

Draft Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
June 2, 2025

Members Present: Chris Beetham, Holly Henderson, Mary Hutchins, Ted Levin and chair Katie Mann.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Erik Krauss.

A hybrid Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting in compliance of the Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, June 2nd 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 a roll call.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Katie asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes of 4/7/25. There were none. Mary made a motion to approve the minutes of 4/7/25. The motion was seconded by Chris and unanimously approved. Katie asked if there were any changes to the draft meeting notes of 5/5/25. There were none. She said the meeting notes of 5/5/25 are accepted as written.
2. **Public Comments:** Katie asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
3. **Green-Up Day:** Matt reported that he is still waiting for Green-Up Day invoices from Casella and the Department of Public Works. He reported that we had 440 volunteers, which is slightly above normal. Matt noted that White River Subaru accepted tires collected from Hartford's Green-Up Day and paid for their disposal. This saved the Town hundreds of dollars. The HCC acknowledged the generosity of White River Subaru and signed a thank you note to them.
4. **HCC Tool Inventory:** Matt distributed an excel spreadsheet of all the HCC tools, materials and supplies. He noted that the tools are being stored in the Clifford Park Barn and materials and supplies are being stored in his office. Matt reported that since the Town Hall basement is in the 100 year flood zone, we are not allowed to store items there. He noted that Resilient Hartford had tools stolen from the Clifford Park Barn so he is looking for another location. Mary volunteered to store the tools in her barn. The HCC agreed. Matt will bring the tools to Trails Day and Katie will deliver the tools to Mary.
5. **Hartford Community Coalition Block Party:** Katie reported that the Community Coalition Block Party is scheduled for Wednesday, June 25th from 5-8 p.m. Katie asked if the HCC would like to have a booth for the event. The HCC agreed. Katie and Holly said they are available. Chris said he might be available. Matt noted that the Community Coalition asked if the HCC if they could manage the compost operation for the event. The HCC agreed. Matt agreed to contact the Community Coalition about reserving a table and helping with the composting.
6. **Town Forest Ice Storm & Microburst Damage:** Matt noted that there were downed trees in the Town Forest from the April 12th ice storm. He asked if anyone was aware of any damage from the May 17th microburst. No one had seen or heard anything. Chris said we could include tree removal on Trails Day. Katie asked about the Town chainsaw policy. Matt responded that all trail volunteers need to sign a volunteer waiver form.
7. **Town Forest Trails Day Event:** Katie reported that Trails Day is Saturday, June 7th from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Matt reported that staff have been promoting the event using a variety of methods. Chris noted that Tom Kahl is the team leader for the kiosk roof replacement. The wood-shake roof is being replaced with a metal roof. Matt ordered the materials Chris noted that he will be replacing a

damaged small bridge and there will be general trail maintenance. Matt noted with more recent downpours; we need to be strategic in placing water bars along steep sections of trail. He noted that while hiking in the Hurricane Forest Wildlife Refuge and Town Forest recently, he saw evidence of trail erosion. Chris agreed and said if there is reoccurring erosion, we should either relocate or close sections of trail. Chris noted that the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association will be bringing their trailer for the event which has dozens of tools.

8. **Family Forest Frolic:** Katie reported that there were seven people in attendance for the May 10th Family Forest Frolic event. She noted that Sky took a summer position and will not be available to lead the Frolic events over the summer.
9. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Management Plan:** Matt distributed the Maanawaka Conservation Area Management Plan that was prepared in 1999. He noted that it needs to be updated. Katie suggested that the HCC review the Plan and discuss it at the 7/7 HCC meeting. The HCC agreed.
10. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Kiosk Signage:** Katie reported that she checked the kiosk signage and thinks it is in decent shape. She noted Henry Hazen's request that the HCC post a "No Camping" on the kiosk. The HCC agreed. Matt agreed to erect the sign.
11. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Power Line Herbicide Treatment:** Katie reported that the Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO) treats the vegetation under the powerline with an herbicide. Mike was looking into it. Erik said that a property owner has to pay a small fee for the right to refuse herbicide application under the powerline. Holly volunteered to talk to the Upper Valley Land Trust about herbicide use and the easement.
12. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Encampment:** Matt reported that he heard from Town Health Officer Brett Mayfield that the homeless people vacated the property but left the structure and some belongings. Katie reported that she visited the property and acknowledged that the site should be cleaned up. Ted noted that there is a big homeless problem in Hartford and the Upper Valley. Matt noted that the Town policy is that camping is not allowed on Town property. Katie suggested that the HCC clean up the site at some point once it is clear that there is no one living there. The HCC agreed.
13. **Conservation Fund Donation:** Matt reported that the Town received a check from the estate of Linda Wilson last week that was deposited in the Town's conservation fund. Matt noted that Linda was on the Conservation Commission for eight years, serving as chair for half of that time. Linda also served on the Town Plan Steering Committee and helped shape Hartford land use policy.
14. **HCC Awards Program:** Mary said that Sky and her are ready to initiate the application process for the HCC Awards Program. Katie suggested using a standard google form for nominations. The HCC agreed. Katie volunteered to develop the form.
15. **Ottauquechee Trail:** Holly offered to look into the Ottauquechee Trail effort and report back to the HCC.
16. **Upcoming HCC Events:**
 - a. Trails Day: Saturday, 6/7 9:00 a.m. - Noon
17. **Announcements/Reports:**
 - a. Chris Beetham Announcement: Chris announced that in July, he will be stepping down from the HCC since he will be moving to Rutland. The HCC thanked Chris for his service and wished him well.

- b. 5/17 Bird Walk: Ted reported that by the numbers, there were 41 species of birds and nine participants. There also were two amphibian species and one mammal among the raindrops.
- c. Walk with County Forester: Katie reported that County Forester Dan Healy offered to do a forest walk with the HCC to look for an appropriate site for the Hartford Area Career & Technology Center Natural Resources Class to conduct their annual Game of Logging chainsaw training. Holly and Ted expressed their interest in participating.

18. Community Events:

- a. Cedar Circle Workshops: <https://cedarcirclefarm.org/education/workshops>

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

20. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

21. Action Items:

- a. Matt will inquire about getting the HCC Bylaws on a Selectboard meeting agenda.
- b. Mary volunteered to store HCC tools in her barn.
- c. Matt will bring the HCC tools to Trails Day and Katie will deliver the tools to Mary.
- d. Katie and Holly said they are available to cover the HCC table for the 6/25 Community Coalition Block and help with composting.
- e. Matt agreed to contact the Community Coalition about reserving a table and helping with the composting for the event.
- f. The HCC will review the Maanawaka Conservation Area Management Plan and discuss it at the 7/7 HCC meeting.
- g. Matt agreed to erect a “No Camping” sign at the Maanawaka Conservation Area trailhead kiosk.
- h. Holly volunteered to talk to the Upper Valley Land Trust about herbicide use and the Maanawaka Conservation Area conservation easement.
- i. Katie suggested that the HCC clean up the homeless site at the Maanawaka Conservation Area at some point once it is clear that there is no one living there.
- j. Katie volunteered to develop a nomination form for the HCC Award.
- k. Holly and Ted expressed their interest in participating in the Town Forest walk with the County Forester Dan Healy.

22. 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).