

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
April 4, 2016

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

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Mike Morris.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, WRJ, Vermont, on Monday, April 4, 2016 in Meeting Room 2. Chair Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. He welcomed new member Dana Hazen and recently appointed Selectboard Liaison Mike Morris.

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 7th. Being none, Jon stated that the minutes are approved as written by unanimous consent.
3. **Conservation Priorities:** Karen Douville reported that she has been working with Janice Berger on conservation priorities using mapping layers and data from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. She noted that it is a web-based program. She stated that Janice and Karen are in the process of compiling the raw data which the HCC will then use to assign priorities and a ranking for prioritizing parcels for conservation. Karen asked the HCC if there are other features that should be added to the list that Janice and Karen developed. Jon Bouton suggested parcels adjacent to conserved parcels or large parcels. Karen stated that she has divided the Town into quadrants which the HCC will review at the 5/2 meeting. Jon gave a demonstration of the interactive map exploring several of the layers for Hartford. Jon thanked Karen and Janice for the work they have put into the project.
4. **Land Management Subcommittee:** Jon Bouton reported that consultant Brian Riordan is finishing up work on the trails map. Once completed, the Land Management Subcommittee (LMS) will meet to discuss recommendations for trails in the Town Forest. Matt Osborn noted that the Conservation Commission has been managing the Town Forest since the late 1990s after a period without active management. The HCC began by updating the Forest Management Plan in 1998 and developed a Recreation Management Plan in 2002. Jon noted that the LMS has been meeting to discuss and review the addition of new mountain bike trails that have been added over the past decade.
5. **Town Forest Trail Closure/Re-opening:** Jon Bouton reported that the trails in the Town Forest were closed for a couple of weeks to allow time to dry out noting that several trail organizations were recommending that folks stay off the trails dry out. A Town Forest neighbor who was monitoring the trails for the HCC informed Matt that they had dried out considerably. The trails were then re-opened. With the recent snow, Jon hopes that the public will use good judgment in deciding when to go out on the trails.
6. **Town Forest Boulders/Water Bar Work:** Matt Osborn distributed a draft Request for Quotes for work on Reservoir Road within the Town Forest. The work includes repair of water bars and placing boulders along the South Side Trail. Karen Douville asked if boulders should be placed along other trail intersections. Mary Hutchins noted that the Hurricane Riders Snow Machine Club will be replacing boulders in a couple of trail intersections. Jon Bouton responded that he has mixed feelings about having boulders everywhere. The HCC agreed to just focus on boulders on the South Side Trail at this time. The HCC accepted the Draft Request for Quotes and asked Matt to advertise it.

7. **Town Forest Building Debris:** Mary Hutchins reported that she picked up most of the remaining building debris that was dumped near the south-side vernal pools. A small amount was frozen in the ground so she will have to return at a later date to complete the clean-up. Jon thanked Mary for taking on the task.
8. **US Forest Service Plot:** Matt Osborn reported that while at the Town Forest, he met a forester from the US Forest Service who was visiting a USFS Plot in the Town Forest. Matt stated that the plot is visited every 5-7 years. Jon Bouton stated that the USFS collects data from plots throughout Vermont from random points and compares the data from the previous visit to determine changes. He went over the summary report.
9. **Linking Lands Alliance:** Karen Douville reported that the Linking Lands will be sponsoring a booth at the Flavors of the Valley event at the Hartford High School on Sunday, April 10th.
10. **Save Dewey's Pond Committee:** Jon Bouton reported that once again the Town was awarded a grant to remove Eurasian Milfoil from Dewey's Pond.
11. **Community Resilience Organization Hartford (CROH):** Jon Bouton reported that the CROH Committee is planning a Hazard Awareness and Resilience Week August 22-27. The event coincides with the 5th anniversary of the Tropical Storm Irene flood and will culminate with a large event to be held August 27th. He stated that CROH is working to build community to come together and work together during emergencies.
12. **Town-wide Trails Project:** Mary Hutchins reported that work continues on creating a snow machine trail from the south side of Hartford to Quechee. As far as the town-wide trail project, the Committee has not met in six months. She will inquire about the status of the Committee.
13. **Announcements/Reports:**
 - a. Vernal Pool Walk: Jon Bouton asked Karen Douville about a date for the vernal pool walk. Karen suggested holding it in the next two weekends. It was agreed to hold the event on Saturday, April 16th. Jon asked Matt Osborn to help promote the event.
 - b. Recruiting New HCC Members: Jon Bouton noted that the HCC is a seven member board. With the appointment of Dana Hazen to the HCC, there are now six members. Since Karen Douville is stepping down in August when her term is up, the HCC will be down to five members. He suggested that the HCC try to recruit new members.
 - c. Green-Up Day: Matt Osborn reported that Green-Up Day is Saturday, May 7th and he has been working on preparations. He was recently contacted by King Arthur Flour and Resource Systems Group about employee participation. Matt also noted that the HCC committed to assisting a property owner to clean-up an illegal dumping site at the corner of Old River Road and the Quechee/West Hartford Road on Green-Up Day.
 - d. Earth Day Event: Matt Osborn reported that an Earth Day event is planned at Lyman Point Park on Friday, April 22nd 5:00-7:00 p.m. Karen Douville requested additional information on the event.
14. **Next Meeting:** Jon Bouton reported that the next regularly scheduled HCC meeting will be held on Monday, May 2nd.
15. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.