Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of February 20, 2014 Meeting

Members Present: Harry Pease, Carl Cassel, Carl Schmidt, Emily Bryant, Jeff MacQueen, Tom Bubolz, Fran Plaisted; Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley

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

Carl Cassel motioned that we accept the revised minutes from January 2014. Emily had not seen the revised minutes so she reviewed the revisions. Tom seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Old Business:

Conservation Fund Spending History Update: Carl Cassel reviewed the history of spending and is preparing the figures. He outlined several issues that were problematic in the records (large legal bill and in 2009 there was an issue of getting reimbursed two times from the town). He has not completed the work, but will document the rest of the figures up to the end of last year outlining in as much detail as he can based on the records, where the funds were spent. He hopes to have to this completed by April, 2014.

Orford Conservation Land Project Update and Planning: Harry spoke with Beth Ann Finley, NRCS, and he is scheduled to meet with the Selectboard next week to update them on the status. NRCS funding application deadline is currently March 21, 2014, but this may have changed with passage of the new Farm Bill). Tullando Farm, Inc. is maxed out on their funding right now from NRCS so we may need to do a work around by having a farm member involved rather than the corporation. Tullando Farm wants to continue farming the land, and has a license agreement with the Commission to do so through May 2016. Harry recommends that we continue to try to pursue this and all Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Terms: Two Commissioner terms have expired, and one will expire in May. Carl Cassel agreed to be reappointed for a 3-year term and all agreed that he be reappointed; Harry reported that Bry would like to be re-appointed as alternate rather than a full member and all present were in favor; Emily also agreed to be re-appointed as an alternate rather than a full member and all present agreed. Jeff MacQueen agreed to become a full member rather than a alternate and all present agreed. We will make a recommendation to the Selectboard. Eric Parenti may be interested in joining the Commission and Harry and Carl Schmidt will follow-up. Fran Plaisted indicated that she needed to think about the commitment of becoming a full member and will let the Commission know next month of her decision. In order to identify more people in town interested, Fran suggested posting a note on the listserv and having a sign-up sheet at Town Meeting.

**New Business:**

Planning for Town Meeting: Emily sent a reminder message out for the photo contest. Emily will make posters and put them out this week. Jeff and Emily will put the photo display together. Prizes are needed for photo contest winners. Harry will donate maple syrup. Jeff will donate a painting. Harry will ask School House Gardens and Mt.Cube Farm for a gift certificate and maple syrup, respectively. It was suggested that we ask other businesses in town as well, such as Ariana’s and Mill Gardens to donate gift certificates. Emily will make cookies. We will have the weed wrench at the meeting and Harry will bring 100 copies of the invasive species booklet. Harry noted that he learned from the annual gathering of Conservation Commissions that Commissions all up and down the River Valley are working on invasive species. We will have a sign-up sheet for prospective new members and volunteers. Harry will represent the Commission and address Warrant Article 17 at the meeting. He is researching additional information to present and plans to speak first.

"Saving Special Places" Workshop: This year it will be held at the Laconia Middle School on April 5. Registration Fee is $60. The Commission agreed to fund any Commissioner who wants to attend. Jeff and Harry agreed to attend. If any members are interested in going, let Harry know no later than March 1, 2014.

Jeff volunteered to lead a bird walk in the spring and we discussed a bird watching Canoe/ Kayak trip on the water in the summer.

Tom moved to adjourn and Carl Cassel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Plaisted