

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
July 1, 2024

Members Present: Chris Beetham, (8/7/27) Sky Claud, (7/31/27), Mary Hutchins (10/30/27) and 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, July 1st at the Quechee Library, 1957 Quechee Main Street. Chris Beetham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and proceeded to read the Hybrid Meeting Script followed by roll call.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Chris noted two corrections. He asked if there are any other changes to the draft minutes of 6/3/24. There were none. Chris stated that the minutes of 6/3/24 are approved by unanimous consent with the noted corrections.
2. **Public Comments:** Chris asked if there are any public comments. There were none.
3. **David Chang Conservation Area Erosion:** Chris reported that the HCC just conducted a site visit of the David Chang Conservation Area (DCCA) as requested by Trout Unlimited volunteer and avid fly fisherman Marty Banak to examine bank erosion that is occurring on the Ottauquechee River riverbank located on the Hartford/Hartland town line. The erosion was the result of 7/10/23 flood. It appears that the erosion occurred on the DCCA parcel and an adjacent parcel. Matt reported that he contacted Kelly Stettner of the Ottauquechee Natural Resource Conservation District. Kelly agreed to conduct a site visit and give us her thoughts on the erosion and possible actions to prevent further erosion. Matt also will invite Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Conservancy. He noted that once a date and time is selected, he will invite the HCC to join them.
4. **Event Sign Request:** Matt reported that the HCC received a request to place a sign at the Town Forest regarding the advertising of a non-profit fundraising event. Matt noted that there is no Town policy regarding such signs. He also noted that the Hartford Sign Ordinance doesn't have a provision for erecting such signs on public property. As a result, the Sign Ordinance would have to be revised in order to allow the signs on Town property.
5. **6/8 Trails Day:** Chris reported that the Trails Day event was successful. A new 16' bridge was constructed on the Moose Brook Trail. In addition, some spare 6'-8' bridge pieces from the Landmark property were also installed on the Moose Brook Trail. Tom acknowledged the assistance of Andy Jones hauling materials to the Moose Brook Trail on his ATV. The event was followed by a cookout for volunteers.

Chris noted that bridges can be slippery for recreationists when they are wet. He suggested installing chicken wire on bridges to help with traction. Mary Hutchins requested that chicken wire not be installed on snowmobile bridges. Matt suggested getting an estimate on the amount of chicken wire needed and the cost for the HCC to decide. Chris volunteered.
6. **6/8 Family Forest Frolic:** Sky reported that the 6/8 walk had a good turnout and was combined with the Quechee Library Story Walk. The next FFF event is scheduled for Saturday, July 13th.

7. **7/9 Forestry Walk:** Tom reported that a forestry walk is planned for Tuesday, 7/9 with County Forester A.J. Follensbee to look at the area of the 2022/2023 timber harvest and see how the area has responded.
8. **White River School Pollinator Garden:** Sky reported that a garden was planted this spring and is pretty full. They are waiting for the seeds to grow and will return in the fall to perform maintenance. Tom asked if the garden survived the mid-June heat wave. Sky responded yes for the most part.
9. **Green-Up Day:** Matt reported that more Hartford organizations and businesses participated in Green-Up Day this year than any previous year. In total, we had 441 volunteers. A total of 4.13 tons of trash was collected including 42 tires. Matt noted that this is the first year that we exceeded the \$2,000 budget for Green-Up Day. He suggested asking for more funds in the next fiscal year budget. The HCC agreed.

Chris suggested doing a fall clean-up project. Matt responded that there is the fall Source to the Sea clean-up that is sponsored by the Connecticut River Conservancy and the White River Partnership. The HCC has participated in the event before. Mary suggested a targeted clean-up. Matt noted that there is cost involved with any clean up. It was agreed to discuss at the August 26th meeting.

10. **Kestrel Boxes:** Matt reported that Ted sent a personal letter to a property owner about hosting a kestrel box on their property. He did not get a response. Ted agreed to follow up.
11. **HCC Website:** Matt reported that Tom submitted comments to him regarding the HCC webpage updates. Matt is waiting for comments from Katie and Chris. Once he receives them, he will submit to Administrative Assistant Danielle Taylor who will make the changes.
12. **HCC Award:** Matt reported that he met with Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield on the proposed award. Lori had some suggestions. Matt will revise the memo to Town Manager John Haverstock describing the proposal which he will then discuss with the Selectboard chair and vice-chair.
13. **Hartford Community Coalition Annual Block Party:** Matt reported that he has not heard about the rescheduling of the 6/19 Block Party that was canceled due to excessive heat. If it is rescheduled, he will inform the HCC.
14. **Announcements/Reports:**
 - a. Commission Stipend: Mary Erdei reported that the Selectboard included commission stipends in the new fiscal year budget. Commission members can choose to be compensated \$50.00 a meeting for their service up to two meetings a month. Mary added that the Selectboard voted to change the HCC bylaws to allow compensation. She suggested using this as an opportunity to look at the HCC bylaws to see if changes are needed. The HCC agreed.
 - b. Composting Workshop: Matt reported that there is a two-day workshop on Municipal and Institutional Composting that will be held at Sunrise Farm in Hartford on Wednesday, 8/28 and Thursday 8/29. Matt agreed to help promote the event.
 - c. AVCC Woodland Legacy Planning Workshop: Tom reported that the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions is sponsoring a woodland legacy planning workshop in Woodstock on Wednesday, July 10th from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

- d. AVCC List Serv: Chris requested information on how to join the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions List Serv. Matt agreed to provide the information.

15. Upcoming HCC Events:

- a. **Forestry Workshop**: Tuesday, 7/9, 6:00 p.m.
- b. **Family Forest Frolic**: Saturday 7/13, 10:00-11:00.

16. Next HCC Meeting: Chris noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 8/26 at 7:00 p.m.

17. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

18. Action Items:

- a. Matt agreed to schedule a site visit of the David Chang Conservation Area bank erosion with Kelly Stettner of the Ottauquechee Natural Resource Conservation District and Ron Rhoades of the Connecticut River Conservancy.
- b. Matt agreed to email the HCC about the date and time for the DCCA site visit.
- c. Chris volunteered to get an estimate on the amount of chicken wire needed to place on non-snowmobile bridges in the Town Forest as well as the cost.
- d. Sky will lead the next young family outdoor education (Family Forest Frolic) event on Saturday, July 13th.
- e. Tom reported that a forestry walk with Couty Forester A.J. Follensbee is planned for Tuesday, 7/9 at 6:00 p.m.
- f. Matt suggested asking for more funds in the next fiscal year budget for Green-Up Day expenses.
- g. It was agreed to discuss a possible fall clean up event at the August 26th meeting.
- h. Ted agreed to follow up with the property owner regarding the kestrel box.
- i. Once he receives all of the HCC website comments, he will submit to Administrative Assistant Danielle Taylor who will make the changes.
- j. Matt agreed to revise the memo to Town Manager John Haverstock about the HCC Awards Program for discussion with the Selectboard chair and vice-chair.
- k. If the Block Party is rescheduled, Matt will inform the HCC.
- l. The HCC agreed to review the HCC bylaws to see if changes are needed.
- m. Matt agreed to help promote the composting event.
- n. Matt agreed to provide the HCC with information on how to sign up for the Association of Vermont Conservation Commission List Serv.

19. HCC Member Terms: Chris Beetham (8/7/27), Sky Claud, (7/31/27), vice-chair Mike Harris (8/7/27), Mary Hutchins, (10/30/27), Tom Kahl (8/24/24), Ted Levin, (11/15/25) and chair Katie Mann (3/20/27).