Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of September 18, 2014 Meeting

Members Present: Harry Pease, Carl Schmidt, Carl Cassel, Kathy Baker, Jeff Macqueen, Tom Bubolz; Alternates Present: Emily Bryant, Craig Putnam, Fran Plaisted; Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley

The meeting was called to order at 7:03p.m.

Alternate Craig Putnam was appointed to sit in as a voting member for the vacant Commissioner position.

Carl Cassel made a motion to approve the minutes from the July meeting and Kathy Baker seconded the motion. With a small modification proposed by Carl Schmidt, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business:

Solarize Orford Update: Emily provided an update. The committee is in the process of selecting an installer. Two bids have been received and group is reviewing them. The launch event will be held on October 18, 2014 at Rivendell Academy in the Café.

Orford Conservation Land Project Update**:** Harry provided an update. This will be a three phase project. First is to complete the invasive plants removal by July 2015; second is to complete the riparian buffer along the river by October 2015, and third is to improve the agricultural access road by May 2016. Invasive plant removal and the riparian buffer should offer educational opportunities for the school and community. We will continue to involve Ron Rhodes, Fritz Gerhardt and Sarah Schwaegler because of their experience and interest. Harry will send the project documents to the Upper Valley Land Trust since they hold the easement on the land. At the October meeting Harry will be looking for volunteers to work on project planning.

Long Term Capital Investment Advisory Committee Update:Carl Cassel indicated that there is not much to report. Bridges are the largest problem identified. Conservation is not a big part of this effort.

Conservation Fund and Budget:Harry provided an update. We have spent $1,136 to date of our $1,970 budget. On September 2 he submitted a level funded budget of $1,970 for 2015. Harry will meet with the Selectboard and Budget Committee on October 15, 2014 to discuss the budget proposal. Harry met with Louise Mack, Tax Collector, to find out how to track uncollected current use change taxes prior to 2013 since only the current (2014) and prior (2013) years are shown on the monthly Tax Collector’s Report. Louise said there are no outstanding current use change taxes from prior years. We are now receiving monthly budget reports, bank statements and tax collector reports so that we can monitor our finances. The current balance in the Conservation Fund is $166,986.

Water Testing Program: Tom took samples and tests were run on September 16. The results came back this afternoon and all E-coli levels are below the threshold.As noted from our last meeting, we agreed with Kirsten Glass, Health Officer, that posters should be put up when E-coli levels are high.

Fisher Shoreland and Wetland Permit Applications Update: Harry received a copyof aprovisional shoreland permit from the state with a condition that it also be approved by the DES Subsurface Systems Bureau and that a wetland permit be obtained along with a series of other contingencies. We anticipate there will be current use change taxes due on this property.

Purple Loosestrife Control Project Monitoring: Jeff participated in the Rivendell Visions Program this summer. In July they studied invasive plants and he took them on a field trip to the Orford Conservation Land to look at the purple loosestrife. Although they didn’t see any beetles, they saw many plants with holes in their leaves from the beetles. This damage to the early growth may have helped prevent it from reaching maturity.

New Business:

Upper Valley Land Trust Conservation Opportunities: Carl Schmidt talked with Sara Cavin from the Upper Valley Land Trust and she suggested that she attend our October meeting to discuss two conservation opportunities, both in the preliminary phase. First is the David and John Bischoff property in Quinttown. UVLT is working with the Bischoffs to conserve this 142 acre lot on Mason Pond. They are looking for funding sources. They hope the Orford Conservation Commission will partner with them on this project. Sara would like a letter of support from us to submit with her grant application on September 26. Carl Schmidt made a motion that we send a letter of support, Carl Cassel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Harry will prepare a draft letter, coordinate it with Carl Schmidt and Anne Duncan Cooley, and sign the letter. Second is a 45 acre parcel of land owned by the Appalachian Trail Commission (ATC) on Baker Road near the Cross Rivendell Trail. The ATC would donate the land, but transfer costs and stewardship costs would need to be funded.

Kiosk at the Orford Conservation Land: Jeff left a note about this with Rob O’Donnell to get the status. We discussed getting estimates from contractors as an alternative. Jeff will follow-up.

Taylor **Soper Property: Carl Schmidt suggested that we look into at this property again. Harry said that the Upper Valley Land Trust has discussed this with Taylor Soper in the past. Carl talked to Jeanie MacIntyre at UVLT and she suggested he contact Taylor. The Commissioners agreed that Carl should contact Taylor about conserving this land that includes about 1,000 feet of river frontage.**

**The** Tullando Farm Open Barn will be held on October 11 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Rivendell Ramble will be held on September 27. Jeff will man a table for the Conservation Commission from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Café at the Rivendell Academy with assistance from Solarize Orford.

Tom made a motion that we adjourn, Carl Cassell seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Plaisted