

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
February 5, 2018

Members Present: Angie Emerson, Mary Hutchins, Tom Kahl, Shawn Kelley and chair Jon Bouton.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: None.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Jct. on Monday, February 5, 2018 in Room 2. Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

1. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes or additions to the agenda. Tom Kahl requested adding winter and spring HCC events. Matt Osborn responded the Hartford Master Plan. The HCC agreed.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes to the Draft Minutes of January 2, 2018. Being none, Jon stated that the minutes are approved by unanimous consent as written.
3. **Winter/Spring HCC Events:** Tom Kahl suggested developing a schedule of HCC winter and spring events that could be promoted. The HCC agreed. The following are dates for the upcoming HCC winter and spring events:
 - HCC Snowshoe: Saturday, February 17th Hartford Town Forest
 - Vernal Pool Walk: Saturday, April 21st Hartford Town Forest
 - Green-Up Day: Saturday, May 5th Hartford Town Hall
 - Trails Day: Saturday, June 2nd Hartford Town Forest
4. **Natural Resources Review:** Matt Osborn reported that he spoke to Lori Hirshfield about the draft letter and she has some suggestions. Matt suggested meeting with Lori and Tom Kahl to revise the letter. Tom suggested putting together a list of resources for property owners as recommended by Chuck Wooster. The HCC agreed.
5. **HCC Bylaws:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any comments about the proposed bylaw revisions. Angie Emerson asked about the three HCC committees (Land Management, Land Acquisition and Education and Information). Jon responded that in his time with the HCC, only the Land Management Committee has been active. He noted that the bylaws make it optional. Other committees could be formed as well. The HCC agreed to accept the draft bylaws and place the item on the March 5th HCC Meeting agenda for a formal vote. Matt Osborn noted that the bylaws require a 2/3 vote to for approval and the Selectboard chair must receive the draft at least 14 days prior to the vote. Matt will take care of the notice to the Selectboard chair.
6. **Town Forest Trails:** Angie Emerson stated that she has spoken with Tim Schaal of the Land Management Subcommittee and Town Forest Steering Committee about his desire to keep the Town Forest trails assessment moving forward. He expressed concern that the Town Forest Recreation Planning Project will slow down the trails assessment process and the production of a hiking/mountain biking trail map. Tim recommended the establishment of a Map Team composed of Tim, Jon Bouton and Dana Hazen. Angie recommended the Map Team continue to work on the trails map with two goals in mind: first, use the map that has been recently produced to plan a spring/summer evaluation assessment of all trails; and two develop the content of the map (water bodies, contours, color, boundaries, etc.). Both the proposed plan for assessing the trails and the proposed content of the map can be presented to the Recreation Steering Committee meeting in May. The HCC agreed. She believes that a draft trails map can be completed as part of the Recreation Management Plan update and not be delayed. The HCC agreed.
7. **Community Resilience Organization Hartford (CROH):** Matt Osborn reported that CROH has decided to move away from Resilience Week to monthly resilience workshops. He also noted that CROH is partnering with the Bugbee Senior Center and Antioch University New England on a “resilient seniors” project that will address the vulnerability of seniors during extreme weather events. The project will include community meetings and a survey of seniors.

- 8. Town Forest Recreation Planning Project:** Jon Bouton reported that the Town Forest Recreation Planning Project had a successful kick-off on January 23rd. The day included a walk in the Town Forest, lunch meeting with consultants, Steering Committee meeting and an open house. The open house was well-attended with approximately 50-70 people attending. Jon stated that he liked the format of the open house and noted that there were lots of engaging conversations.

Regarding the Town Forest survey, Matt Osborn suggested keeping it open through Town Meeting Day, Saturday, March 3rd. The HCC agreed. The on-line survey has been released and promoted and the Town is awaiting arrival of hard copies of the survey.

- 9. Hartford Master Plan:** Matt Osborn reported that work has begun on the update of the Hartford Master Plan. The Plan was last updated in 2014 and is due to expire in May, 2019. The goal is to get a draft to the Selectboard in April, 2019. Matt noted that the Natural Resources chapter needs to be updated and this is an opportunity for the Conservation Commission to help shape it. The Natural Resources chapter was last updated in 2003. Matt noted that the Plan update will be in two phases: a modest update for 2019 and a more involved update a few years after. He suggested reviewing the existing Natural Resources chapter. The HCC agreed to placing the item on the March 5th agenda.

10. Announcements/Reports:

- a. Town Meeting Table: The HCC agreed to have an HCC table at Town Meeting and include HCC brochures, HCC events, Town Forest surveys, Town Forest trails map and HCC poster boards. Jon Bouton agreed to reserve a table. Tom Kahl volunteered to staff the table.
- b. Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission Regional Plan: Matt Osborn reported that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission continues work on the Regional Plan update. He noted that the goal is to bring the Plan to the TRORC Board to consider adoption in June, 2018. Prior to that, there will be public hearings. Matt will request an updated schedule.
- c. Basin 10 Tactical Basin Plan Meeting: Matt Osborn reported that he attended a Clean Water Advisory Committee Meeting at the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission to discuss the Basin 10 Plan on January 10th. Basin 10 includes the Ottawaquechee River and Black Rivers. The Basin Coordinator for the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is Marie Caduto. Matt noted that he will e-mail information on the Plan to the HCC.
- d. Act 171 Webinar: Matt Osborn reported that on January 29th, Planning Commission members Bruce Riddle and Peter Merrill joined HCC members Jon Bouton and Angie Emerson for the webinar. Act 171 requires Regional Plans and Town Plans to identify areas that are important as “forest blocks” and “habitat connectors” and plan for development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation. Matt noted that it was a very good webinar. He also noted that the Conservation Commission has been doing this since the 2007 Master Plan.
- e. AVCC Grant Application: Matt Osborn reported that the Association for Vermont Conservation Commissions has a mini-grant program with a maximum award of \$600 to be used for conservation projects. The application deadline is May 4th. The HCC agreed to consider an application related to the Town Forest trails.
- f. Carbon Sequestration: Tom Kahl reported that he will be attending a carbon sequestration monthly series beginning February 24th and ending August 18th. The series will take place at the Marsh Billing Rockefeller National Historic Park in Woodstock.
- g. HCC Snowshoe: The HCC agreed to hold the annual HCC snowshoe event in the Town Forest on Saturday, February 17th. Angie Emerson volunteered to lead the event which will be co-sponsored with the Green Mountain Club. Matt agreed to develop a flyer and promote the event.

- 11. Next Meeting:** Jon Bouton noted that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 5th.

- 12. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.