

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
September 9, 2019

Members Present: Jon Bouton, Angie Emerson, Dana Hazen, Lee Michaelides and chair Tom Kahl.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Alan Johnson, Jennifer Burnham and Andrew Davis of the White River Natural Resource Conservation District.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Monday, September 9, 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. Jennifer Burnham of the White River Natural Resource Conservation District wanted to discuss the service of her organization. Jon Bouton wanted to discuss the sale of the Quechee Lakes Section 5D. The HCC agreed.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Tom Kahl asked if there are any corrections to the Draft Minutes of August 5th. Being none, Tom stated that the minutes are approved as written by unanimous consent.
3. **White River Natural Resource Conservation District:** Jennifer Burnham and Andrew Davis of the White River Natural Resource Conservation District were present to talk about their organization and their programs. Tom Kahl thanked Jennifer and Andrew for attending.
4. **Update and Maintaining Wetland Inventory:** Jon Bouton noted that the current National Wetlands Inventory is based on aerial photography and may not capture all wetlands. He suggested looking at other sources of wetlands information that may be more accurate. Matt Osborn suggested by starting with the Two Rivers-Ottawa-Quechee Regional Commission. He noted that a consultant for the Hartford Historic Preservation Commission used LIDAR aerial photographs to provide much more detail of historic cemetery features. He will inquire about possible updated information on wetlands. Jon noted that it may be challenging to obtain landowner permission to survey possible wetlands. Dana Hazen suggested looking at current use mapping.
5. **Hartford Community Coalition Block Party Recycling:** Matt Osborn reported that Resilient Hartford is working on recycling and composting for the September 14th Potato Fest event. He suggested that HCC should see how that works.
6. **HCC Stewardship Awards:** Lee Michaelides reported that he updated the document. There was discussion about possible candidates for the award, the number and frequency of awards. There was consensus to have 2-3 awards that would be given out annually possibly announcing them at town meeting. It was agreed to continue discussion next month and for members to identify their top three candidates.
7. **Stream Restoration:** Jon Bouton reported that it looks like it would work better to schedule the site visit next spring. The HCC agreed.
8. **Natural Resource Letters:** Tom Kahl noted that Katie Mann was working on the letters.
9. **Forest Management in the Town Forest:** Jon Bouton reported that a site visit with Windsor County Forester A.J. Follensbee about the Forest Management Plan and the programmed timber harvests will

be scheduled for Thursday, September 12th. Jon will arrange the time with A.J. Jon also noted that A.J. will attend the October 7th HCC Meeting.

- 10. 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.
- 11. VYCC Trails Crew:** Tom Kahl reported that the work originally scheduled for this fall will be postponed until next spring. Jon Bouton noted that the delay may be beneficial. He suggested investigating a VYCC grant. Matt Osborn agreed to inquire.
- 12. Town Forest Trails Work Outing:** Tom Kahl reported that the Town Forest trails work outing is scheduled for Saturday, September 14th 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. Matt Osborn discussed publicity for the event. The HCC will provide lunch for volunteers. Jon Bouton volunteered to grill. Matt Osborn volunteered to purchase food for the cookout.
- 13. Possible Land Acquisition:** Matt Osborn reported that he was contacted by a realtor who represents a landowner adjacent to the Town Forest who is proposing to sell land to the Town that would expand the Town Forest. The HCC discussed the proposal and agreed to prepare a natural resource evaluation of the property and conduct a site visit.
- 14. Quechee Lakes Land:** Jon Bouton reported that the owner of the Quechee Lakes Corporation (Taurus Investment Holdings) is listing the 640-acre Section 5C as well as other lands they own. He noted that this property ranks very high for its natural resource qualities.
- 15. Next Meeting:** Tom Kahl noted that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 7th.
- 16. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.
- 17. Meeting Action Items:**
 - a) Matt Osborn agreed to inquire about possible updated information on wetlands.
 - b) The HCC agreed to see how the September 14th Potato Fest recycling and composting works.
 - c) It was agreed to continue discussion next month about the awards program and for members to identify their top three candidates.
 - d) Katie Mann continues to work on the natural resources letters to the next ten highest ranked properties.
 - e) Jon volunteered to arrange a meeting with the County Forester A.J. Follensbee about forest management in the Town Forest.
 - f) Matt Osborn agreed to inquire about a trails grant for the VYCC trails crew.
 - g) The HCC will provide lunch for volunteers. Jon Bouton volunteered to grill. Matt Osborn volunteered to purchase food for the cookout.
 - h) 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.
 - i) The HCC discussed the proposal and agreed to prepare a natural resource evaluation of the property and conduct a site visit.