

Draft Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
November 7, 2022

Members Present & Date their Term is Up: Jon Bouton (9/7/24), Angie Emerson (1/11/25), Ted Levin (11/15/25), Katie Mann (2/26/23), Lee Michaelides (10/29/26) and chair Tom Kahl (8/24/24).

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Mary Erdei.

A hybrid Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting in compliance of the Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, November 7th in Room 2 of the Hartford Town Hall located at 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction. Since chair Tom Kahl was attending remotely from Utah, he asked vice-chair Katie Mann to chair the meeting. Katie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and proceeded to read the Hybrid Meeting Script followed by roll call.

1. **Changes to the Agenda:** Katie asked if there are any changes to the agenda. There were none.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Katie asked if there are any changes to the draft minutes of 10/3/22. There were no changes. Katie stated that the HCC minutes of 10/3/22 are approved as written by unanimous consent.
3. **HCC Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget:** Matt Osborn reported that Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield proposed level funding for the HCC including the \$3,000 conservation fund appropriation in her department budget which will be discussed at the November 22nd. Lori recommends that the HCC attend the budget session and be prepared to justify why \$3,000 should be added to the conservation fund. Tom volunteered to attend the workshop and present.
4. **Climate Change & the HCC:** Angie Emerson reported that she met with the Tree Bboard to discuss implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The Tree Board is concerned about heat islands and increasing the tree canopy and would like to amend the Zoning Regulations to require more stringent landscaping standards. She noted that the Parks and Recreation Department is planning to open up the view of the White River from Lyman Point Park which will require removing Japanese Knotweed. She asked if this is in line with the Conservation Commission's work. There was discussion about the challenge of eradicating Knotweed. Jon suggested focusing on upstream areas rather than along rivers where Knotweed is well-established. The HCC agreed to focus on increasing tree canopies and reach out to the White River Partnership. Angie noted that they are meeting again on Wednesday to continue exploring ways to collaborate.
5. **Integrated Town Forest Management Plan:** Angie reported that we have a binder with the Integrated Town Forest Management Plan. She thinks it is ready for the HCC to approve. She made a motion to approve the Plan. The motion was seconded by Lee Michaelides. Jon noted some minor typos/inaccuracies. Angie responded that we should adopt the plan and review annually. The HCC agreed. Katie suggested holding off a decision on e-bikes. The HCC agreed. The HCC unanimously voted to approve the Plan.
6. **Town Forest Timber Harvest Update:** Matt reported that an agreement with the Hartford Area Career Technology Center (HACTC) to work in the Town Forest, including timber harvest preparation work was approved on Friday. They began work today. Matt completed an addendum to the logging contract to address several changes in the scope of work and the involvement of HACTC and the Department of Public Works. He is hopeful to have a signed contract soon. Tom agreed to post information on the timber harvest on the List Serv.

7. **Hemlock Memorandum of Understanding:** Matt reported that the MOU between the Town, Cover and Wright's Sawmill has to be worked out. Wright's Sawmill is uncomfortable establishing a price to process the wood when the work will be done this winter. He noted that Cover has a new Executive Director. Matt agreed to work with Cover.
8. **Town Forest Timber Harvest Public Outreach:** Tom noted that he will advertise on the List Serv throughout the project. Katie suggested working on a permanent interpretation display after the timber harvest and discussing it at the December 5th HCC Meeting. The HCC agreed.
9. **Town Forest Trail Maps:** Tom reported that there are two remaining trail maps that have to be installed by the Boy Scouts. Tom noted that he took down all of the old trail maps. He stated that we will decide on whether to create a reroute of the Moose Brook Trail in the spring.
10. **Hunting Safety and Public Awareness:** Matt reported that he has been posting hunting safety notices on the Hartford List Serv. Katie asked if Matt located orange vests that a former Conservation Commission member made several years ago. Matt responded that he did not locate them. He noted that he priced them out and they are inexpensive. The HCC requested that Matt obtain vests for the Town Forest and Maanawaka Conservation Area. Matt agreed to obtain the vests, deliver to both sites and create a poster.
11. **Vermont State Police Search & Rescue Training:** Tom reported that the Vermont State Police conducted a search and rescue training at the Town Forest on October 14th.
12. **Private Landowner Conservation Outreach:** Katie reported that she has letters and maps for five
13. **Quechee Library Story Walk:** Ton reported that the story walk signs have been taken down in the Town Forest.
14. **Private Landowner Conservation Outreach:** Katie reported that she has letters and maps for five property owners. She asked if we should send these out now or wait and add five more properties first. The HCC agreed to send out the five letters now and work on letters to the next ten property owners in the coming year.
15. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Posting:** Matt reported that he posted the Maanawaka Conservation Area on November 4th and one signpost was missing. He suggested that it be replaced.
16. **David Chang Conservation Area Boundary Markers:** Jon will get a quote for obtaining these markers.
17. **Town Website:** Matt reported that the Department of Planning and Development was without an administrative assistant for three months. He stated that a new person (Dee Gish) started last Wednesday. Once she receives training, she will work on the HCC webpages.
18. **Announcements:**
 - a. AVCC Summit: Tom reported that Angie and he attended the AVCC Summit and noted that it was a good discussion on resiliency and flooding. He also learned that Burlington working on similar projects as Hartford on climate change.

19. Next Meeting: Katie reported that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m. Katie noted that Tim Stout will to attend the meeting and give a presentation on forest carbon. Anna Schaal of the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association will also attend the meeting to discuss the recent posting of the Town Forest trails on the Trail Forks (mountain bike) website..

20. Upcoming Events:

- a. Next HCC Meeting: Monday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m.

21. Adjournment: Angie made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ted and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.