th. Chair Kye Cochran called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. She read the script for hybrid meetings followed by a roll call.

Clifford Park Food Forest (CPFF) & Abenaki Garden

- a. **2022 Year in Review:** Ruth reported that additional fruit and nut trees were planted in 2022 and a team of volunteers watered the trees and guilds during dry periods over the summer and fall. She noted that the Abenaki Garden was tilled and two cover crops planted. She added that one dead plum tree and one dead butternut tree was replaced, a mulch plot was established and the trees were fenced and trunks protected from rodents with hardware cloth. Ruth gave an overview while sharing the wiki site on the screen.
- b. **Budget/Fundraising:** Matt reported that during the last fiscal year (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022), Resilient Hartford spent \$1,380 on the CPFF. Matt noted that an additional \$400 was carried over to the current fiscal year RH budget (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023) giving RH a total of \$2,160 to spend by June 30th. For the current fiscal year, \$422 has been expended leaving \$1,738 remaining in the budget leaving the Food Forest in good financial shape. He stated that RH has talked about purchasing a pump and accessories this spring. Matt noted that once RH has a more detailed plan of the next steps, we can seek grant funding.

Kye reported that Apple Corps applied for a Building A Local Economy grant to pay for a coordinator to assist with several resilience food projects including the CPFF. Apple Corps applied for \$5,000 and received \$1,400.

c. Brainstorming/Planning for 2023:

- 1. Upper Valley Resilience Network: Cat reported that Vital Communities received a \$250,000 planning grant to tie together Resilience Hubs and help increase local food security. It is a two-year project that may lead to implementation funds. She noted that Hartford wasn't initially designated as a Resilience Hub but the request was made to be added as one. Cat and Karen explained the potential collaboration with the Upper Valley Resilience Network (UVRN) and that each hub will receive a \$500 stipend and decide on how funds will be spent. Cat noted that the CPFF is key to the Hartford Resilience Hub. She added that she is not sure of the Apple Corp role but she envisions that Apple Corps will hire someone to coordinate the CPFF and other resilience food projects. Claudia expressed caution about having a coordinator for the CPFF and other food resilience projects noting that the CPFF is a digestible project. The

same volunteers could be spread too thin by working on too many projects. Claudia noted that there isn't a strong enough outline for the multi-project coordinator idea. Ruth agreed.

2. Current Plantings/New Plantings: Matt asked Karen about her recommendations for new plants. Karen responded that we need to ensure we can take care of what we have planted already. She added that we also need to bring the soil back to life. Others agreed. Earl stated that he is fine to follow the advice of the group if we monitor the CPFF for another year and focus on building the soil, like we have been doing with the cover crops. The consensus was to go slow and that planting to work within parameters of watering capacity. Ruth noted that we should continue with multiple cover crop plantings each year to build the soil and to extend the guild plantings. Cat agreed that it makes sense to slow down and focus on soil health.
3. Water Collection System: Dylan reported that he sent HP Roofing the Memorandum of Understanding for the rain gutter proposal. Matt noted that RH talked about getting a pump and the cost was in the \$400-\$500 range to help deliver water from the barn to the Food Forest and Abenaki garden. Dylan noted that there are accessories such as fittings, hose, etc. that will add to the cost. He offered to get an updated estimate.
4. Soil Building/Flood Regulations: Matt stated that he will follow up reviewing the new state model flood regulations to see if they would allow the soil building that RH would like to do. If not, the alternative would be to hire an engineer to calculate the materials to be brought in. Cat suggested talking to the Ottawaquchee Natural Resource Conservation District and the White River Natural Resource Conservation District to get their thoughts. Matt will follow up with Cat and they will connect with two conservation districts next month. Cat thinks we can get help with funding for an engineer to help us deal with the Flood Regulations.
5. Organizer for this Year. Ruth reported that when she volunteered to serve as an organizer/coordinator last year, it wasn't clear what her responsibilities were. She kept track of what was happening and staying on top of it. She noted that as an organizer, she did the following:
 - Scheduled work parties
 - Scheduling meetings and doodle polls
 - Checking on plantings
 - Prepare watering schedules
 - Coordinating supplies and seeds
 - Thinking about what is next and what is needed

Ruth noted that it is hard to get volunteers. Karen suggested developing an annual calendar. Ruth stated that she likes planning but could use help scheduling. Karen suggested co-organizers. Dylan stated that he thinks we should try to get a paid organizer. Matt responded that the Town's insurance provider requires liability and worker's compensation insurance. Cat responded that the insurance would cost more than the work would pay. It was agreed that we aren't quite ready to hire a coordinator but to keep the topic on the table.

6. Should We Form Teams? There was discussion about setting up teams by topic area to help keep moving forward. The consensus was to assign the following teams:
 - I. Water Team (maintain weekly watering needs)
 - II. Growing Team (planting, planning garden design, timing of crops, building soil)
 - III. Outreach Team (events and education)

- IV. Infrastructure Team (fencing, water collection system, signs, storage)
- V. Fundraising Team (research and write grants)

Karen suggested that each team have a leader. Cat thinks it would help if more people knew about the teams. Karen suggested sending out an email to the CPFF Google Group List and to the larger RH email list. Kye volunteered. Ruth suggested considering a hybrid coordinating team as an alternative to a single volunteer coordinator.

- d. Next Food Forest Meeting:** It was agreed that we should have another Food Forest meeting in the next month or so to get input on 2023 work program and discuss at the 2/22 RH meeting.
- e. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.