

Draft Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
November 5, 2018

Members Present: Mary Hutchins, Tom Kahl, Lee Michaelides and chair Jon Bouton.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Michael Quinn and Selectboard Liaison Alan Johnson.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Jct. on Monday, November 5, 2018 in Room 2. Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Jon Bouton asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda. There were none.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any corrections to the Draft Minutes of October 1, 2018. Tom Kahl noted a correction. Jon stated that the minutes are approved with the noted correction by unanimous consent.
3. **HCC Budget:** Jon Bouton reported that Department of Planning and Development Services Director Lori Hirshfield suggested adding to the HCC budget funds for implementing the Town Forest Recreation Plan. This would include hiring a Vermont Youth Conservation Corps trail crew to do trail work and the cost of materials. Jon also noted that it would include use of the Town Conservation Fund. By doing so, we would address the issue of using the Conservation Fund and justify returning to the annual \$3,000 appropriation. Mary Hutchins thought it was a great idea. The HCC agreed. Michael Quinn noted that Windsor had a very good experience working with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. Tom Kahl noted that the Hartford High School did volunteer trails work on the Appalachian Trail in West Hartford. Matt responded that we will continue to pursue other options to a paid trail crew, noting that we had an Eagle Scout work in the Town Forest two summers ago.
4. **Natural Resources Review:** Jon Bouton reported that he has made contact with a few property owners and has had positive responses. Tom Kahl offered Jon support with follow-up letters.
5. **Town Forest Recreation Planning Project:** Michael Quinn, a resident of Windsor and a former Hartford Middle School teacher, noted that he was attending the meeting to hear more about the project. Matt Osborn noted that Hartford is one of ten towns selected by the Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation as a pilot project to develop a process and template for other communities to develop Recreation Management Plans for Town Forests. SE Group and Arrowwood Environmental were selected as the consultants. The communities were only required to provide an in-kind match for the project.

Jon Bouton reported that the Draft Recreation Plan will be presented to the Selectboard on Wednesday, November 7th. This will be the third community meeting and the first meeting with the Selectboard. Consultant Drew Pollack Bruce will be presenting. Jon also noted that the Town Forest Summit with all ten towns participating in the project, is scheduled for Friday, November 9th in Richmond. Jon, Angie, Tom and Matt will be attending.

Jon Bouton noted that the Natural Resources Toolkit is an important piece of moving forward with a review of trails and that the Selectboard and the mountain bike community need to be aware of it.

6. **Town Forest Trails Assessment:** Tom Kahl wanted to know the timeframe for going through a process of reviewing the trails assessment and making decisions about trail repairs, realignment or

closure. Jon Bouton noted that the HCC Working Group will be busy working on the Town Plan update and that the trail review process would come after the first of the year.

7. **Middle School Class & Town Forest:** Jon Bouton reported that he joined Hartford Middle School teacher Trish Pfeiffer and her class on a visit to the southern vernal pool in the Town Forest. Jon noted that they found a spotted salamander.
8. **Town Forest Trail Signs:** Tom Kahl reported that some of the intersection markers that were installed earlier this fall in the Town Forest are missing. They will need to be replaced.
9. **Hartford Town Plan Update:** Matt Osborn reported that the HCC Working Group, consisting of Angie Emerson, Jon Bouton Lee Michaelides and Matt have been working on the update of the Natural Resources Chapter of the Town Plan. Jon Bouton noted that they are trying to condense and reorganize the chapter.

Alan Johnson noted that the Energy Commission is working on the Energy Chapter and would like input from the Conservation Commission on where renewables should not be located. He noted that by renewables, it is generally solar since wind power is not viable given Hartford doesn't have higher elevation ridges that have the necessary wind velocity. Alan also noted that the Energy Commission advocates using existing building and disturbed ground for solar arrays before seeking undeveloped sites. The HCC agreed. Alan stated that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission has developed a list of areas that are not suitable for renewable energy facilities. Matt asked if that includes prime agricultural soils. Alan responded yes.

10. **Community Resilience Organization Hartford (CROH):** Jon Bouton reported that CROH will be sponsoring a workshop on Thursday, November 8th on Environmental Racism and Community Resilience at the Bugbee Senior Center. The speaker, Arielle King, is a Vermont Law School student.
11. **Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup Fall Workshop:** Tom Kahl reported that he attended the workshop Droughts & Downpours: Managing for Extremes sponsored by the Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup. The talk featured climate data presented by Dartmouth Professor Erik Omsburg, a tour of Hypertherm's rain gardens and discussion about green stormwater techniques. Jon Bouton suggested that HCC consider a brochure on the subject. The HCC agreed.

12. Announcements/Reports:

- a. HCC Opening: Jon Bouton noted the HCC still has an opening.
- b. 2019 HCC Meeting Schedule: Matt Osborn distributed the HCC meeting schedule for 2019.

13. **Next Meeting:** Jon Bouton noted that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 5th.

14. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.