

Town of Hartford
Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting
Approved Minutes
June 24, 2025

There was a delay in starting the meeting due to confusion as to the standing of the membership and officers resulting from election returns that resulted in two Selectboard members no longer being on the Selectboard and one new Selectboard member appointed the previous week to the Committee.

The precedent set of membership following the listing of qualifications which constituted the makeup of the committee when it was deemed to be charged under the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee Ordinance was at question. The identical membership, minus one who no longer qualified as per an ordinance stipulation that a person not a resident could not serve, was appointed to an Ad Hoc committee named the Planning Committee on March 6, 2025. No charge, duty or task was specified for that committee reflected in the minutes of that meeting, just its name. As per the March 25, 2025 meeting minutes, the leadership was unchanged.

The purpose of the Ad Hoc committee was clarified upon request to the Selectboard by the Committee Secretary at the June 17, 2025 Selectboard meeting. The Secretary noted several failed attempts in early June to confer with the chair to determine the direction of the committee in order to set an agenda for the next meeting. Lacking such direction, the secretary drafted and sent out an agenda intending to move forward with committee business.

Given the disorder and the nature of the dispute over leadership, lacking the presence of the previously elected chair, or the calling of the meeting to order or any other input by the previously elected vice chair, the Selectboard chair, Cathy Lowe, who was present as a committee member, called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm.

Attendance: Cathy Lowe, Selectboard; Aaron Harvey, Selectboard; Rebecca Elsmann, Recreation Committee; Lennie Eichman, Solid Waste Committee-alternate for Lee Holman; Margaret Matthews, Planning Board.

Present but left prior to elections: Daryl Boness, Ordinance Committee; Ken Violette, Cemetery Committee; Chad Casey, Pond/Lake Representative; Tony Pirruccello, Appeals Board; Susan Goulet, former Selectboard member.

Absent: Kathy Landry, former Selectboard member; Bim McNeil, Road Commissioner; Lee Holman, Solid Waste Committee.

Resigned: Tom Rodrigue, Appeals Board alternate.

Public: Lianne Bedard.

The minutes were read and accepted as read. The next item was to be elections which reignited the membership dispute, and before that could be settled, several members left and Daryl Boness was heard to say he resigned.

The remaining members constituted a quorum as per the Comprehensive Review Committee Ordinance quorum of five members, considered by general agreement to be a reasonable number for a larger committee, there being no Selectboard approved rules by which the committee was functioning.

Officer elections were held and Margaret Matthews was elected chair, Becky Elsman, Vice Chair and Lennie Eichman, Secretary.

Peggy Matthews presented a list of rules for the committee to submit to the Selectboard for approval in order to avoid further disputes over procedure. The rules were reviewed and members voted to present them to the Selectboard for approval.

Lianne Bedard asked for an exact monthly date for the team to meet which will be determined.

Old Business: Not discussed due to assigned members having left the meeting.

Discussion and assignment of Subcommittee assignments as listed on the agenda.

‘Recreation: Rebecca Elsman, Transportation: Cathy Lowe, Natural Resources-Lennie Eichman, Agriculture & Forestry-Aaron Harvey, Historical and Archeological Resources, and Scenic Sites as part of Natural Resources-Peggy Matthews with Lee Holman.

Discussion of the fact that when water quality goes down, the tax base decreases. Run-off needs to be checked as areas grow, for example, the effect of phosphorus.

Peggy reported that statistics showed no growth around Bear Pond between the 2008 plan and 2018 information. Tax cards need to be reviewed to check on new construction. Areas not suitable for construction, such as steep slopes or areas in the watershed, need to be accounted. All figures need to be checked.

Next meeting: July 29, 2025 @6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Matthews and Lennie Eichman
Former and current secretaries of the Comprehensive Plan Committee