

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
April 3, 2017

Members Present: Angela Emerson, Mary Hutchins, Tom Kahl, Shawn Kelley and chair Jon Bouton.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Cassidy Neal.

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at the Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Monday, April 3, 2017 in Meeting Room 2. Chair Jon Bouton called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Introductions were made. Parks and Recreation Commission member Cassidy Neal stated that he is interested in joining the Conservation Commission.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Jon Bouton asked if there are any changes to the Draft Minutes of March 6, 2017. 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. Jon Bouton suggested adding the vernal pool walk. The Commission agreed.
3. **Trails Project:** Jon Bouton reported that High School Student Keith Illingworth will be doing trail restoration work in the Town Forest this spring and summer. Jon noted that Keith has experience working on trails. Matt Osborn noted that Keith is out of town and expects him to attend the May 1st HCC Meeting. Tom Kahl noted that Keith will provide the HCC with a materials list.
4. **Green-Up Day 2017:** Matt Osborn reported that Green-Up Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 6th. Matt stated that business participation is increasing and he is hoping to encourage more businesses to participate this year. He will contact the Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce. Tom Kahl suggested getting photos of the businesses for publicity. Matt noted that we've had several school groups, scouts and community groups participate in Green-Up Day in the past. He will contact them in the coming weeks. Matt has contacted two property owners who have experienced illegal dumping and been included in HCC Green-Up Day clean-ups. Matt reported that Green-Up bags will be available April 24th. Matt requested additional bags this year. Jon Bouton agreed to post information on Green-Up Day to the Hartford List Serv. Angela Emerson suggested providing volunteers with something inexpensive to show our appreciation. Jon suggested contact Green-Up Vermont. Matt encouraged HCC members to help out on Green-Up Day.
5. **Land Management Subcommittee:** Jon Bouton gave an overview of the work of the Land Management Subcommittee regarding the best way to manage trails in the Town Forest. He noted that we need to ensure good design and stewardship. Jon stated that we need to schedule the next meeting and suggested a doodle poll to send to Committee members. The HCC agreed to hold the next meeting the last week of April or first week of May.
6. **Lower Hurricane Reservoir:** Jon Bouton stated that he would like to look at options at the conservation pool at the former Lower Hurricane Reservoir. Tom Kahl stated that he will

revisit the site with Shawn Kelley when the snow has melted in order to determine the location of the water level in relation to the engineering plans.

- 7. Leahy Environmental Summit & High Meadows Watershed Grant:** Matt Osborn reported that he attended a two-day workshop at the ECHO Museum in Burlington on March 24th and 25th. The workshop is designed to help watershed teams across the state to develop projects for the High Meadows Watershed Grant on building resilience in Vermont watersheds. The grant deadline is June 1st. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) is leading an effort for the Ottawaquechee River watershed to do public outreach and education. Partners include Michael Storce, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, Larry Kasden, Ottawaquechee Natural Resource Conservation District, Stephanie Kyriazis, Marsh-Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park, Todd Menees, Vermont Rivers Program and Ron Rhodes, Connecticut River Conservancy. Matt noted that the Conservation Commission and Community Resilience Organization have agreed to participate in the project. Matt stated that he will keep the HCC apprised as the specifics of the application emerge.
- 8. Clean Water Advisory Committee:** Matt Osborn reported that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission has formed a Clean Water Advisory Committee. Matt has been appointed by the Hartford Selectboard to represent the Town. The Committee has met twice. The Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) will address a number of water quality related projects in the TRORC region. Tasks of the committee include: assisting in the development and review of Tactical Basin Plans in coordination with Vermont Watershed Planners, evaluating and prioritizing potential water quality related projects, reviewing and providing input on water related policy changes, and coordinating planning efforts across sectors. The CWAC is intended to be a reciprocal platform upon which TRORC and committee members engage in open dialogue on any topics deemed important by either party. Matt stated that he will keep the HCC apprised of the Committee's work.
- 9. Community Resilience Organization Hartford (CROH):** Jon Bouton reported that the CROH will be hosting Resilience Week again next year. The event will take place August 21-26. He stated that the Committee is currently planning the workshops.
- 10. HCC Brochures:** Matt Osborn reported that the bear brochure has been uploaded on the HCC webpage. He provided copies for the libraries. Tom Kahl and Angela Emerson volunteered to distribute the brochures to the four libraries.
- 11. Natural Resources Review:** Jon Bouton gave an overview of the Natural Resource Review which includes a list of the highest ranking parcels in the Town related to natural resources. The information was based on the State BioFinder and was developed by former HCC members Karen Douville and Janice Berger. Tom Kahl suggested that the HCC take some time at the next few meetings to review the information and determine how best to use it. The HCC agreed.
- 12. Announcements/Reports:**

 - a. Mapping Vermont's Natural Heritage: Matt Osborn reported that the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is looking for reviewers for the draft guide "Mapping Vermont's

Natural Heritage.” It is a “how to” conservation planning manual for communities. Matt thinks it is great timing for the HCC.

- b. Recruiting New HCC Member: Cassidy Neal indicated that he will submit an application to the Selectboard to serve on the Conservation Commission.
- c. Upper Valley Pollinators: Jon Bouton reported that three Pollinator events are taking place this month and the HCC has agreed to promote the events. Matt Osborn agreed to forward the schedule to the Conservation Commission.
- d. Vernal Pool Walk: Jon Bouton reported that it is time to schedule the annual HCC Vernal Pool Walk in the Town Forest. It was agreed to schedule the walk at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 22nd. Matt Osborn agreed to put together a poster for the event.
- e. Regional Plan Update: Matt Osborn reported that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) is updating the Regional Plan and includes the following chapters:
 - Working Landscapes
 - Healthy Communities
 - History and Development
 - Implementation Matrix
 - Energy
 - Energy Implementation Plan

Matt reported that the Hartford Planning Commission held a workshop to discuss the Plan on March 27th. Matt noted that the Planning Commission is pleased with the TRORC staff response to input on the Plan and the engaging conversations of the TRORC Board. He stated that the Planning Commission expressed some concern about the impact of the current use program on the local tax rate. Jon Bouton responded that municipalities are reimbursed by the state. Matt also noted that some of the rural communities in the region have expressed concern about the State effort to protect large areas of core forest. They are concerned that there will not be places for development. Public hearings on the Plan are scheduled for Wednesday, April 12 Bethel Town Hall and Thursday, April 13 Thetford Town Hall. Matt stated that he will provide the HCC with the deadline to submit comments.

- f. Trails Connect Public Forum: Mary Hutchins reported that she attended the Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) March 27th public forum on trails at Hypertherm. She characterized it as a very good meeting with information on trails etiquette. Angela Emerson also attended the forum and noted that the Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) often gets requests from organizations to do trail work. They suggest planning ahead and providing information to UVTA. Mary added that it is important that the project be clearly defined, able to be completed within the scheduled time and have visible results. Jon Bouton suggested looking into obtaining help for Keith Illingsworth’s trail project. Angela stated that the UVTA is interested in leading workshops.
- g. BioFinder Workshop: Matt Osborn reported that a BioFinder workshop has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 11th at the Hartford Area Career Technology Center. He noted that space is limited and registration is required. He will send out an e-mail about the event.
- h. Hartford Community Coalition Block Party: Jon Bouton reported that the annual Hartford Community Coalition Block Party is scheduled for Wednesday, June 7th at Lyman Point Park. The Conservation Commission will have a table with HCC brochures and newsletters. Tom Kahl suggested doing a fun activity geared toward children.

13. Next Meeting: Jon Bouton reported that the next regularly scheduled HCC meeting will be held on Monday, May 1st.

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