

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
March 6, 2017

Members Present: Dana Hazen, Mary Hutchins, Tom Kahl, Shawn Kelley and chair Jon Bouton.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Hartford High School Senior Keith Illingworth.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Monday, March 6, 2017 in Meeting Room 2. Chair Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

1. Trails Project: High School Student Keith Illingworth was back before the HCC to discuss his proposal to create more sustainable mountain bike trails in the Town Forest.

To begin the project, Keith is proposing work on the following trails:

- Simonds Way
- West Side Loop
- Snowmobile reroute
- Pine Drop

Jon Bouton expressed concern about the steepness of Pine Drop. He suggested holding off on that section. Matt Osborn asked if Keith could work on the South Side Trail instead. Keith agreed. Keith noted that he will sign a volunteer consent form and will have any volunteers assisting him to do the same. Jon Bouton suggested that a written agreement with Keith on the project be prepared. He also suggested that Keith prepare a materials list and provide it to the HCC. Keith agreed.

Regarding the skills park, the HCC agreed that the Town Forest isn't the right place for it. Tom Kahl noted that the Town Forest is a multi-use area in a natural setting. Mary Hutchins agreed and stated that she would not like to see the Town Forest become a major mountain bike destination. Matt Osborn reported that he spoke to Parks and Recreation Department Director Tad Nunez about locating the skills park in one of the town parks. Due to current staffing limitations and maintenance requirements, Tad did not want to take on a skills park at this time.

Jon Bouton noted that trails should be properly designed and suggested adhering to the standards of the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA). The HCC agreed.

As for next steps, Keith stated that he will wait for the trails to dry out before undertaking the trails work. Jon Bouton stated that he is very excited about the project. The HCC agreed. Jon thanked Keith for coming to the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes: Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes to the Draft Minutes of February 6th. Being none, Jon stated that the minutes are approved by unanimous consent as written.

3. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes or additions to the agenda. Matt Osborn suggested adding the Regional Plan, LL Bean and the Hazen Trail and Lake Pinneo Milfoil. The Commission agreed.
4. **BioFinder Workshop:** Matt Osborn reported that a series of regional workshops on BioFinder, are being scheduled by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Matt noted that a workshop has been tentatively planned for Tuesday, April 11th at the Hartford Area Career Technology Center.
5. **Land Management Subcommittee:** Jon Bouton reported that he has spoken to several individuals about reconvening the LMS meetings. Matt Osborn noted that he has a few people to contact as well. Jon suggested conducting a doodle poll in the coming weeks for a LMS Meeting in early April. The HCC agreed.
6. **Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission Regional Plan:** Matt Osborn reported that a Draft update of several chapters of the Plan were recently completed. They include:
 - Definitions
 - Energy
 - Healthy Communities
 - History and Development
 - Implementation
 - Working Landscapes

Matt noted that Planning Commission chair Bruce Riddle suggested would like to schedule a Planning Commission workshop to discuss the proposed changes and invite the Conservation Commission. Matt agreed to send the HCC a link to the Regional Plan changes. Matt noted that public hearings on the proposed changes are scheduled for April 12th and April 13th.

7. **LL Bean & Hazen Trail:** Matt Osborn reported that he was contacted by LL Bean seeking permission to use the Hazen Trail for group hikes approximately 5-6 times a year. Matt noted that the hikes are usually capped at 10 participants with a maximum of eight cars parked at the trailhead. Matt did note that they had a larger group (20) for the 4th of July hike to view the fireworks. The next hike is scheduled for April 8th. The HCC agreed to allowing the group to use the trailhead to sponsor hikes.
8. **Lake Pinneo Milfoil:** Matt Osborn reported that the Quechee Lakes Landowners Association (QLLA) met with Town Officials last week to discuss their plan to treat Eurasian Milfoil with the herbicide Sonar. Milfoil was discovered in over 70% of the Lake in 2016. The 2011 Irene Flood was the likely culprit. Matt stated that the Quechee well is located near Lake Pinneo and the Department of Public Works wants to make sure that the well is not impacted by the herbicide. QLLA will have to apply for a permit with the State before the herbicide can be applied. According to Solitude Lake Management, the company working with QLLA, Sonar will be applied to target milfoil at 5 parts per billion. The drinking water standard is 20 parts per billion. Matt agreed to forward e-mails about Sonar to the HCC.

- 9. Clean Water Advisory Committee:** Matt Osborn reported that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission has formed a Clean Water Advisory Committee. Matt has been appointed by the Hartford Selectboard to represent the Town. The Committee will be meeting on March 28th. Matt stated that he will keep the HCC apprised of the Committee's work.
- 10. Lower Hurricane Reservoir:** Tom Kahl presented a series of photographs of the conservation pond and outflow of the former Lower Hurricane Reservoir. He noted that it appears that there has been some sloughing of the north bank of the outflow. Jon Bouton stated that he would like to see a more natural appearance of the outflow which will eventually happen over time. Tom stated that he would like to revisit the site when the snow has melted in order to determine the location of the water level in relation to the engineering plans. Shawn Kelley volunteered to assist Tom. Shawn noted that there could be silting taking place.
- 11. Town Forest Kiosk Display:** Matt Osborn reported that he replaced the trails map and updated notices at the Town Forest kiosk. Matt provided the HCC with the updated signage. He noted that we need to recognize the White River Junction Rotary Club and Boy Scout Chandler Connor for their work on the kiosk. Jon Bouton suggested a plaque and volunteered to come up with the language for it. Mary Hutchins volunteered to produce the plaque.
- Tom Kahl reported that he picked up three automobile tires that were discarded by the kiosk. Matt Osborn said we can dispose of them during the Green-Up Day effort.
- 12. Leahy Environmental Summit & High Meadows Watershed Grant:** Matt Osborn reported that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) will be applying for a High Meadows Watershed Grant to do watershed public outreach and education in the Ottawaquechee River watershed. TRORC and partners have been invited to a two-day workshop at the ECHO Museum in Burlington on March 24th and 25th. He asked if a HCC Member is available to attend the training. Shawn Kelley responded that he might be available.
- 13. HCC Brochures:** Mary Hutchins reported that she completed the revisions to the bear brochure. Matt Osborn noted that he printed the brochure for Community Day. Matt added that the brochure will be uploaded on the Conservation Commission webpage with the other HCC Brochures. Matt agreed to print more brochures. Tom Kahl volunteered to distribute the brochures to the four libraries.
- 14. Possible Conservation Easement Bliss Road:** Matt Osborn reported that he was contacted by a Bliss Road property owner who expressed an interest in pursuing a conservation easement for their 65.6 acre lot. Matt noted that the property is adjacent to the Town Forest, has a large wetlands complex and is located within the Wildlife Connector Overlay District. The HCC was very enthusiastic about the prospect of a conservation easement for this property and noted that the HCC has designated \$5,000 from the conservation fund to go toward conservation easements.
- 15. HCC Budget:** Jon Bouton reported that the town budget will be voted on tomorrow.
- 16. Announcements/Reports:**

- a. Recruiting New HCC Member: Jon Bouton noted that with the addition of Angela Emerson to the HCC, there is one remaining opening.
- b. Community Day: Jon Bouton reported that the HCC had a table at the March 4th Community Day event with HCC Brochures, Newsletters and several flyers. Tom Kahl and Jon staffed the table. Jon noted that there were several inquiries.
- c. Upper Valley Pollinators: Jon Bouton reported that copies of a flyer for the upcoming Pollinator events were available at the HCC Table for Community Day. He also noted that the Hartford Garden Club is interested in being involved in the effort.

16. Next Meeting: Jon Bouton reported that the next regularly scheduled HCC meeting will be held on Monday, April 3rd.

17. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.