

Draft Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
November 4, 2019

Members Present: Jon Bouton, Dana Hazen, Mary Hutchins, Katie Mann, Lee Michaelides and chair Tom Kahl.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Resident Paul Blazeovich and Selectboard Liaison Alan Johnson.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Monday, November 4, 2019. Tom Kahl called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Introductions were made.

1. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Tom Kahl asked if there are any changes or additions to the agenda. Jon Bouton suggested adding discussion on Town Forest uses. The HCC agreed.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Tom Kahl asked if there are any corrections to the Draft Minutes of October 7th. Being none, Tom stated that the minutes are approved as written by unanimous consent.
3. **HCC Budget:** Matt Osborn reported that the HCC request to increase the budget of the forest management fund from \$650 to \$2,000 was not supported by Planning Department Director Lori Hirshfield since each department head is being asked to limit the increases in department budgets. Lori indicated that the items are eligible for funding from the Town conservation fund. Alan Johnson noted that each Commission is given an opportunity to request more funds during the budget sessions.
4. **HCC Stewardship Awards:** Matt Osborn will inquire about having a plaque in the Town Hall.
5. **Stream Restoration:** Katie Mann reported that the site visit to a demonstration project in Rochester, Vermont could be scheduled next May. Dana Hazen suggested that a closer option would be to visit a project in Piermont, NH. It was agreed to consider that. Dana will seek permission from the property owner.
6. **Natural Resource Letters:** Katie Mann reported that she has been working on the letters as well as maps to go along with the letters.
7. **Town Forest:**
 - a. Halloween Wind Storm: Tom Kahl reported that he visited the Town Forest following the Halloween wind storm and that he did not see a lot of damage. He noted that he found flagging near the Pine Drop Trails and wondered if VYCC staff had been looking at a possible reroute. Jon Bouton noted that the area to the east of Pine Drop is in the area designated as a 100-acre habitat area recommended in the Wildlife Habitat Assessment.
 - b. Leaf Removal: Jon Bouton noted that the HCC agreed to continue discussion about the practice of blowing or raking leaves off the trails. The pros and cons were discussed. Lee Michaelides agreed to conduct research on the topic and discuss with mountain bikers.
 - c. Trail Forks Mapping Request: Tom Kahl reported that the HCC received a request from a mountain biker to post the Town Forest trails on the Trail Forks website. There was discussion and consensus that the HCC does not want the Town Forest to become a major mountain bike destination and declined the request to post a trails map on the Trail Forks website. The HCC supported a request to post the Town Forest Trails on the Upper Valley Mountain Association website.
 - d. Trails Agreement: Matt Osborn reported that he received a legal review for a license agreement with a property owner that gives the Town permission to allow a trail to go off the Town Forest property onto

private property. Matt will contact the property owners. The trail is the EZ Way Up Trail. By doing so, it will avoid construction of a new trail that would be much steeper.

- e. Town Forest Uses: Jon Bouton reported that he received an inquiry from a falconer who has a red tail hawk that he wanted to take to the Town Forest to train the bird. The idea is to find areas with red oak trees and teach the bird to hunt. There were no objections.
 - f. Forest Management: Lee Michaelides distributed a draft description of forest management and a small timber harvest in the Town Forest for the HCC to review before the next HCC meeting. Tom Kahl stated that he hopes we can come up with a project where Town Forest wood could be used for a public purpose. The HCC agreed.
- 8. David Chang Conservation Area:** Jon Bouton reported that in the agreement to purchase the David Chang Conservation Area from VINS, the Town agreed to place a sign on the property recognizing David Chang. It was noted that there is no designated parking for the property and we didn't want parking to create problems for the neighboring property owners. Jon suggested very small subtle signs placed throughout the property as an alternative to a large sign visible from Route 4. He volunteered to investigate the cost of the signs.
- 9. Wetland Inventory:** Matt Osborn reported that he will contact State Wetlands Biologist Rebecca Chalmers about coming to an upcoming HCC meeting to talk about wetlands and improving current wetland mapping. Matt will set up a meeting.
- 10. Maanawaka Conservation Area:** Matt Osborn reported that the Upper Valley Land Trust recently conducted the annual inspection of the Maanawaka Conservation Area, required to enforce the conservation easement on the property. He also noted that he will doing the annual posting of the property with Tom Kahl the end of the week.
- 11. Possible Land Acquisition:** Matt Osborn reported that he contacted the agent for the property owner about the HCC's interest in the property.
- 12. Quechee Lakes Land:** Jon Bouton stated that there is nothing new to report. It was agreed to keep the item on future HCC agendas.
- 12. Next Meeting:** Tom Kahl noted that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 2nd.
- 13. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.
- 14. Meeting Action Items:**
- a) Matt Osborn will inquire about having an HCC Awards plaque in the Town Hall.
 - b) Dana will seek permission from a property owner who had stream restoration work done on their property for the HCC to visit the site in the spring.
 - c) Lee Michaelides agreed to conduct research on leaf blowing of trails and discuss with mountain bikers.
 - d) Matt agreed to contact the property owners about a trails license agreement.
 - e) The HCC agreed to review the draft forest management piece on the Town Forest before the December 2nd meeting.
 - f) Matt Osborn agreed to contact Emily Zanleoni to discuss the topic at a Community Coalition meeting. Jon Bouton, Angie Emerson and Alan Johnson volunteered to accompany Tim McCosker at the Hartford Community Coalition meeting to talk about reducing waste at the Block Party.
 - g) Jon Bouton volunteered to investigate the cost of small signs for the David Chang Conservation Area.
 - h) Matt Osborn agreed to set up a meeting with a wetlands biologist to discuss wetlands mapping.
 - i) Matt Osborn and Tom Kahl agreed to post the Maanawaka Conservation Area.