

Approved Minutes of the
Hartford Conservation Commission
April 5, 2021

Members Present: Jon Bouton, Mary Hutchins, Dana Hazen, Katie Mann, Lee Michaelides and chair Tom Kahl.

Staff Present: Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Dennis Brown.

A remote meeting of the Conservation Commission in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, April 5, 2021. Tom Kahl called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Tom read the Act 92 Open Meeting Law Script.

1. **Changes to the Agenda:** Tom Kahl asked if there are any changes to the agenda. There were none.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Tom Kahl asked if there were any changes to the minutes of March 1, 2021 HCC Meeting. There were no changes. Tom stated that the minutes are approved as written by unanimous consent.
3. **HCC Annual Officer Elections:** Tom Kahl noted that it is time to hold officer elections. There was consensus that the existing officers should continue in their positions. Tom made a motion to renew the existing officers: Tom as chair, Dana Hazen as vice-chair and Jon Bouton as treasurer. The motion was seconded by Mary Hutchins and approved 6 to 0.
4. **Town Forest Recreation Management Plan:** Tom Kahl stated that he hopes to get on the Selectboard agenda in the coming weeks. Matt stated that he will make the request tomorrow. Matt suggested that he meet with Angie Emerson and Tom to work on the presentation to the Selectboard. The Commission agreed.
5. **Green-Up Day:** Matt Osborn noted that Green-Up Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 1st. He noted that with Covid, it will be very similar to Green-Up Day 2020. We will have on-line registration and picking up bags outside the Town Hall and the Quechee Library. Matt noted that he has received e-mails from several individuals signing up for road sections. He noted that Green-Up bags arrived earlier than ever before. He stated that we advertised that Green-Up bags will be available starting April 19th and dumpsters don't arrive until April 28th. He asked if we should release bags earlier. The HCC agreed to stick to the 4/19 date. Matt agreed to work on Green-Up Day promotion. Matt asked the HCC who is available to help out on Green-Up Day. Jon, Tom, Katie and Dana responded that they plan to participate. Tom thanked Katie for setting up the on-line registration form.
6. **Town Forest:**
 - a. Winter 2022 Timber Harvest: Tom Kahl reported that Jon Bouton and Tom joined County Forester A.J. Follensbee on a site visit to look at the proposed log landing and skid road. He noted that the new skid road will parallel the Moose Brook Trail. Following the timber harvest, Tom noted that he and Jon would like to see the skid road to replace this section of the Moose Brook Trail that has three problematic wet crossings. The new parallel skid trail is on drier ground and will be easier to maintain.

Tom reported that A.J. has submitted revised bid documents and would like to go out to bid later this month to get the best prices for the work. Matt agreed to seek Town approval of the bid documents. An information walk with the bidding loggers is planned for early May followed by a

deadline in bids in late May. Tom noted that additional videos prepared by A.J. on the Town Forest timber harvest have been posted on the Town website. He also stated that A.J. is planning regular educational walks this summer with the public on the timber harvest in the Town Forest.

Regarding use of some of the wood from the timber harvest, Tom stated that he is working on an agreement with Cover Home Repair, the Town and Richard Wright to make hemlock available for ramp construction projects that Cover does in Hartford. The HCC also will use hemlock for bridge decking in the Town Forest. A Memorandum of Understanding between the parties will be developed.

- b. 2021 Trail Maintenance: Tom Kahl reported that the Trails Committee is planning a preliminary meeting on April 24th to plan a May trails work outing. Tom will contact Tim and Anna Schaal and Bill Brown to confirm the date. A tentative date of May 22nd was selected for the trails work outing. Tom asked if the HCC should sponsor an on-line trail maintenance program as we did in 2020. The HCC agreed. Katie agreed to set up the registration form.
 - c. Wayfinding Signs. Matt Osborn received approval from the Department of Public Works to erect small wayfinding signs on Town street name signs. Matt will contact VTrans to inquire about the need for a state permit for signs at the intersection of Route 4 and to research sign costs.
 - d. Trails Map & Signs: Tom Kahl reported that Tim Schaal submitted several suggestions for changes to the trail map. Dana volunteered to look at the suggestions and see if he has the capability to make the changes. Tom noted that Tim provided a map with proposed trail sign locations. Jon Bouton suggested changing the trail sign location at the junction of Simonds Way and Legacy Trail. The HCC agreed. Tom agreed to talk to Tim Schaal.
 - e. Hartford Area Career Technology Center Natural Resources Class: Tom Kahl reported that A.J. Follensbee has not heard back from Tom Ostler about the HACTC Natural Resources class and their participation in the 2022 timber harvest. Tom agreed to follow-up.
 - f. Formal Relationship with the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association: Tom Kahl reported that Anna Schaal of the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association is seeking to establish a formal relationship with the Conservation Commission regarding trail maintenance in the Town Forest. It was agreed that there is currently a good working relationship with the UVMBMA. There was discussion of the pros and cons of a written agreement. Tom stated that Anna will be invited to the May 3rd HCC meeting to discuss the arrangement.
 - g. Possible Conservation Easement: Matt Osborn reported that he contacted the Upper Valley Land Trust about attending an upcoming HCC meeting to discuss a possible conservation easement for the Town Forest. The UVLT agreed to have a representative attend the June 7th HCC meeting.
7. **Private Landowner Outreach:** Tom Kahl reported that he will set up a meeting with a Jericho property owner that he spoke with last fall. Katie Mann agreed to work on maps for the next ten property owners of ranked parcels in Hartford in May. Matt agreed to verify ownership records.
 8. **Climate Action Plan Report:** Jon Bouton reported that workshops for the Climate Action Plan (CAP) continue and that working groups are developing strategies and actions for the CAP.
 9. **Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions Tiny Grant Program:** Matt agreed to prepare an application for a \$300 grant for Hartford, on behalf of the local resident Hartford Salamander Team, to partner with the North Branch Nature Center on their Amphibian Road Crossing (ARC) program.

The deadline for applications is May 1st. Tom reported that the Hartford Salamander Team held a March 25th crossing training session and has begun monitoring crossings.

10. Announcements:

- a. Invasive Plant Inquiry: Matt Osborn reported that he received an inquiry through the Hartford Parks and Recreation Department about providing promotional information on invasive plants and garlic mustard in particular. Jon Bouton stated that there is plenty of promotional material available. He volunteered to collect information and provide it to the Parks and Recreation Department for their weekly Constant Contact e-mail.

11. Next Meeting: Tom Kahl reported that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 3rd at 7:00 p.m.

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

13. Meeting Action Items:

- a) Matt agreed to request that the Town Manager's office schedule the Recreation Management Plan for a Selectboard meeting in late April or early May.
- b) Matt agreed to work with Tom and Angie on the Recreation Management Plan presentation to the Selectboard.
- c) Matt agreed to work on Green-Up Day promotion.
- d) Jon, Tom, Katie and Dana volunteered to participate on Green-Up Day.
- e) Matt agreed to seek Town approval of the bid documents for the timber harvest.
- f) Tom stated that he is working on an agreement with Cover Home Repair, the Town and Richard Wright to make hemlock available for ramp construction projects that Cover does in Hartford.
- g) Tom will contact Tim and Anna Schaal and Bill Brown to confirm the date for a meeting in the Town Forest to plan for a trail maintenance event planned in May.
- h) Katie agreed to set up the registration form for on-line trail maintenance registration.
- i) Matt will contact VTrans to inquire about the need for a state permit for wayfinding signs at the intersection of Route 4 and to research sign costs.
- j) Tom agreed to follow-up with the Hartford Area Career Technology Center about their involvement with the 2022 Town Forest timber harvest.
- k) Tom agreed to talk to Tim Schaal about the trail maps and trail signs for the Town Forest.
- l) Tom reported that he will set up a meeting with a Jericho property owner to talk about conservation options.
- m) Katie agreed to work on maps for the next ten property owners of ranked parcels in May.
- n) Matt agreed to verify ownership records of the ten parcels.
- o) Matt agreed to prepare a AVCC Tiny Grant application for Hartford to partner with the North Branch Nature Center on 2021 amphibian protection.
- p) Jon volunteered to collect information and provide it to the Parks and Recreation Department for their weekly Constant Contact release.