

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
May 2, 2016

Members Present: Janice Berger, Karen Douville, Dana Hazen, Mary Hutchins, Shawn Kelley and chair Jon Bouton.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: None.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, WRJ, Vermont, on Monday, May 2, 2016 in Meeting Room 2. Chair Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes to the Draft Minutes of April 4th. Mary Hutchins noted a correction. Karen Douville noted a correction. Being no other changes, Jon stated that the minutes are approved by unanimous consent with the noted changes.
2. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes or additions to the agenda. Karen Douville requested that Conservation Priorities be added to the agenda.
3. **Pollinators and Pesticides:** Karen Douville reported that she attended recent symposiums on pollinators and pesticides. Last year's was presented by the Vermont Law School and this year's was presented by Vermont ANR. Research has shown that some pesticides, namely neonicotinoids stay active in plants for several years. In the last few years, there has been a great deal of hard science taking place on the subject indicating that pesticides are taking a toll on insects including bees. There was discussion that even some nursery stock sold for pollinator gardens have neonicotinoids. The HCC noted that it is important to ask nurseries if plants have been treated with it. The HCC considered this a good topic for the newsletter, then decided to do a brochure on the subject instead because they thought the brochures are more user-friendly. Karen stated that she has materials on the subject that she will distribute to the HCC. She asked Matt if funds designated for the newsletter could be used for a brochure and what the deadline is to spend the funds. Matt stated that he will inquire. Karen Douville added that the HCC could develop a brochure on living with bears as well and Mary Hutchins agreed to design the layout. The HCC agreed.
4. **Conservation Priorities:** Karen Douville stated that she thinks we need to change the name of this project since the information can be used for other purposes. She suggested "Land Assessment". Janice Berger suggested "Natural Resource Review". The HCC agreed.
5. **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. Jon reported that he asked Dana Hazen if he could download the files created by Brian. Dana stated that he downloaded the files. They were JPEG and PDF files. Matt Osborn suggested scheduling a meeting with Brian, Jon and Dana to review the map and talk about the future use of the files for updating. Matt agreed to contact Brian. It was agreed that an early day or late afternoon meeting would work best.

There was discussion regarding the condition of the new mountain bike trails in the Town Forest. Jon Bouton noted that a few years ago, the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) was in the Upper Valley to discuss proper trail building techniques. He noted that IMBA has a strong stewardship ethic. He suggested contacting the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association to look at trail conditions once the map is completed.

6. **Town Forest Boulders/Water Bar Work:** Matt Osborn reported that Department of Public Works Director Rich Menge has requested a site visit with Highway Superintendent Allyn Ricker and Matt to see if the work is something that the DPW should be doing.
7. **Town Forest Building Debris:** Jon Bouton reported that he filled a bucket with the remaining roofing materials that were dumped near the vernal pools.
8. **Invasive Plants:** Karen Douville reported that for the last three years, she has been conducting an experiment on the removal of honeysuckle and it seems to be working. She cuts the shrub's main stems to 4' or 5' removing all branches with leaves, then returns to cut off all of the new growth. This is far more effective than cutting the shrub at ground level which then directs the plant's energy to the roots and regrowth. She has had success with glossy buckthorn as well and hopes that the method will be successful with other invasive plants.

Jon Bouton reported that on Monday, May 9th, he will be presenting a program to the Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC) on lessons learned regarding invasive plants over the last twenty-five years. Karen suggested informing the NCC about the HCC weed wrench loan program.

Dana Hazen asked the HCC if they have an active invasive plant removal project. Jon responded that the HCC has devoted time to removing invasive plants in the Hurricane Forest Wildlife Refuge near Wright's Reservoir. Karen suggested monitoring the area around the Upper Hurricane Reservoir in the Town Forest. Jon and Dana volunteered to work with Karen on it.

9. **Linking Lands Alliance:** Karen Douville reported that the Linking Lands Alliance had a table at the Flavors of the Valley event last month and the Bobcat game attracted a lot of attention.
10. **Save Dewey's Pond Committee:** Janice Berger reported that the Town received ½ of the funds for Milfoil removal this year. She stated that she is not sure how the reduction will affect the removal efforts.
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 had a table at the Earth Day event and he put together an emergency food kit for the table. CROH also recruited volunteers to serve as neighborhood coordinators. Matt Osborn reported that CROH will be participating in the Vermont Resilience Conference to be held May 20th and 21st in Northfield.
12. **Town-wide Trails Project:** Mary Hutchins reported that she spoke to Parks and Recreation Department Director Tad Nunez and he hopes to get the Committee meeting again.
13. **Announcements/Reports:**
 - a. **Vernal Pool Walk:** Jon Bouton reported that there was a small turnout for the vernal pool walk held on April 16th. He stated that the weather swings this spring resulted in unfavorable conditions although they did find newts in one of the traps and there were many eggs in the vernal pool.
 - b. **Green-Up Day:** Matt Osborn reported that Green-Up Day is Saturday, May 7th and he has been working on preparations. He stated that so far the activity level is high this year. He reported that in addition to King Arthur Flour and the Coop Food Store, RSG is holding a company green-up activity. Matt reported that he updated the Green-Up Day information on the town website and has

several Green-Up Day messages for the Hartford List Serv. Karen Douville offered to contact other businesses. Matt asked the Conservation Commission who is available to help out on Saturday. Jon Bouton, Karen Douville and Dana Hazen will participate.

- c. Trails Day: Matt Osborn reported that National Trails Day is Saturday, June 4th. He noted that the HCC has switched it to the Sunday in the past since it fits HCC members schedule better. The HCC agreed to schedule Trails Day on Sunday, June 5th at 1:00 p.m. in the Town Forest and focus on trail maintenance and repairs to the kiosk. Mary volunteered to work on the poster.
- d. Earth Day Event: Jon Bouton reported that the HCC had a booth at the 4/22 Earth Day Event at Lyman Point Park. Shawn Kelley, Matt Osborn and he staffed it. Matt noted that HCC brochures and newsletters were available and several folks took some.
- e. Recruiting New HCC Members: Jon Bouton reported that the HCC will need to recruit two members to reach full membership. Karen Douville stated that she did some recruiting at the Flavors of the Valley event last month. Jon volunteered to prepare a posting on the Hartford List Serv about the HCC openings.

14. Next Meeting: Jon Bouton reported that the next regularly scheduled HCC meeting will be held on Monday, June 6th.

15. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.