

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
March 2, 2026

Members Present: Sky Claud, James Donahey, Holly Henderson, Mary Hutchins, Ted Levin and chair Katie Mann.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

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

A hybrid Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) Meeting in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, March 2nd 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 and introductions.

1. **Approval of the Minutes of 2/2/26:** Katie asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes of 2/2/26. There were no changes. Ted made a motion to approve the minutes of 2/2/26 as written. The motion was seconded by Mary and unanimously approved.
2. **Public Comments:** Katie asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
3. **Conservator of the Year Award:** Katie reported that we had talked about resuming the Conservator of the Year award this spring. She recommended promoting the award at the Mix & Mingle event and presenting it at the annual Hartford Community Coalition Block Party. Others agreed. Katie suggested creating a flyer with a QR code for the Mix & Mingle. Holly volunteered.
4. **Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle:** Katie reported that the third annual Mix & Mingle event is scheduled for Thursday, March 12th at the Bugbee Senior Center. Katie noted that 26 organizations confirmed that they will be attending, of which 10 organizations will be giving five-minute presentations. She stated that Junction Arts & Media will be recording the event.

The following is the schedule:

4:00-5:00	Dinner
5:00-5:30	Set-up
5:30-6:00	Pre-mingle
6:00-7:00	Presentations
7:00-8:00	Mingle
8:00-8:30	Clean-up

Katie stated that she will set up the trifold and provide a list of HCC spring events. Katie stated that the event will be advertised on the Town website, Daybreak, Town newsletter, Hartford List Serv, Upper Valley List Serv, libraries, Bugbee Senior Center and flyers around Town.

Holly offered to post the event on the Vermont Standard's Nature Groupy website.

Tad volunteered to prepare a press release for the event and post on the Valley News Calendar.

Ted volunteered to edit the press release and send to Upper Valley List Serv.

Katie will do the introductions.

Tad will manage the slides.

Katie noted that Mike volunteered to be the timekeeper.

Matt will provide refreshments.

5. **Town Forest Wildlife Habitat Assessment:** James reported that he reached out to I-Naturalist and that he posted a flyer with a QR Code at the Town Forest Kiosk regarding the Hartford Biodiversity Project. Katie thanked James for doing that.
6. **Town Forest Chestnut Tree Planting:** Holly reported that there are 15-20 chestnut trees to plant in the Town Forest. James was asked if the Town Forest has enough areas to support that many trees. He responded that 15 is the right amount. James suggested enclosures for the trees to protect them from deer. The HCC agreed. James offered to price out the protective enclosures and coordinate purchasing them with Matt. There was discussion about the best time to plant the trees. James noted that if the trees are potted, it doesn't matter if they are planted in the spring or fall. Holly will coordinate with Daniel Jones of the American Chestnut Foundation and loop back with Dan Gibson of the Hartford Area Career & Technology Center regarding a date for the planting.
7. **Town Forest Family Forest Frolic:** Sky reported that the next Family Forest Frolic will take place on Saturday, March 14th at 10:00 a.m. in the Town Forest. The event will have a maple sugar theme.
8. **Town Forest Conservation Easement:** Katie asked the HCC if they are interested in having a representative from the Upper Valley Land Trust come to a future HCC meeting to talk about the conservation easement process. The HCC agreed. Katie will contact the Upper Valley Land Trust to see if they are available to attend the 4/6 or 5/4 HCC meeting.
9. **Maanawaka Management Plan:** Holly, James and Holly agreed to work on the Plan in the coming months.
10. **Ottawaquechee Trail:** Holly noted that with Mike's return to the HCC, she would like to pass this project back to him.
11. **Elections:** Katie reported that April is the month that HCC holds elections for chair, vice-chair and treasurer. She indicated that she has been chair for a few years and would like to step down.
12. **Announcements/Reports:**
 - a. Conservation Commission Gathering: Holly reported that Mike and she attended a Conservation Commission gathering last month in Bradford. The meeting was intended to encourage information sharing and collaboration. She noted that managing deer populations and invasive plants were hot topics at the meeting. Future meetings are planned.
 - b. HCC Annual Presentation to the Selectboard: Katie reported that on February 17th, she went before the Selectboard to provide them with an update of the Conservation Commission's work. She noted that the meeting went well. At the meeting, a Selectboard member suggested that the HCC provide a liaison to the Planning Commission. Erik suggested regularly reviewing the Planning Commission agenda to see if there is a project of interest to the HCC. Tad suggested that the HCC liaison establish a relationship with Planning Commission chair John Reid. Ted suggested asking John to come to a HCC meeting to talk about the Planning Commission's work. Holly stated that she is interested and will contact John Reid.
 - c. Fungus Meeting: Tad reported that he attended a meeting on fungus on Friday.

- d. Biodiversity for a Livable Climate: Tad reported that he has participated in Biodiversity for a Livable Climate sessions and is really impressed by it. He said he will share information with the HCC on the organization's website.
- e. Election Day: Erik reported that tomorrow is election day and he encourages everyone to vote. He noted that the Selectboard will decide on commission liaison positions. She asked Matt to put this on the 4/6 agenda. He stated that he has enjoyed serving as the Selectboard Liaison to the HCC. He hopes to continue as the liaison, but noted that the liaison process isn't always smooth. Katie responded that she appreciates Erik's service as a Selectboard liaison.

13. Upcoming HCC Events:

- a. Environmental Stewardship Mix & Mingle: Thursday, 3/12 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- b. Family Forest Frolic: Saturday, 3/14 at 10:00 a.m.
- c. Next HCC Meeting: Monday, 4/6 at 7:00 p.m.
- d. Vernal Pool Walk: Saturday, April 12th with a back-up date Saturday, April 25th.
- e. Maanawaka Wildflower Walk: Sunday, May 3rd at 10:00 a.m.
- f. Green up Day: Saturday, 5/2, 8:30 a.m. - Noon
- g. Migratory Bird Walk: Saturday, 5/16 at 5:00 a.m.

14. Community Events:

- 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>

15. **Next HCC Meeting:** Katie noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 4/6 at 7:00 p.m.

16. **Adjournment:** Holly made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mary and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

17. Action Items:

- a. Katie recommended promoting the award at the Mix & Mingle event and presenting it at the annual Hartford Community Coalition Block Party. Others agreed. Katie suggested creating a flyer with a QR code for the Mix & Mingle. Holly volunteered.
- b. The third annual Mix & Mingle event is scheduled for Thursday, March 12th at the Bugbee Senior Center.
- c. Katie stated that she will set up the HCC trifold and provide a list of HCC spring events.
- d. The event will be advertised on the Town website, Daybreak, Upper Valley List Serv, Town newsletter, List Serv, libraries, Bugbee Senior Center and flyers around Town.
- e. Tad volunteered to prepare a press release for the event and post it on the Valley News Calendar.
- f. Katie will do the introductions.
- g. Tad will manage the slides.
- h. Holly offered to post the event on the Vermont Standard's Nature Groupy website.
- i. Mike volunteered to be the timekeeper.
- j. Matt will provide refreshments.
- k. James offered to price materials for protective enclosures for the chestnut trees and coordinate purchasing them with Matt.
- l. Holly will coordinate with Daniel Jones of the American Chestnut Foundation and loop back with Dan Gibson of the Hartford Area Career & Technology Center regarding a date for the planting.

- m. Sky reported that she will lead the next Family Forest Frolic which will take place on Saturday, March 14th at 10:00 a.m. in the Town Forest.
- n. The HCC agreed to invite the Upper Valley Land Trust to speak at an upcoming HCC meeting about the process and cost of providing a conservation easement for the Town Forest.
- o. Holly, James and Holly agreed to work on the Plan in the coming months.
- p. Katie reported that April is the month that HCC holds elections for chair, vice-chair and treasurer.
- q. Matt agreed to add elections to the 4/6 agenda.
- r. Holly stated that she will contact Planning Commission chair John Reid about designating a HCC members as a liaison to the Planning Commission.
- s. Tad will share information with the HCC about the Biodiversity for a Livable Climate organization.

18. 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, (10/27/29) and Katie Mann, chair (3/20/27).