

**Approved Meeting Notes of the
Resilient Hartford Meeting
January 3, 2024**

Resilient Hartford Members Present: Kyle Katz (10/30/26) and Laura Simon (1/8/27).

Resilient Hartford Liaison Members Present: Selectboard Liaison Ally Tufenkjian.

Staff Present: Matt Osborn, Town Planner.

Others Present: Rachel Kent of Apple Corps.

A hybrid Resilient Hartford Meeting was held on Wednesday, January 3rd. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. Matt Osborn announced that Dylan Kreis and Earl Hatley contacted him to say they are unable to attend the meeting. He noted that there is not a quorum but suggested discussing the Food Forest and the December 5th community discussion. Everyone agreed.

1. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments.
2. **Food Forest Update:** Matt reported that although there wasn't a large turnout at the 12/5 community forum on the Food Forest, it was a productive discussion. He noted that the consensus of the group is the need to modify the Food Forest Design Plan to reflect the likelihood of increased future flooding. An important piece is to enhance the riparian buffer along the White River. At the 12/5 discussion, Cat Buxton noted that from the beginning, we've had big ideas for the Food Forest and we've encountered many barriers along the way. She noted that we are learning to deal with the barriers and adapt. The July 10th Flood was a wake-up call that poses challenges to the Food Forest. It also showed that Clifford Park's location in the floodplain may not be a suitable location for an Abenaki Garden. The flood risk will limit what plants we grow. We will need to get input from Earl Hatley regarding the future of the Abenaki Garden. Laura Simon volunteered to contact Earl.

One of the key goals for the Food Forest is to create more biodiversity and provide a source of organic matter back into the soil. Laura noted that we are not able to bring in materials to improve the soil since the Food Forest is located in the 100-year flood zone. Instead, we have to build up the soil by growing cover crops. She stated that this will take a lot of time. Others agreed.

Matt reported that on 12/14, he attended a Clifford Park site visit with Greg Russ of the White River Partnership and Parks and Recreation Department Director Scott Hausler to get input on ways to enhance the Clifford Park riparian buffer. Greg acknowledged that the Clifford Park floodplain did its job to allow floodwaters a place to slow down. The riparian buffer was badly damaged during the Irene Flood but has recovered since then. Greg provided a list of native trees and shrubs that do well in floodplains.

Matt reported that Ruth Fleishman prepared a draft plan from the community discussion comments. He briefly described the plan. Ruth is seeking feedback on the draft plan.

Rachel Kent noted the need for community outreach and involvement and volunteered to work on it. She also suggested tying in the Farmer's Market to the Food Forest. Rachel noted that at the 12/5 Food Forest discussion to take Matt's 12/5 powerpoint presentation and create a voiceover video and make available at the West Hartford Library and other libraries. She volunteered to work on it. Kyle Katz suggested preparing a multi-media plan for the Food Forest.

Matt noted that the Conservation Commission will be working on pollinator gardens in 2024 and is seeking partners. Matt thinks it makes sense to plant a pollinator garden as part of the Food Forest. Others agreed. Matt agreed to talk to the Conservation Commission at their 1/8 meeting.

Matt suggested talking to the Tree Board to see if they have interest in working with RH on the Food Forest. Laura and Kyle volunteered to attend a Tree Board meeting and talk to them.

3. **Next RH Meeting:** Matt noted that the next RH meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 29th.
4. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.
5. **Date RH Member Terms Expire:** Laura Simon (1/8/27). Carolyn Hooper (10/17/25) Earl Hatley (4/4/25), Michaela Lavelle (6/27/26), Kyle Katz (10/30/26) and chair Dylan Kreis (1/8/27).