

Hartland Conservation Commission Minutes of Apr. 8, 2026 meeting DRAFT

Meeting brought to order at 7:02 PM by Chair Anderegg.

1. Introductions Commission Members Attending: Rob Anderegg, Jennifer Waite, Guy Crosby, Dan Nelson, Dan Gottsegen, Doug Hill (remotely). **Residents/Guests Attending:** Phil Hobbie (Selectboard), Karen Ganey (White River Natural Resources Conservation District), Mary Ann Postans, Helen Esmond (Zoom), Lou White (Zoom). Chair Anderegg welcomed non-members and encouraged an informal, participatory atmosphere.

2. Approve minutes for the Mar. 11 meeting (vote) The minutes from the March 11th meeting were reviewed and approved without change.

3. Treasurer's Report Total operating budget remaining: \$1,245 (out of the operating \$3,000 budget). Conservation Trust Fund Balance: \$10,550.58. A pending invoice for \$300 is expected from the mapmaker (Gary Trachier) for the Sumner Falls map project.

4. Elect officers and other administrative decisions (votes) The commission conducted its annual administrative review:

- **Election of Officers:** A motion was made to maintain the current leadership structure (Chair: Rob Anderegg, Scribe: Tina Barney, Treasurer: Doug Hill).
 - **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Meeting Time and Place:** The commission voted to continue meeting on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at Damon Hall, with no meetings in July or August.
 - **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Agenda Postings:** Agendas will continue to be posted at the Town Website, Damon Hall, Mike's Store, and the North Hartland Post Office, as well as on the Hartland listserv and HCC Facebook page.
- **Decision Making:** The commission voted to continue following an informal version of Robert's Rules of Order, prioritizing consensus but requiring a simple majority for voted items. A quorum is defined as five members.

5. Changes to Act 250/181 – Dan G. and Doug Dan Gottsegen presented a detailed report on Act 181 and the proposed S.325. Key points included:

- **Tier System:** The state is being divided into tiers to encourage housing in urban areas (Tiers 1A/1B) while protecting sensitive lands (Tier 3). Tier 2 areas will remain as they are under Act 250. Tier 1A and 1B implementation begins after Jan 1, 2026.
- **The "Road Rule":** New triggers for Act 250 review based on driveway length (800+ feet or combined roads/driveways exceeding 2,000 feet) are a point of concern for some. The rule is scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2026.

- **Impact on Hartland:** Current maps suggest Hartland is largely unaffected by Tier 1 designations due to a lack of municipal zoning, though high-elevation headwaters may fall under Tier 3.

Legislative Status: S.325, which has been approved by the Senate, and is now under consideration in the House, aims to push back implementation for the road rule (to January 1, 2030) and Tier 3 Rulemaking/Implementation (until June 30, 2028, providing more time for mapping rural, forested areas).

The Commission will monitor the progress of Acts 181 and S.325 but will take no action at this time.

6. Nature of Hartland – Jennifer Jennifer Waite proposed a community outreach initiative through the Saturday morning Community Breakfasts.

- **Topic:** "The Nature of Hartland" - focusing on local ecology, wildlife connectivity (e.g., bear habitat), and the Natural Resources Inventory.
- **Goal:** Use anecdotal data (game cameras, resident sightings) to engage the public in ecological stewardship.
- **Next Steps:** Jennifer will coordinate with the Resilience Group to find a date for a fall presentation. Other possible outlets could be posts to the Hartland listserv or joint ventures with the Hartland Nature Club.

7. Green-Up Day planning Green-Up Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 2nd.

- **Focus Areas:** Roadside cleanup and the "back side" of the park-and-ride near the Summarsell property.
- **Special Project:** Guy and Doug will coordinate the removal of an abandoned refrigerator from Shepherd Brook.
- **Supplies:** The commission will verify with the Town Clerk if clear bags can be provided alongside green bags to encourage recycling of roadside cans/bottles.

8. Updates

- **Amphibian Road Crossing:** A "Big Night" occurred recently with significant activity. While many wood frogs and salamanders were saved, high mortality was noted on Hartland-Quechee Road. Jennifer will look into purchasing safety triangles for future crossing events to alert speeding motorists.
- **Sumner Falls hiking map:** Gary has completed a draft that is now geo-referenced for mobile use (Avenza). Dan G. will coordinate minor color swaps for the topography layers to improve readability before the final version is posted to the town website.

9. Other business

- **Rights of Nature Initiative:** Karen Ganey (WRNRCD) presented a proposal for a town ordinance granting legal rights to the Ottawaquechee River. The commission discussed the complexities of jurisdictional authority (Federal/State vs. Town) and noted that, per current bylaws and resources, the HCC cannot serve as a regulatory enforcement body. The commission will continue to study the ordinance.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Minutes were generated by AI from a recording of the meeting and reviewed by the Commission.