

**Approved Minutes of the**  
Hartford Conservation Commission  
February 3, 2025

**Members Present:** Chris Beetham (8/7/27), Mike Harris, vice-chair (8/7/27), Holly Henderson, (10/14/28), Mary Hutchins, (10/30/27), Ted Levin, (11/15/25) and Katie Mann, chair (3/20/27).

**Staff Present:** Town Planner Matt Osborn.

**Others Present:** None.

A hybrid Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting in compliance of the Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> in Room 2 of the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction, Vermont. Katie Mann 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:** Katie asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes of 1/6/25. There were none. Katie stated that the minutes of 1/6/25 are approved as written by unanimous consent.
2. **Public Comments:** Katie asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
3. **HCC Annual Update to the Hartford Selectboard:** Katie reported that she will be appearing before the Selectboard on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> to give them an update of HCC's work. She stated that she will focus on HCC events. She asked the HCC if there was anything else that she should include. There were no suggestions.
4. **HCC Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle:** Katie noted that the event will be taking place at the Bugbee Senior Center. Katie reported that she received confirmations from all the organizations that she contacted except VINS and the Montshire Museum. She noted that Junction Arts & Media (JAM) has agreed to videotape the event. The following is the schedule:

5:00 p.m. Set-up  
5:30-6:00 Mix & Mingle  
6:00-7:00 Presentations (5 minutes each)  
7:00-8:00 Mix & Mingle

Katie reported that the following organizations have been invited:

1. Vermont Institute of Natural Science
2. Vermont Center for Ecostudies
3. Hartford Garden Club
4. Hartford Tree Board
5. Hartford Climate Action Steering Team
6. Hartford Salamander Team
7. White River Partnership
8. Upper Valley Land Trust
9. Resilient Hartford
10. Monshire Museum
11. Conservation Commission

Katie suggested inviting the Quechee Garden Club. The HCC agreed. Katie will reach out to the Upper Valley Food Co-op to see if they could provide refreshments. Katie suggested using the HCC tri-board as a display at the event. Holly volunteered to set it up. Mike volunteered to present for the HCC.

Chris volunteered to be the timekeeper. Katie will contact the Quechee Garden Club and send an email to the organizations this week.

5. **Hartford Area Career & Technology Center (HAC&TC) Work in the Town Forest:** Katie reported that HAC&TC Natural Resources teacher Dan Gibson found another site to collect logs. She suggested that the HCC discuss what we want in a partnership with HAC&TC Natural Resources Class. She suggested discussing at the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Holly noted that it is important work that the HAC&TC Natural Resources Class does but it is also important that the work adhere to the Forest Management Plan.

Katie agreed to contact Dan Gibson about the possibility of the HAC&TC Natural Resources Class removing invasive plants in the Town Forest.

Katie reported that Matt and she will be meeting with new County Forester Dan Healey later this month. She will ask Dan to attend a future HCC meeting to introduce him to the Commission.

6. **Family Forest Frolic:** Katie reported that the next Family Forest Frolic event is scheduled for Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 a.m at the Town Forest.
7. **Long-term Conservation:** Mike reported that he met with a Vermont Law and Graduate School staff member to talk about the conservation toolbox project. He noted that the School hired a new faculty member for the Law School Clinic and there are two students well-suited for the project. Mike will set up a meeting with the students next week and see about having them come to the April 7<sup>th</sup> HCC meeting. He asked Matt to see if the Town Manager will sign the written agreement with the School. Matt agreed.
8. **Emerald Ash Borer:** Matt reported that Mary Erdei suggested that the HCC do an educational outreach campaign about the Emerald Ash Borer similar to what the Norwich Conservation Commission has done. Matt looked into it and found that the Hartford Tree Board took a lead on the topic and didn't think the HCC needed to duplicate their efforts. The HCC agreed.
9. **HCC Awards Program:** Mary reported that Sky and she met to discuss the awards program. Sky is working on the certificate and Sky and Mary are working on the write-up. Holly stated that it will be important to promote the award program once we release the information.
10. **HCC Website:** Katie reported that she met Planning & Development Administrative Assistant Danielle Taylor regarding changes to the Town Conservation Commission and Conservation webpages. Katie noted that Danielle updated the webpages and is at a point where the HCC may review and comment on them. Katie noted that we can add photos and video links. She added that we can include HCC events in the Town Calendar, but the information must be accurate. Holly volunteered to work with Katie and Chris on the webpages. Mike noted the importance of keeping the webpages up to date.
11. **HCC Bylaws:** Mike stated that he thinks the draft HCC Bylaws are ready to put out for public notice and placed on the March 3<sup>rd</sup> HCC agenda. Matt will post the bylaws and email to the Selectboard chair.
12. **Ottauquechee Trail Maintenance:** Mike reported that he attended a trails committee meeting at Quechee Lakes Landowners Association and is interested in following the work of the committee. He stated that the Ottauquechee Trail was impacted by the 2023 Flood and road/drainage improvements. Due to the changes, he thinks it would require a capital project to restore the trail connection.

**13. Upcoming HCC Events:**

- a. Family Forest Frolic: Saturday 2/8 at 1:00 p.m.
- b. Conservation Mix & Mingle: Friday, 3/7.
- c. Vernal Pool Walk: A Saturday in April.
- d. Maanawaka Conservation Area Wildflower Walk: A Saturday in April.
- e. Green-Up Day: Saturday, 5/3.
- f. Migratory Bird Walk: Saturday, 5/17.
- g. Trails Day: Saturday, 6/7.

**14. Announcements/Reports:**

- a. Annual Winter Natural History Walk: Ted reported that the 1/25 Natural History Walk went well. It was a very cold morning. Six people joined Ted on the walk.
- b. UVMBA Annual Meeting: Chris reported that he attended the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association Annual Meeting and gave a report on the 2024 Town Forest Trails Day event.
- c. HCC Calendar: Katie reported that she created a calendar for the HCC.

**15. Next HCC Meeting:** Katie noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 3/3 at 7:00 p.m.

**16. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

**17. Action Items:**

- a. Katie will reach out to the Upper Valley Food Co-op to see if they could provide refreshments for the Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle event.
- b. Holly volunteered to set up the HCC Tri-Board for the Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle event.
- c. Mike volunteered to present on behalf of the HCC at the Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle event.
- d. Chris volunteered to be the time keeper at the Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle event.
- e. Katie will contact the Quechee Garden Club about the Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle event.
- f. Katie will send an email to the organizations this week about the Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle event.
- g. Katie agreed to contact Dan Gibson about the possibility of the HAC&TC Natural Resources Class removing invasive plants in the Town Forest.
- h. Katie reported that Matt and she will be meeting with new County Forester Dan Healey later this month.
- i. Katie will ask County Forester Dan Healey to attend a future HCC meeting to introduce him to the Commission.
- j. The HCC agreed to discuss working with the Hartford Area Career & Technology Center at the March 3rd meeting.
- k. The next Family Forest Frolic event is scheduled for Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.
- l. Mike will set up a meeting with the Vermont Law and Graduate School students next week and see about having them come to the April 7<sup>th</sup> HCC meeting.
- m. Matt agreed to see if the Town Manager will sign the written agreement with the Vermont Law and Graduate School. School on the Conservation Toolkit.
- n. Sky is working on the HCC Award certificate.
- o. Sky and Mary are working on the HCC Award write-up.

**18. HCC Member Terms:** Chris Beetham (8/7/27), Sky Claud, (7/31/27), Mike Harris, vice-chair (8/7/27), Holly Henderson, (10/14/28), Mary Hutchins, (10/30/27), Ted Levin, (11/15/25) and Katie Mann, chair (3/20/27).