Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of September 19, 2013 Meeting

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

Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley

Harry called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Bry made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15 meeting, Carl Cassel seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business:

Conservation Fund Spending History Update: Carl Cassel reported that he is still searching for some records to be able to trace all financial transactions in the Conservation Fund. Emily said she has some information that she will put on a disc and give to Carl. Carl will continue to work on this and submit a report at the October meeting.

Water Testing Program Update: Harry and Kirsten Glass, Orford Health Officer, met with the Selectboard during the week of August 20. All agreed that water contamination issues, such as the recent high levels of e-coli detected in portions of Jacobs Brook, fall within the purview of the Health Officer and not the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission will continue its normal water testing program and will report results to the Selectboard and Health Officer.

Recycling Program Update: Christine Bills is working with Sandra Marsh to issue a new brochure about recycling in Orford, which is nearly ready to be printed. Sandra Marsh reported that she did not get much of a response on her proposal to add curbside recycling for her curbside trash pickup customers. Anne suggested we check on how the hazardous waste disposal went in Piermont in September to determine whether Orford will participate next year. Harry will check.

Eck Woodlands Encroachment Update: Harry reported that he first met with Larry Sargent on July 3. Then he accompanied the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) on their annual monitoring visit on August 6. On September 16, Harry again visited the site and installed a metal post on the southwest corner of the property. Since there was still a pallet of firewood and a portable sawmill on the property, Harry sent an update to the Selectboard on September 17.

Orford Conservation Land Management Plan Update: Jeff suggested establishing a trail above the pond and loop back to the hayfield which would be good for birders and other visitors. Members thought this was a good idea. Plans for a kiosk have been provided to Rob O’Donnell who volunteered to fund and build one.

Invasive Plants Demonstration Project Update: Craig reported on the site visit to the Orford Conservation Land on September 16 led by Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Watershed Council. Ron was accompanied by Fritz Gerhardt, Ph.D., Conservation Scientist, and also Pete Helm of the UVLT. Craig stated that the land is ripe for addressing invasives since there are several invasive species, including buckthorn, bittersweet and honeysuckle. Craig will formulate ideas and communicate with Commission members. Ron Rhodes is willing to apply for a grant to help address the invasives. Fritz will issue a report of his survey of the property, which will be available by our October 17 meeting, and which will provide input for a grant application should the Commission chose to apply for one. There was a short discussion regarding road repair to the property and agricultural access. Harry will talk to Rendell Tullar to see what access rights he currently has across the Perilman land to the lower meadow.

Weed Wrench Purchase Update: The wrench is scheduled to be delivered September 25. Carl Cassel has agreed to store it and loan it out to Town residents and landowners. A loan policy was outlined as follows:

1. May be loaned for a week at a time and extended if no one else is waiting for it.
2. May not be sub-loaned to someone else.
3. No use of mechanical equipment with the weed wrench is allowed.
4. If the wrench is broken the user must replace it with a new one.

Outreach Update: Harry contacted UVLT regarding their previous request for financial aid for an appraisal on a large tract of land in town. UVLT agreed that they would have additional discussions with the landowner and if he wanted to proceed, they would have to come in and make a formal presentation and request. Harry also reported that he attempted to contact Chuck Perilman, but did not get a call back.

New Business:

Orford Historical Society Proposal: The Orford Historical Society has requested the Commission to co-sponsor a program to be presented December 10 in the Rivendell Academy Multipurpose Room by Adair Mulligan from Lyme entitled “The Connecticut: New England’s Great River.” Kathy made a motion that we co-sponsor the program, it was seconded by Carl Cassel, and unanimously approved.

2014 Budget Request: The Selectboard asked for a “level funded” 2014 budget proposal by September 20. Following discussions of the 2013 budget request and budget execution, the following 2014 budget request, totaling $1,970, was unanimously approved after a motion by Kathy and a second by Carl Schmidt. The 2013 budget totaled $2,020.

1. Water Testing: $1,000
2. Dues to NH Association of Conservation Commissions: $220
3. Friends of the Orford Libraries Newsletter Space: $100
4. Mowing of the Orford Conservation Land: $300
5. Education: $150
6. Miscellaneous (Printing, Postage, etc.): $200

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. after a motion from Tom and a second from Carl Cassel.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Baker