

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
April 2, 2018

Members Present: Dana Hazen, Mary Hutchins, and chair Jon Bouton.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Lee Michaelides.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Jct. on Monday, April 2, 2018 in Room 2. Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Introductions were made. Jon noted that Lee Michaelides applied to the Conservation Commission. His interview with the Selectboard is scheduled for April 10th.

1. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes or additions to the agenda. There were none.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes to the Draft Minutes of March 5, 2018. Being none, Jon stated that the minutes are approved by unanimous consent as written.
3. **Hartford Town Plan Update:** Matt Osborn reported that staff is forming a Town Plan Steering Committee to work with planning staff and the Planning Commission on the update of the Town Plan. The Steering Committee will be made up of representatives from Town boards and commissions. Matt noted that in the 2003 and 2007 Plan updates, representatives from the Conservation Commission contributed a great deal to the Steering Committee. Matt reported that Angie Emerson expressed an interest in serving on the Steering Committee. The HCC agreed that Angie would make an excellent member.

Matt Osborn noted that staff and the Planning Commission hope to create a more visually engaging, user-friendly plan. He noted that the current Plan is 312 pages and isn't particularly engaging. He suggested reducing the amount of information in the plan. Matt distributed a copy of the Brattleboro Town Plan which he thinks is a good example. The HCC examined the Brattleboro Plan and agreed that it was a better looking and more engaging plan. Matt noted that the Natural Resources chapter was last updated in 2003. He stated that the HCC worked closely with staff in putting together the chapter.

Mary Hutchins suggested updating the information on the Hurricane Reservoirs and Deweys Pond.

Jon Bouton suggested adding information on contiguous forest blocks and climate change. He also suggested encouraging growth in forest product industries.

Lee Michaelides thinks geology and air quality are unnecessary topics for the Natural Resources chapter.

There was consensus to provide less written information and more maps throughout the chapter.

The HCC reviewed the existing Natural Resources Map. Matt noted that there is a limit on how much information to provide on a single map. The HCC agreed. Matt provided background information on Hartford's overlay districts that were developed in the 2007 Town Plan and adopted in the 2008 zoning amendments.

Matt Osborn distributed copies of the Natural Resources Chapter implementation program and suggested that the HCC review the 40 recommendations following review of the chapter. The HCC agreed.

Jon Bouton suggested continuing discussion of the Natural Resources chapter at next month's HCC meeting.

4. **Green-Up Day 2018:** Matt Osborn reported that Green-Up Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 5th. Matt noted that we've had several school groups, businesses, scouts and community groups participate in Green-Up Day in the past. So far, he has heard from two businesses and student representatives from the Hartford Middle School and High School. He reported that the HCC Green-up project this year will involve cleaning up a tire dump off Taft's Flat. He will conduct a site visit later this week. Matt encouraged HCC members to help out on Green-Up Day and asked for assistance on Friday, May 4th. Jon Bouton stated that he is available both days. Dana Hazen and Lee Michaelides volunteered to help out on Green-Up Day.
5. **Town Forest Trails:** Jon Bouton reported that progress on the trails map continues. Matt Osborn reported that he is obtaining a cost estimate for the trails assessment from the Upper Valley Trails Alliance. Once approved, the Trails Alliance will be able to conduct the assessment this spring.
6. **Town Forest Trail Signs:** Matt Osborn reported that he found the name of the sign vendor that had done such a good job on the signs a few years ago and didn't charge a lot. He will be ordering trail signs in the coming weeks.
7. **Town Forest Recreation Planning Project:** Matt Osborn reported that the results of the Town Forest survey have arrived. He distributed copies of the report prepared by consultant SE Group. A total of 103 surveys were submitted (101 on-line and 2 hard copies). Matt stated that this was a good response. SE Group submitted a report that tabulated the survey results and comments and results from the January 23rd public visioning workshop. Matt stated that he wasn't surprised by the survey results and felt that there was a wide range of opinions. Lee Michaelides responded that it is a good indication that a broad cross section of the community participated in the survey, not just one particular group of people.
8. **Invasive Plants & Insects:** The invasive insect Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed in Washington and Caledonia County after being discovered in Orange County several weeks ago. Jon Bouton noted that with the arrival of spring, invasive plants will be growing once again.
9. **Community Resilience Organization Hartford (CROH):** Jon Bouton reported that CROH met to prioritize workshops for 2018. Seven topics were selected including:
 - Neighborhood Resilient Groups
 - Disaster Preparedness
 - How to developing a more secure food system
 - Resilient Homesteads & Permaculture (Ben Falk)
 - Community Storm Preparedness
 - Diversity & Inclusivity
 - Hartford Resilient Seniors
10. **Announcements/Reports:**
 - a. Vernal Pool Walk: Jon Bouton noted that the vernal pool walk is scheduled for Saturday, April 21st at 10:00 a.m. in the Town Forest. Matt Osborn stated that posters are up and he will post a notice on the town website, Valley News Calendar and have regular notices on the Hartford Listserv.
11. **Next Meeting:** Jon Bouton noted that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 7th.
12. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.