

Approved Meeting Notes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
May 5, 2025

Members Present: Chris Beetham, Holly Henderson and chair Katie Mann.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Erik Krauss, Parks and Recreation Commission Liaison Tom McCleary and Henry Hazen.

A hybrid Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting in compliance of the Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, May 5th in Room 2 of the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction, Vermont. Katie Mann called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Introductions followed. Katie noted that there is not a quorum. As a result, the meeting will focus on updates and public comments with no action taken.

1. Public Comments: Katie asked if there were any public comments.

- a. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Kiosk:** Henry Hazen reported that the kiosk signage is pretty faded and believes that new signage is needed. Katie responded that the HCC will look into it.
- b. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Encampment:** Henry reported that there is a homeless encampment near the Backwater Trail. He expressed concern that it should not be tolerated. He expressed concern about the safety of hikers, the mess that encampments create and the fact that the property has a conservation easement and prohibits camping. Matt Osborn responded that the Town has spoken to the campers and notified them that they are not allowed to camp on Town property. Katie asked who Henry contact should if he has questions or concerns. Matt responded that Henry could start by contacting him. Other Town departments are involved, and Matt can communicate with them. Henry suggested that the Conservation Commission erect a “No Camping” sign at the trailhead kiosk.
- c. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Management Plan:** Henry asked if there is a management plan for the property. Matt responded yes. It was written many years ago and should be updated. He suggested sending it out to the Conservation Commission members and discussing it at the June 2nd meeting. Katie agreed.
- d. **Downed Trees:** Tom McCleary asked who he should report to if there is a downed tree in the Hurricane Forest Wildlife Refuge. Matt responded the Parks and Recreation Department. Tom asked about the Town Forest. Matt responded to contact him, and he will communicate to the HCC and trail volunteers.

2. Trails Day Preparations: Chris stated that there are some downed trees in the Town Forest from the April ice storm that hit higher elevations in town. Some trail volunteers have already removed several downed trees. Chris and Matt noted that there are others that need to be cleaned up and could be done on Trails Day. Chris reported that Tom Kahl volunteered to coordinate placing a metal roof over the wood-shingle roof of the Town Forest Kiosk. Katie asked about painting supplies for blazing the main trails. Matt responded that he has paint. Chris reported that the trails are drying out. Katie noted that Trails Day is Saturday, June 7th. Katie will ask Mike if he would be willing to grill on Trails Day. Matt noted that he will need a materials list ahead of Trails Day.

3. Vernal Pool Walk: Katie reported that there was a good turnout for the Vernal Pool Walk with plenty of salamanders.

4. **Ottauquechee School Town Forest Visit:** Katie reported that there were 40 students who participated in the 5/2 Ottauquechee School visit to the Town Forest. Katie noted that Holly and Sky helped out. They broke the students into two groups of twenty and discussed the history of the Town Forest and management that is focused on a variety of wildlife.
5. **HCC Bylaw Amendments:** Erik noted that Matt will be bringing the HCC Bylaw Amendments to the Selectboard at an upcoming meeting.
6. **Upcoming HCC Events:** Katie noted that the events are being well-publicized.
 - a. Family Forest Frolic: Saturday 5/10 at 1:00 p.m.
 - b. Migratory Bird Walk: Saturday, 5/17 at 5:30 a.m.
 - c. Trails Day: Saturday, 6/7 from 9:00 a.m. - Noon.
7. **Next HCC Meeting:** Katie noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 6/2 at 7:00 p.m.
8. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.
9. **Action Items:**
 - a. Katie agreed to look at the Maanawaka Conservation Area Kiosk signage.
 - b. Matt suggested sending the Maanawaka Conservation Area Management Plan to the HCC and discussing it at the June 2nd meeting.
 - c. The next Family Forest Frolic event is scheduled for Saturday, May 10th at 1:00 p.m. at the Town Forest.
 - d. Katie will ask Mike if he would be willing to grill on Trails Day.
 - e. Matt noted that he will need a materials list ahead of Trails Day.
 - f. Matt will inquire about getting the HCC Bylaws on a Selectboard meeting agenda.
10. **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).