

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
November 3, 2025

Members Present: James Donahey, Mary Hutchins, Ted Levin and chair Katie Mann.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Erik Krauss and Wilder resident Tad Montgomery.

A hybrid Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, November 3rd in Room 2 of the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction, Vermont. Chair 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 the Minutes of 10/6/25:** Katie noted a correction. She asked if there were any other corrections. There were none. Mary made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/6 with the noted correction. It was seconded by Ted and unanimously approved.
2. **Approval of the Minutes of 10/20/25:** Katie asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes of 10/20/25. There were none. James made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/20 as written. It was seconded by Mary and unanimously approved.
3. **Public Comments:** Katie asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
4. **Hartford Area Career & Technology Center Natural Resources Class Game of Logging:** James reported that he walked around Stand #2 with County Forester Dan Healy to mark about 20 trees appropriate for the Game of Logging class that would release adjacent trees to grow and follow the Forest Management Plan. The cut trees would be left on the ground to decay.

Katie noted that the HCC expressed concern that 20 trees twice a year seemed like a lot of trees to cut. James noted that Dan Healy didn't think it was a lot and he agreed since there is thinning prescribed in the Forest Management Plan. It was agreed that HAC&TC needs to provide greater notice to the HCC when requesting permission to do work in the Town Forest. Ted suggested reviewing the request every year. James suggested designating an area in the Town Forest for the Natural Resources Class to work. There was consensus for the HCC to meet in the spring to look at a specific area for the NR Class to work. In preparation for the site visit, Katie asked the HCC to review the Forest Management Plan.

5. **Chestnut Tree Planting:** Katie reported that HAC&TC Natural Resources Class Teacher Dan Gibson agreed to work with the HCC and plant the chestnut trees in the Town Forest. James noted that he thinks that we can find appropriate locations to plant the chestnut trees.
6. **Town Forest Winter Natural History Walk:** Ted reported that he would like to select a date for the Annual Conservation Commission Natural History Walk in the Town Forest. He agreed to lead the walk on Saturday, January 17th at 7:00 a.m.
7. **Town Forest Kiosk Trees:** Katie reported that she talked to HAC&TC Natural Resources teacher Dan Gibson about taking down the dead pine trees near the Trailhead Kiosk. She agreed to follow up with Dan.
8. **Town Forest Wildlife Habitat Assessment:** Ted suggested that the HCC obtain wildlife cameras to monitor wildlife activity in the Town Forest. He recommends installing the cameras after snowfall to

see where the wildlife are moving first. The HCC agreed. He also suggested inquiring about participation of a high school biology class. Katie suggested involving the UVM Naturalist Program. James stated that either Holly or he will contact the UVM Naturalist Program.

9. Maanawaka Conservation Area Management Plan: Katie noted that she received the Maanawaka Conservation Area plant inventory and will review it.

10. Maanawaka Conservation Area Posting: Matt reported that James and he posted Maanawaka on Friday. James noted that several of the plywood backings for the signs have rotted. He suggested replacing them with pressure treated lumber. James offered to price out lumber and get back to the HCC. James volunteered to make new sign backings. Katie thanked James for volunteering.

11. Maanawaka Conservation Area Encampment: Katie noted that the clean-up of the homeless encampment is planned for Sunday, 11/9 at 10:00 a.m. Matt reported that there is a large number of items from the encampment by the road and that it is too much for the HCC to deal with. He will talk to the Town Manager about seeing if Town staff can dispose of the items. Katie noted that the Sunday's HCC event will focus on returning the encampment areas back to their natural state.

12. Family Forest Frolic: Katie reported that Sky will lead the next Family Forest Frolic in January.

13. Upcoming HCC Events:

- a. Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association (UVMBA) Monthly Meeting: James reported that he will be attending the monthly meeting of the UVMBA on Wednesday.
- b. Town Forest Natural History Walk: Ted Levin will lead the winter Natural History Walk on Saturday, January 17th at 7:00 a.m.
- c. Family Forest Frolic in January (date to be determined).

14. Announcements/Reports:

- a. Future Land Use Maps: Erik noted that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission has submitted a Future Land Use Map for Hartford which the Planning Commission and staff are currently reviewing. He asked Matt if the HCC should review the maps. Matt responded yes if HCC members have the time. He noted that it takes a lot of time to review the maps and the many land use categories.

15. Community Events: Katie announced that she posted new links.

- a. AVCC : <https://vtconservation.com/fall-webinars-from-the-community-wildlife-program/>
- b. Vermont Woodlands Association: <https://vermontwoodlands.org/upcoming-events>
- c. Vermont Coverts; Woodlands for Wildlife: <https://vtcoverts.org/calendar.html>
- d. Upper Valley Land Trust: <https://uvlt.org/events/list/Adjournment>

16. Next HCC Meeting: Katie noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 12/1 at 7:00 p.m.

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

18. Action Items:

- a. The HCC agreed to meet in the Town Forest next spring to look at a specific area for the HAC&TC Natural Resources Class to work.
- b. In preparation of the spring site visit, Katie asked the HCC to review the Forest Management Plan.

- c. HAC&TC Natural Resources Class Teacher Dan Gibson agreed to work with the HCC and plant the chestnut trees in the Town Forest.
- d. Katie agreed to follow-up with teacher Dan.Gibson about removing the dead pine trees near the trailhead kiosk.
- e. Ted agreed to lead the Town Forest Natural History Walk on Saturday, January 17th at 7:00 a.m.
- f. James stated that either Holly or he will contact the UVM Naturalist Program.about the Wildlife Habitat Assessment.
- g. Matt will talk to the Town Manager about the encampment materials by the Maanawaka Conservation Area.
- h. James offered to price out lumber for the Maanawaka Conservation Area No Hunting sign backings.
- i. James volunteered to make the sign backings for the Maanawaka Conservation Area No Hunting signs.
- j. On Sunday, 11/9 at 10:00 a.m., the HCC will meet at the Maanawaka Conservation Area to return the former encampment areas back to their natural state.
- k. Sky will lead a Family Forest Frolic in January.

19. HCC Member Terms: Sky Claud, (7/31/27), James Donahey, (7/13/29), 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).