

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
March 3, 2025

Members Present: Chris Beetham, Sky Claud, Holly Henderson, Ted Levin and chair Katie Mann.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: County Forester Dan Healy.

A hybrid Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting in compliance of the Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, March 3rd 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. Katie 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 2/3/25. There were none. Katie stated that the minutes of 2/3/25 are approved as written by unanimous consent.
2. **Public Comments:** Katie asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
3. **Partnership with the Hartford Area Career & Technology Center (HAC&TC):** Katie introduced new County Forester Dan Healy to the HCC. She noted that Matt and Katie met with Dan at the Town Forest to help Dan get to know the Town Forest better and talk about working with the HAC&TC Natural Resources Class and teacher Dan Gibson. Dan reported that he has been at the job for seven weeks. He previously worked as a consulting forester in the area. He sees himself as a resource to the HCC. Katie noted that Dan has already met with HAC&TC Natural Resources teacher Dan Gibson. Katie noted that during the site visit, they viewed the game of logging site where hemlock trees were cut. She said the purpose of this discussion is to get feedback from the HCC about what we want in a partnership with HAC&TC Natural Resources Class. Dan reported that he has reviewed the Forest Management Plan. He noted that working with the HAC&TC, we would provide them with a learning lab and that he would make sure that all work is consistent with the Forest Management Plan. There was discussion about what we should be planning regarding forest management in the Town Forest. Katie noted that there has been turnover on the Conservation Commission. She suggested that members read the Forest Management Plan to get a better understanding of the Plan and its recommendations.

Katie noted that all along the HCC has wanted to demonstrate what a sustainable forest looks like. She added that Dan Healy would work closely with teacher Dan Gibson adding that one possibility is to identify a specific area in the Town Forest for the Natural Resources Class to work. Dan Healy used a similar approach in the Brattleboro Town Forest and it has worked out well. Dan said he could assess a few different stands in the Town Forest and make a recommendation to the HCC. It was agreed to meet with Dan in the Town Forest in June after Dan has had a chance to get to know the Town Forest and provide recommendations on a five-acre site for the HAC&TC to work. Ted and Holly agreed to meet with Dan.

4. **Pollinator Collaboration:** Katie reported that the HCC was contacted by David Hammond of the non-profit organization Creating Habitats for Pollinators (CHP) seeking pollinator partners in the Upper Valley. Matt noted that David has worked with Dartmouth College and is interested in helping transform public spaces by planting native wildflowers. CHP could provide planting expertise, equipment and most seed costs. Katie noted that CHP worked on the Mascoma Greenway. The HCC was receptive to the idea and to follow-up.

5. HCC Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle: Katie noted that the event will be taking place at the Bugbee Senior Center Friday evening. She noted that Junction Arts & Media (JAM) agreed to videotape the event. Katie noted that the final line up is:

- Vermont Center for Ecostudies – Dana Williams
- Hartford Garden Friends – Nancy Davis
- Hartford Tree Board – Jeff Arnold
- Hartford Climate Action Committee & Hartford Energy Commission –Dana Clawson
- Hartford Salamander Team – Ben Fletcher
- White River Partnership – Christian Pelletier
- Upper Valley Land Trust – Cassie Bernyk
- Resilient Hartford – Earl Hatley
- Hartford Hub & Hazelwood Forest- Rachel Kent & Birdie Emerson
- Hartford Conservation Commission – Mike Harris & Holly Henderson

The following is the schedule:

- 5:00 p.m. -5:30 p.m. - Set up of tables
- 5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. - Pre-presentation mingle (also can be set up)
- 6:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m. - 5-minute presentation by each organization - will be facilitated by the HCC.
- 7:00 p.m. -7:30 p.m. - Mingle
- 7:30 p.m. -8:00 p.m. - Breakdown/clean up

Katie reported that the Upper Valley Food Co-op will provide refreshments. Chris suggested providing a link about the organizations on the HCC webpage. Katie noted that she will do the introduction. Mike will serve as the MC and Mike and Holly will do the HCC presentation. Holly will set up the trifold display and Chris will be the timekeeper. Katie agreed to put together a program. Matt agreed to get Holly information on Green-Up Hartford schedule for the trifold.

6. Family Forest Frolic: Sky reported that the next Family Forest Frolic event is scheduled for Saturday, March 8th at 1:00 p.m. at the Town Forest. Sky asked the HCC if she could tap one red maple and one sugar maple in the Town Forest for the event. The HCC agreed.

7. Long-term Conservation: Katie reported that Mike had a meeting with the Vermont Law & Graduate School about the Conservation Toolkit Project and that there is a signed agreement between the Town & School. Matt noted that there is a meeting planned for next week and Mike wanted to know if any other HCC members were interested in attending. Holly volunteered to attend.

8. Ottauquechee School Request: Katie reported that she was contacted by the Ottauquechee School principal about participating in an event that the school is sponsoring on Friday, May 2nd. The School's mascot is a wolf. The School is interested in learning about wolf habitat and rewilding. They would like to include a field trip to the Town Forest and hoped the HCC could lead. Ted responded that he would love to do it but will be out of town on 5/2. He will inquire with a friend to see if they could lead the field trip. It was agreed that Sky, Holly and Katie will meet to discuss further.

9. HCC Awards Program: Sky reported that she is looking for feedback on the information that she prepared on the Awards Program. She suggested that the HCC discuss a timeline and a rubric for the awards program before announcing the award program. The HCC agreed.

10. HCC Website: Katie reported that the changes to the webpages were made. She asked the HCC if there were any comments. There were none.

11. HCC Bylaws: Matt reported that the Draft HCC Bylaws are ready to begin the adoption process and add to the April 7th HCC agenda. Matt agreed to post the notice and distribute the bylaws to the HCC Selectboard chair as required.

12. Upcoming HCC Events:

- a. Conservation Mix & Mingle: Friday, 3/7 at 6:00 p.m.
- b. Family Forest Frolic: Saturday 3/8 at 1:00 p.m.
- 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 at 5:30 a.m..
- g. Trails Day: Saturday, 6/7 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon.

13. Announcements/Reports:

- a. HCC Annual Update to the Hartford Selectboard: Katie reported that she attended the February 18th Selectboard Meeting to provide an update of HCC's work. She noted that she focused on HCC events. Katie stated that the Selectboard seemed pleased with the work of the HCC.
- b. Ted Levin: Ted reported that he will be in Colorado for the April 7th HCC meeting and hopes to attend the meeting remotely. He noted that he will be in Costa Rica for the May 5th HCC Meeting and will not be able to attend.
- c. Trails Day Preparations: Chris announced that he would like to meet at the Town Forest sometime in May to discuss preparations for Trails Day.

14. Community Events:

- 1. Cedar Circle Workshops: <https://cedarcirclefarm.org/education/workshops>
- 2. Cedar Circle New Teen Farm Fellowship: <https://cedarcirclefarm.org/education/teen-farm-fellowship>

15. Next HCC Meeting: Katie noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 4/7 at 7:00 p.m.

16. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

17. Action Items:

- a. County Forester Dan Healy will meet with the HCC in the Town Forest in June after Dan has had a chance to get to know the Town Forest and provide recommendations on a five-acre site for the HAC&TC to work.
- b. Ted and Holly agreed to meet with Dan in the Town Forest.
- c. The HCC agreed to explore a partnership with Pollinator Partners in the Upper Valley.
- d. Katie noted that she will do the introduction for the Environmental Mix & Mingle event (ESM&M).
- e. Mike will serve as the M.C. for the ESM&M event.
- f. Mike and Holly will do the HCC presentation for the ESM&M event.
- g. Holly will set up the trifold display for the ESM&M event.
- h. Chris will be the timekeeper for the ESM&M event.
- i. Katie agreed to put together a program for the ESM&M event.
- j. Matt agreed to get Holly information on Green-Up Hartford schedule for the trifold. .

- k. The next Family Forest Frolic event is scheduled for Saturday, March 8th at 1:00 p.m. at the Town Forest.
- l. Holly volunteered to meet with Mike and the Vermont Law and Graduate School about the Conservation Toolkit Project.
- m. Ted will inquire with a friend to see if they could lead a site visit in the Town Forest about wolf habitat and rewilding. It was agreed that Sky, Holly and Katie will meet to discuss further.
- n. At the 4/7 meeting, the HCC will discuss a timeline and a rubric for the awards program.
- o. Matt will post the bylaws and email to the Selectboard chair as required.

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).