ORFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES FOR MEETING 6/20/13

Present: Harry Pease, Bry Beeson, Emily Bryant, Carl Schmidt, Jeff MacQueen, Craig Putnam, Kathy Baker; Guests: Rob and Deirdre O’Donnell, Christine Bills, Eva Daniels, Sandra Marsh.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Bry moved and Kathy seconded that minutes of the May 16, 2013 meeting be approved. The motion carried.

Recycling: Christine Bills was invited to discuss her ideas regarding recycling in the town of Orford. She passed out a list of ideas she has to encourage sustainability, protection of the environment and recycling. She stated she would like to be involved in any recycling efforts in the town. Sandra Marsh related all recycling that’s currently available at the recycling center. Consensus was that this information must be made more available to the public, and that we need to encourage use of the facilities; perhaps through the Library Newsletter or other means. After considerable discussion, it was decided that Christine Bills, Sandra Marsh, Rob O’Donnell and Jeff MacQueen would form a committee to develop a plan to promote recycling and sustainability. Harry will inform the Selectboard of the Commission’s decision.

Current Use Change Fees: There is now a process to ensure that fees collected by the Town of Orford when land is taken out of Current Use are deposited in the Conservation Fund. Harry is to receive a monthly report from the town treasurer regarding the status of the Conservation Fund bank account. A check for $9750 is to be deposited into the account shortly for fees collected in 2012. 2013 fees should be available soon.

Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) Meeting: Harry gave a report on the meeting he, Anne Duncan Cooley and Carl Schmidt had with Jeanie McIntyre and Sara Cavin on May 31. The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update on land conservation initiatives in Orford and see how the OCC and UVLT could work together more to promote conservation.

1. Trinity Farm: UVLT is actively working with the O’Donnell’s on conservation.
2. Fisher land: Property is for sale. Estuary land is not developable, thus an easement is not very valuable and so there is little incentive to conserve it and reduce the property value.
3. Perilman land: They have shown interest, but have not been responsive lately. OCC agreed to try to contact them in August when they are expected to be in town.
4. Marino land: This got close to completion, but a family concern slowed it down.   
   There would be more interest if the Perilman property next door gets conserved.
5. Soper land: There has been no action for a while pending the outcome of the owners’ divorce. Harry checked and there has been no change in ownership of the property.

It was agreed that the OCC should hold a public information meeting, with assistance from the UVLT, and hopefully other conservation organizations such as the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, to educate landowners and promote conservation.

Possible Encroachment on Eck Woodlands conserved land: The Town owns the land and the UVLT holds the easement. UVLT discovered last year that a trailer owned by Lawrence Sargent was partially across the property line on the conserved land. Bry met with Mr. Sargent this past spring and asked him to move it. A recent visit by the UVLT indicates that there may be additional encroachment. Harry will discuss this with the Selectboard on June 26.

Possible Illegal Filling of Wetlands: OCC and the Selectboard received a letter from NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) reporting that they were informed of wetlands on Indian Pond Road being filled by Lawrence Sargent without a permit. Harry will discuss this with the Selectboard on June 26.

Other Business:

1. Carl commended Harry for his input to the town website.
2. Emily passed around a map of trails in Orford. It was suggested that the map be included on the website. She will bring a more detailed map for the July meeting. Having a map of conserved land and perhaps equestrian and snowmobile trails was suggested.
3. Craig suggested we should contact Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Watershed Council to inquire of any aid that may be available to enhance conserved lands. We should think about what would be a good project? Also, we should inform citizens about invasive insects such as the emerald ash borer, and help educate them about threats to the environment presented by invasive species. One idea is to hold an invasive species identification and control event at the Orford Conservation Land.
4. Jeff weed whacked the Orford Conservation Land property trails and areas overlooking the pond. He was asked to make a trail around the pond to connect with the access trail. He also contacted UVLT regarding birding hotspots in Orford.
5. Bry questioned the mechanics of who contacts landowners regarding land conservation. Usually it is done by UVLT. OCC is willing to help if need be.
6. Harry asked Bill McKee for updated tax maps. There is only one master copy of the large map available, and a book of smaller maps. It was suggested to have the large map reproduced.
7. Water Testing: Samples were taken in Jacobs Brook by Tom and sent for testing. Results have been received and will be shared with town residents once water quality standards are determined from NH DES. Upper Baker Pond and Indian Pond are tested by the State.
8. Wetlands Application: Lobdell Associates of Landaff, representing Robert Meserve, submitted a draft Permit By Notification (PBN) for advance review by the OCC. The PBN is for a Floating Dock and Stairs to be constructed at the Meserve property on the Connecticut River just south of the Piermont town line. It was agreed that Harry and Carl Schmidt would review the PBN and survey the site on behalf of the OCC, and then make a determination on the draft PBN.

Bry moved, and Jeff seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:55. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Baker