Orford Conservation Commission

July 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Members present: Harry Pease, Tom Bubolz, Bry Beeson, Emily Bryant, Carl Cassel, Jeff MacQueen, Craig Putnam, Kathy Baker, Anne Duncan Cooley

Guest: Rob O’Donnell

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

A motion to approve the June 20, 2013 meeting minutes was made by Bry, seconded by Tom, and unanimously approved.

Conservation Fund Status: Harry received a report from the town treasurer as to the status of the funds in the Conservation Fund account. As of June 24, 2013 the balance in the fund was $158,617.92. The general consensus of the Commission was to use funds in a pro-active manner in accordance with the purpose of the Commission. There was a general discussion regarding the town’s support for the Commission to use the funds to buy easements or land that should be conserved. It was suggested that the Commission ask the public for ideas, that we adhere to NRI recommendations for Commission projects, and that we consult with UVLT and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests regarding their ideas and priorities in the town. Carl Cassel agreed to put together a history of spending from the Conservation Fund that we could use to get ideas for future projects.

Old Business:

Water Testing Program: Test results on July 9 from Jacobs Brook showed a high count of E-coli. After consulting with the Selectboard, Harry posted a notice on the Orford listserv warning people to stay out of the brook. There was a discussion regarding the frequency of testing and the posting of warnings. It was agreed that it is a Selectboard responsibility. It was further agreed that Harry would meet with Anne Duncan Cooley and the Town Health Officer for further discussions about the scope and frequency of the water testing program.

Recycling Program: The committee established at the June meeting has not yet met. Rob O’Donnell reported that Sandra Marsh is considering a trial curb-side pick-up of recyclables bi-weekly for a fee. Harry will follow-up with Christine Bills.

Eck Woodlands Encroachment: At the request of the Selectboard Harry met with Larry Sargent on July 3, 2013. Larry agreed to move all wood and other personal property off the town owned land by August 1. Harry also sent a letter to Larry regarding their meeting.

Possible Illegal Filling of Wetlands: Harry called NH on June 26 for an update. DES had not received a response yet from Larry Sargent. DES will notify the Selectboard and the Conservation Commission by letter of any further actions they take.

Wetlands Application for Floating Dock and Stairs: Harry and Carl Schmidt reviewed the draft application and walked the property. Harry contacted the landowner’s agent because the application had errors and the drawing of the landing was inadequate. The agent submitted a final application at the end of June which Harry signed on behalf of the Commission indicating no objection to the project before it was sent to NH DES.

Orford Conservation Land Management Plan: Bry and Jeff are developing a management plan in compliance with the requirements in the easement. They suggested also making a map of trails and a map for birders, as well as installing an information kiosk. Rob O’Donnell offered to donate a kiosk if we would provide a sketch of what we want. Jeff will prepare a sketch.

Public Information Meeting: The Commission would like to hold a public information meeting sometime later in the year to inform property owners about the benefits and procedures for conserving land, and to solicit their ideas for conservation projects. Orford has some wonderful natural resources that are worthy of conservation. Our goal is to include the UVLT and The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests in the meeting. Harry has already had some discussion with the UVLT on this subject and will also reach out to the Forest Society.

New Business:

Invasive Plants: Craig suggested we concentrate on invasive plants, possibly starting with the Orford Conservation Land. We discussed coordinating with Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Watershed Council, as well as trying to include Rivendell students. Emily will contact Ron and Jeff will talk to Rivendell.

Potential Easement: Keith Wertman is investigating the possibility of an easement for forest land and wetlands of about 895 acres on the George Schwarz property on the north side of Route 25A.

Trail Map: Emily presented a new version of the Orford trail map she developed. The Commission agreed that Emily could be the liaison with the Hedges about the trail up Stonehouse Mountain.

Fran Plaisted temporarily resigned from the Commission for personal reasons.

A motion was made to adjourn by Bry, seconded by Jeff and affirmed by all. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Baker