

**Approved Minutes of the**  
Hartford Conservation Commission  
October 5, 2020

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

**Staff Present:** Planner Matt Osborn.

**Others Present:** Selectboard Liaison Emma Behrens and Selectboard and Windsor/Orange County Forester A.J. Follensbee.

A remote meeting of the Conservation Commission in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law was held on Monday, October 5, 2020. Tom Kahl called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Tom read the Open Meeting Law Script developed by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

1. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda:** Tom Kahl suggested adding stream restoration to the agenda. The HCC agreed. He asked if there are any other changes or additions to the agenda. There were no other additions or changes to the agenda.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Tom Kahl asked if there were any changes to the minutes of August 31, 2020. There were no changes. Tom stated that the minutes are approved by unanimous consent as written.
3. **Forest Management Plan for Town Forest:** County Forester A.J. Follensbee was present to talk about the Forest Management Plan. There was discussion about the schedule in the Plan. A.J. suggested marking the trees in June, 2021 and advertising the bid in July, 2021. The timber harvest will occur during the winter of 2022. The HCC agreed. A.J. agreed to update the schedule. He also noted that he provided a draft agreement with the Town for his services overseeing the timber harvest. There will not be a charge for A.J.'s services. Matt Osborn noted that he had questions for A.J. about the agreement and will call A.J. this week to discuss.

The next step is to go before the Selectboard and ask them to adopt the Forest Management Plan. Matt agreed to request getting on the Selectboard agenda in the coming weeks.

A.J. announced that he is planning to hold 2-3 remote presentations this winter on forest management that he will conduct with Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper. Ethan has done several remote presentations on forest management and A.J. thinks Ethan does an excellent job. The presentations will be recorded and posted on a U Tube channel.

4. **Emerald Ash Borer:** Tom Kahl reported that he received the Emerald Ash Borer posters. He will post them at the Town Forest, Maanawaka Conservation Area and the Hurricane Forest Wildlife Refuge.
5. **Use of Glyphosate on Town Properties:** Matt Osborn reported that he submitted a memo to the Town Manager requesting permission to use Glyphosate to treat invasive plants in the Town Forest and the David Chang Conservation Area. Matt noted that Jon Bouton assisted with the memo. The request was approved.
6. **Town Forest:**
  - a. Recreation Management Plan: Angie Emerson reported that she circulated the revised Draft Recreation Management Plan to the HCC and received comments from Mary Hutchins and Matt Osborn. Matt noted that the next step is to hold a remote community meeting to present the Draft

Plan and to get public input. The HCC agreed to schedule the community meeting on Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m. It was agreed that Tom will welcome folks to the meeting, Matt will provide background information and Angie will present the Draft Plan. Matt agreed to promote the meeting and post the draft plan on the Town website. Katie Mann volunteered to create a google form for public comments.

- b. Trails Committee: Tom Kahl reported that the VYCC crew spent a second week working on improvements to the Goat Trail in late August. Tom reported that he received an e-mail from mountain biker Anna Schaal that part of a bank turn created by the VYCC washed out. Tom agreed to follow-up with Anna. Tom also noted that the VYCC moved some boulders to prevent four wheeling on the West Side Loop and one of the boulders has already been moved. It was surmised that hunters may have moved it.

Tom reported that a new bridge was erected over a gulley on the Pine Drop Trail by mountain bikers Wayne Hoisington and Bill Brown. Matt Osborn noted that a permit was not required. Tom noted that the bridge materials cost \$140. Angie Emerson suggested erecting a plaque recognizing the mountain bikers for their volunteer work. The HCC agreed. Angie volunteered to design the plaque.

- c. Boundary Painting: Jon Bouton reported that he marked the northern boundary of the Town Forest with blue ribbon and he will be contacting property owners prior to painting the boundary.
- d. Town Forest Knotweed: Dana Hazen reported that he treated the section of Japanese Knotweed along Reservoir Road with Glyphosate following authorization by the Town Manager.
- e. Game of Logging Class: Jon Bouton reported that the Hartford Area Career Technology Center Adult Education Class Game of Logging is scheduled to take place this weekend in the Town Forest. He noted that normally Level 1 training occurs on Day 1 and Level 2 training for Day 2. However, not enough folks signed up for the Level 2 training. Jon noted that Charlie Reibel of the Hartford Area Career Technology Center asked if they could do two Level 1 trainings if enough register for the second day. It will require cutting 10-15 additional trees. Jon Bouton made a motion to change Day 2 training to Level 1. The motion was seconded by Angie Emerson and approved unanimously. Jon noted that he marked the trees to be cut with red ribbon. Jon will work with the HACTC and mark the additional 12-15 trees for them to cut if a second day of Level 1 training occurs.

- 7. **Natural Resource Landowner Outreach:** Tom Kahl reported that Jon Bouton and he walked the property of a large parcel west of Christian Street with the property owner. The property has been in the family for sixty years and the property owner prefers that it not be developed. Tom noted that Jon, Matt and he also walked the property of a parcel northwest of the Town Forest with the property owners. The parcel includes a large wetland. The property owners are considering enrollment in the current use program and exploring whether a conservation easement might work for them.

Tom noted that Katie Mann finished the maps for the last of ten letters to property owners of high-ranking parcels. Matt will mail the letter.

- 8. **David Chang Conservation Area:** Dana Hazen reported that if he has time, he will return to the David Chang Conservation Area and treat invasive plants this fall.
- 9. **Maanawaka Conservation Area Annual Inspection:** Matt Osborn reported that he was contacted by the Upper Valley Land Trust about the annual inspection to ensure that the conservation easement is

being honored. Matt noted that Tom Kahl volunteered to join the UVLT staff member on the inspection.

**10. Gift of Four Trees:** Tom Kahl reported that the Hartford Tree board donated four trees to the Conservation Commission that were left over from their Annual Tree Sale. Jon Bouton suggested planting them within the Japanese Knotweed along the White River in Lyman Point Park and involving the Tree Board. The HCC agreed. Matt Osborn noted that we will need approval of Parks and Recreation Department Director Scott Hausler. Jon volunteered to contact Scott. Jon, Katie and Tom volunteered to assist in planting the trees.

**11. Climate Action Plan:** Mary Hutchins reported that the Climate Action Committee has met several times in the last month. They received several proposals from consultants to prepare the Climate Action Plan, interviewed two consultants and selected one Pale Blue Dot. As part of the project, there will be several working groups.

- Transportation and Land Use
- Waste Management
- Local Food and Agriculture
- Energy and the Built Environment
- Health and Safety
- Water and Wastewater
- Greenspace
- Climate Economy

Mary noted that the Climate Action Committee will be soliciting individuals to serve on the working groups.

**12. Stream Restoration:** Tom Kahl stated that he wanted to discuss next steps for the stream restoration. He noted that the HCC is considering a site on Podunk Brook and possibly the Town Forest. There was discussion. Dana Hazen noted that the stream restoration projects promote flood resiliency and habitat improvement, but to have ecological benefit the projects need to be fairly large. He stated that funding is a big part of it and noted that we need to be mindful that the permitting process requires 2-3 month review. Dana suggested considering a demonstration project. Katie Mann noted that there are pros and cons to each site. She also noted that we need select sites that minimize risk to infrastructure. She suggested possible partnering with a property owner. Jon Bouton suggested looking at the outflow of the former Lower Hurricane Reservoir as a possible site. Tom stated that we need to be clear of what we want to do. It was agreed to continue the conversation.

**13. Announcements:**

- a. New Tree Warden: Tom Kahl reported that Dana Hazen has been named to the Town of Hartford Tree Warden. The HCC congratulated Dana.

**14. Next Meeting:** Tom Kahl reported that the next HCC meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00.

**15. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

**16. Meeting Action Items:**

- a) A.J. Follensbee agreed to update the schedule in the Forest Management Plan.

- b) Matt agreed to call A.J. about questions he had about the agreement between A.J. and the Town.
- c) Matt agreed to request getting on the Selectboard agenda in the coming weeks for the Selectboard to consider adopting the Forest Management Plan.
- d) Tom volunteered to post the Emerald Ash Borer flyers.
- e) Matt agreed to promote the 10/21 community meeting on the Recreation Management Plan and post the draft plan on the Town website.
- f) Katie volunteered to create a google form for public comments.
- g) Tom agreed to follow-up with Anna Schaal about the Goat Trail bank turn that partially washed out.
- h) Angie volunteered to design a plaque recognizing volunteers who built bridges on Town Forest trails.
- i) Jon agreed to contact property owners on the north side of the Town Forest prior to painting the boundary.
- j) Jon will work with the HACTC and mark up to 20 trees for them to cut 12-15 east of the Trailhead Kiosk.
- k) Matt will mail the last natural resource letter to the property owner.
- l) Dana stated that if he has time, he will return to the David Chang Conservation Area and treat invasive plants this fall.
- m) Tom volunteered to join the UVLT staff member on the annual inspection of the Maanawaka Conservation Area.
- n) Jon volunteered to contact Parks and Recreation Department Director Scott Hausler about planting trees in Lyman Point Park.
- o) Jon, Katie and Tom volunteered to assist in planting the trees in Lyman Point Park.
- p) It was agreed to continue discussion about potential stream restoration sites and projects.