Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of August 15, 2013 Meeting

Members Present: Bry Beeson, Jeff MacQueen, Tom Bubolz, Carl Cassel, Carl Schmidt, Harry Pease, Craig Putnam, Kathy Baker

Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley.

Guest: Rob O’Donnell

Harry called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Tom made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 18 meeting, Carl Cassel seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Conservation Fund Spending History: Carl Cassel passed out a list of expenditures he has found so far. Some details are still needed to complete it. He will go back and look at the minutes of previous Commission meetings to obtain more details of receipts and expenditures and update us at our September meeting.

Old Business:

Water Testing Program Update: Tom reported that the e-coli levels from the August tests at two of the five testing locations were still above safe levels. Those two sites are Creamery Road Bridge and Dublin Road. Harry will put out a notice on listserv and Carl Cassel will include a reference in the Friends of the Library Newsletter. Harry will also arrange to meet with the Town Health Officer and Selectboard about the water testing program. Water testing will be done again in September.

Recycling Program Update: Christine Bills will work with Sandra Marsh to update the recycling program brochure then set up a meeting with the recycling committee. Sandra is considering a curbside recycling pilot program to see how it will work.

Eck Woodlands Encroachment Update: Harry had a monitoring visit with Fuller Henriques from UVLT and walked half the property. Larry Sargent had moved everything except a small pallet of wood and his portable sawmill back across the property line, and he said he would move those soon. Harry will follow-up and also install a metal post at the southwest corner of the property.

Orford Conservation Land Management Plan Update: Jeff has looked into installing a kiosk. All agreed that it should be located near the parking lot. Rob O’Donnell offered to finance the kiosk, and he and Jeff will consult regarding the design.

New Business:

Invasive Plants Demonstration Project: Ron Rhodes from the Connecticut River Watershed Council agreed to lead a demonstration project on identifying and controlling invasive plants. He will apply for grant money, but it would not be available until the end of the year. Craig will coordinate with Ron and also set up a site visit in September. It was suggested to include Rivendell students, and perhaps Scouts in the program. Jeff will coordinate with Rivendell.

Purchase of Weed Wrench: Harry suggested that we purchase a weed wrench that can be used at our demonstration project and also loaned out to town citizens to dig out invasive plants. It would be a medium size, 17.5 pounds, and a total cost of $189 including shipping. Kathy made a motion that we purchase a weed wrench, Bry seconded and all approved. Harry will work with the Town Administrator to purchase it. We will then need to establish a loan policy for the weed wrench. Kathy suggested we plant shrubs around the Orford Conservation Land monument. Members suggested we wait until the kiosk is in place and coordinate the plantings.

Carl Schmidt reported that UVLT said there has been no movement on conservation easements on the Perilman or Marino properties.

Anne reported there is a hazardous waste pilot program in Piermont September 21. The town of Piermont is contributing $1000 towards the program, and it proposed to charge $45/car. The Selectboard has $800 that it could contribute and asked if the Commission would consider contributing $1,000 towards the project. Discussions ensued about the short time frame, the uncertainty about resident participation, that we had not budgeted for this and that residents can still take household hazardous waste to Lebanon. The Commission decided not to participate this year after a motion by Bry to do so, with no second to the motion. The Orford Selectboard will consider budgeting money for participation in the project next year.

Carl Cassel reported that Ann Green has a “Northern Trespass” DVD, available for all to view, concerning the Northern Pass Project.

Bry asked that we take care in providing citizen’s names in public records, that we should be sure to ask permission before doing so. Commission members agreed.

Harry stated that UVLT reported that easements for Trinity Farm are on hold, that UVLT would like the Commission to contact the Perilmans about their status, and for us to consider approving payment for an easement appraisal estimated to cost about $5,000 for a large property on 25A. Harry agreed to try to contact the Perilmans and to tell UVLT that we would only consider paying for an easement appraisal based on a formal request and a presentation from the UVLT and the property owner.

Harry received a complete copy of the 2012 town tax maps which are available for reference.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m. with a motion from Tom and a second from Carl Cassel.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Baker