Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting on August 18, 2016

Commissioners Present: Carl Schmidt, Craig Putnam and Harry Pease; Alternates Present: Emily Bryant and Fran Plaisted; Guest: Amber Boland, UVLSRPC

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m.

Harry requested that Emily and Fran serve as full commissioners for the meeting.

Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) Update: Amber provided a read-ahead on Monday of a draft Climate Change chapter for the NRI. We discussed the draft in some detail. Craig suggested we start off simply; make it more of a story and less scientific. Emily suggested making some of the data more visual by including graphs to display changes over time in temperature, rainfall, snowfall, etc. Climate change impact on specific natural resources will be included in each resource section. We also agreed that we should use the NRI introduction section to explain why and how we are including climate change information in this update. All agreed that keeping the information as local as possible is important, and to include references to Orford’s agriculture, forestry, and maple syrup production, and home and garden owners. To that end we agreed to talk to local people and include quotes or vignettes about climate change. Amber will make changes to the climate change chapter based on our input and send us a new draft prior to the September meeting. Beginning in September we will work on the water resources sections of the NRI. Harry suggested that Commissioners each take one of the four water resource sections and review them prior to the September meeting and be ready to discuss ideas for the update. Emily and Fran will do surface waters, Harry has wetlands, Carl Schmidt has floodplains, and Craig has groundwater.

Culvert Inventory: As a follow-up to a brief discussion at last month’s meeting, Amber reported that as part of the Capital Improvement Plan that UVLSRPC helped Orford perform two years ago they did an abbreviated culvert inventory and found that we have 165 culverts in town. UVLSPRC could do a full culvert inventory for the town if we wanted which includes evaluating condition, capacity, hydrology, etc. This information can be used to determine if the culverts are right-sized and help with a replacement schedule. There is grant funding available this year that could pay up to 50% of the cost. Harry agreed to check with UVLSRPC staff member Adam Ricker to get more specifics and report to the Selectboard.

Minutes of Previous Meetings: June 16, 2016 Minutes – Carl Schmidt moved we approve the minutes, Fran seconded and the motion carried. July 7, 2016 Minutes – Craig moved we approve the minutes, Carl Schmidt seconded and the motion carried.

July 21, 2016 Minutes - Emily moved we approve the minutes, Craig seconded, and the motion carried.

Mason Pond Celebration: UVLT has suggested Saturday, October 1 as the new date for the Mason Pond Celebration. We agreed and will coordinate with UVLT, including publicity. We expect the time of 2:00 p.m. and other plans will be the same as previously agreed.

Mason Pond Agreement: Harry reported that the Attorneys for the Town of Orford and UVLT worked out an “Option and Land Use Agreement” for the Mason Pond property that was acceptable to all parties. The agreement gives the Town of Orford the right to purchase the property for one dollar if UVLT does not fulfill its conservation, education and public access obligations for the property. On August 10, 2016, UVLT President Jeanie McIntyre signed the agreement and Harry gave her the $60,000 check from the Orford Conservation Fund that had been previously approved by the Conservation Commission. The Option and Land Use Agreement will be recorded at the Grafton County Registry of Deeds.

Carl Schmidt reported that the Fishers, who built a house and barn near the Connecticut River across from the State Highway Garage, are submitting an application for a permit to stabilize the river bank on the north end of their property. Harry will check with the Town Clerk to see if the application has been received as we will need to review it.

Carl Schmidt also reported that he is pursuing getting some baseline drawings done of the Billy Brown barn and shed to help with future maintenance.

Jeff sent an update regarding his summer conservation program with students. He taught them to identify invasive plants and they helped him pull some, and at the Orford Conservation Land they assisted with putting down wood chips to improve the walking trails. They also trapped crayfish at Indian Pond and Upper and Lower Baker Ponds looking for the invasive rusty crayfish which fortunately they did not find.

Craig suggested that at our next meeting we again discuss finding new members as we are still short one Commissioner. We agreed to discuss this at our September meeting.

Craig moved to adjourn, Carl Schmidt seconded and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Fran Plaisted