

Draft Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
December 5, 2016

Members Present: Dana Hazen, Tom Kahl and chair Jon Bouton.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Norwich Conservation Commission member Craig Layne.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Monday, December 5, 2016 in Room 312. Chair Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Jon welcomed Craig Layne of the Norwich Conservation Commission. Introductions were made.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes to the Draft Minutes of November 7th. Being none, Jon stated that the minutes are approved by unanimous consent as written.
2. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes or additions to the agenda. Craig Layne stated that he would like to discuss the impact of recreational trails on wildlife. The Commission agreed.
3. **Impact of Recreational Trails on Wildlife:** Craig Layne reported that the Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC) is concerned about the impact of recreational trails on wildlife given the extensive network of recreational trails in Norwich. He stated that the NCC has been mapping critical habitats and unfragmented forests. Currently, the Norwich Trails Committee is looking at creating a mountain bike loop trail in Norwich. He asked if Hartford is experiencing an increase in the number of recreational trails. Jon Bouton responded that there has been an increase in mountain bike trails in the Town Forest, but he is not sure of the situation elsewhere in Hartford. Jon noted that the Wildlife Habitat Assessment and the Amphibian Inventory had recommendations regarding recreational trails. The HCC agreed to work with the NCC on the subject.
4. **Land Management Subcommittee:** Jon Bouton reported that the LMS Meeting on November 17th had a small turnout without representation from the mountain bike community. He stated that the Committee will make an effort to reach out the mountain bikers in the coming weeks. He also noted that the next meeting will take place after the holidays.
5. **Town Forest Kiosk Display:** Matt Osborn presented information from the kiosk display. He suggested adding a note that new trails require HCC approval. The HCC agreed. Jon Bouton suggested replacing the damaged trails map with a new map. Tom Kahl suggested including an e-mail address to report downed trees or other information that the HCC should be informed about. Tom also suggested providing a link for folks to obtain the trails map. Dana Hazen stated that once the trails map is revised to include mountain bike trails, the HCC should provide geo-referencing.
6. **Town Forest Downed Trees:** Matt Osborn reported that he heard from Reservoir Road resident Judy Lombardi that there are a few more downed trees in the Town Forest.
7. **Lower Hurricane Reservoir:** Jon Bouton reported that Scott Jensen of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Rivers Program met with Matt Osborn and Jon on November 21st to look at the Lower Hurricane Reservoir conservation pool and consider methods to increase the size of the pool. Scott requested copies of the Lower Hurricane Reservoir plans. He will review the plans, assess the

situation and get back to the HCC. Jon expressed an interest in improving the appearance of the outflow. At the site visit, Scott Jensen noted that adding streambank gravel can be an effective way to hold back more water and create a more natural outflow.

- 8. HCC Brochures:** Matt Osborn distributed the final draft of the bear brochure. He noted that Mary Hutchins requested that the HCC review it one more time before printing and distribution.
- 9. Natural Resources Review:** Jon Bouton reported that he will type up notes from the meeting with Karen Douville. He noted that he will ask Karen to prepare a summary as well.
- 10. HCC Budget:** Jon Bouton reported that the Selectboard will be holding a budget session on Tuesday, December 13. This will replace the November 15th budget session was cancelled. Jon plans to attend the workshop. He noted that in addition to eliminating the conservation fund appropriation, Lori Hirshfield proposed a \$75 reduction in travel & meetings and a \$200 decrease in materials and supplies (educational materials).
- 11. Town-wide Trails Project:** Matt Osborn reported that the Riverwalk Trail effort has successfully obtained grants for planning and engineering of the three-phase trail in the Ratcliffe Park neighborhood.
- 12. Maanawaka Conservation Area:** Tom Kahl reported that he replaced missing trail signs on the Hazen Trail. The HCC thanked Tom.
- 13. Announcements/Reports:**
 - a. Recruiting New HCC Members: Matt Osborn reported that he met with Angela Emerson last week and that Angela indicated that she will be submitting an application to serve on the Conservation Commission. Matt noted that Angela is interested in policy and education.
- 14. Next Meeting:** Jon Bouton reported that the next regularly scheduled HCC meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 10th.
- 15. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.