

**Draft Minutes of the**  
Hartford Conservation Commission  
August 5, 2019

**Members Present:** Jon Bouton, Angie Emerson, Mary Hutchins, Katie Mann, Lee Michaelides and chair Tom Kahl.

**Staff Present:** Planner Matt Osborn.

**Others Present:** Selectboard Liaison Alan Johnson.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Monday, August 5, 2019. Tom Kahl called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Tom Kahl asked if there are any changes or additions to the agenda. Angela Emerson asked that we add the David Chang Conservation Area to the agenda. The HCC agreed.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Tom Kahl asked if there are any corrections to the Draft Minutes of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Being none, Tom stated that the minutes are approved as written by unanimous consent.
3. **Forest Management in the Town Forest:** Jon Bouton reported that he touched base with Windsor County Forester A.J. Follensbee about the Forest Management Plan and the programmed timber harvests in the Town Forest. A.J. offered to work on the update of the Forest Management Plan and manage timber harvests for the Town. Jon stated that the earliest a harvest would take place is the winter of 2021. Matt Osborn noted that Town Forest timber harvests are required to take place in the winter and to use a forwarder instead of a skidder to reduce damage. Jon stated that the two timber harvests in the 2000s took place in sections A & B (southwest side). He noted that sections G & H in the Hurricane Forest Wildlife Refuge Park were designated as no cut areas after the 2009 Forest Management Plan was completed. The next cuts would take place in sections D & E. Jon expressed concern about doing trail improvements before harvesting. It was agreed to keep that in mind. The HCC agreed to do an update of the Forest Management Plan before harvesting and include a public outreach component. Mary Hutchins noted that the Maxfield Act 250 permit had restrictions on wetlands in the Town Forest. Matt agreed and responded that he will e-mail the HCC the wetlands conditions and the map. He stated that the trails map that Dana Hazen produced has the wetlands layer.
4. **Hartford Community Coalition Block Party Recycling:** Angie Emerson reported that compostable plates are commercially available. Lee Michaelides reported that compostable utensils are also available. Angie agreed to contact the Prouty organization to find out about their recycling and composting operation. Jon Bouton noted that Resilient Hartford is working on recycling and composting for the September 14<sup>th</sup> Potato Fest event. He suggested that HCC should see how that works.
5. **HCC Priorities:** Angie Emerson agreed to review the list of HCC Priorities and ensure that the items are programmed for future agendas.
6. **HCC Stewardship Awards:** The HCC reviewed the draft description of the HCC Awards Program that Lee Michaelides developed. There was discussion about whether to open it to the public to allow nominations. The HCC agreed that the HCC will decide. Jon Bouton made a motion to accept the criteria that Lee developed and move forward with the awards program. The motion was seconded by Mary Hutchins and approved. It was agreed that discussion will continue at the September HCC Meeting.

7. **Stream Restoration:** Katie Mann reported that Dana Hazen provided information on the landowners in the watershed. She noted that the cost to do the work is approximately \$12,000 per mile. Jon Bouton noted that there are grant funds available. Katie stated that the next step is to contact the Upper Valley Land Trust. She noted that there will be more to report on later. She stated that Trout Unlimited has the most experience working on stream restoration projects. It was agreed to inquire about visiting a demonstration project. Jon suggested inviting the Ottauquechee Natural Resource Conservation District. Katie also noted that she will continue to work with Greg Russ of the White River Partnership.
8. **Natural Resource Letters:** Jon Bouton noted that he has sent out two letters to ten landowners and did not get much response. He agreed to follow-up with a few of them. There was discussion and agreement to contact the landowners of the next ten highest ranked parcels. Katie Mann volunteered to work on the letters. Jon volunteered to work on the Biofinder information for those parcels.
9. **Town Forest Trails:** Angie Emerson reported that Tom Kahl and she walked the trails in the Town Forest and numbered all of the intersections. She noted that they could not locate all of the trails on the map. Tom and Angie agreed that the draft map for public use is close to being ready to finalize. A note will appear on the map that it is subject to change. Once completed, a map will be printed at the Town Forest Kiosk, made available on-line and a QR code provided. She also reported that a site visit with the Town Forest Trails Working group is scheduled for tomorrow afternoon to look at problem areas and decide on the priority areas for the VYCC work. The HCC agreed that the trails through vernal pools should be relocated and that trails should stay on town property.
10. **VYCC Trails Crew:** Tom Kahl reported that the meeting with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps to examine the trails work to be done this fall is scheduled for Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. He noted that currently we are looking at the following projects:
  - a. Pine Drop re-route
  - b. Southern vernal pool re-route
  - c. Goat Trail rehabilitation
11. **Town Forest Trails Work Outing:** Tom Kahl reported that the Town Forest trails work outing is scheduled for Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> and will focus on a bridge over a wet area on the W.B. Brown Trail. Tim Schaal has agreed to design the bridge and the Conservation Commission will provide the materials.
12. **Town Forest Illegal Camping:** Tom Kahl reported that there has been a second occurrence of illegal camping this summer in the Town Forest. He spoke with the young couple that camping is not allowed. The couple left the site within two days. It was agreed to keep an eye out for additional illegal campers.
13. **David Chang Conservation Area Invasive Plants:** Angie Emerson noted that the HCC agreed to work on invasive plant removal at the David Chang Conservation Area. It was agreed to discuss and develop a plan at the October HCC Meeting.
14. **Hanover/Norwich Trails Map:** Matt Osborn reported that he received a few dozen copies of the recently printed trails map of Appalachian Trail hikes in Hanover, Lyme, Norwich and West Hartford. He will provide them to the public by the Planning Office. Katie Mann stated that the maps are part of the AT community program geared toward encouraging local hiking on the AT. She noted that she

dropped off copies of the map at the West Hartford Library. Alan Johnson suggested providing copies to the Parks and Recreation Department. Matt agreed and will drop the maps off there.

**15. Next Meeting:** Tom Kahl noted that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>.

**16. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**19. Meeting Action Items:**

- a) Matt Osborn agreed to e-mail the HCC the wetlands conditions and the map.
- b) Angie Emerson agreed to contact the Prouty organization to find out about their recycling and composting operation.
- c) The HCC agreed to see how the September 14<sup>th</sup> Potato Fest recycling and composting works.
- d) Angie Emerson agreed to review the list of HCC Priorities and ensure that the items are programmed for future agendas.
- e) It was agreed that discussion on the HCC awards will continue at the September HCC Meeting.
- f) Katie Mann agreed to contact the Upper Valley Land Trust about the stream restoration project.
- g) Katie Mann agreed to inquire with Trout Unlimited about visiting a demonstration project.
- h) Katie Mann volunteered to work on the natural resources letters to the next ten highest ranked properties.
- i) Jon volunteered to work on the Biofinder information for the next ten highest ranked properties.
- j) It was agreed that the HCC keep an eye out for additional illegal campers.
- k) It was agreed to discuss and develop a plan for dealing with invasive plants in the David Chang Conservation Area at the October HCC Meeting.