

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)
Meeting Minutes: May 21, 2020
Meeting held via Zoom due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Present via Zoom: Members: Ted Cooley (Chair), Carl Schmidt, Tom Bubolz, John Miller, Craig Putnam, Harry Pease. Alternate: Emily Bryant.

Meeting was called to order at 7:03pm

Emily was seated as a member.

1. **Minutes of April 23, 2020:** approval was tabled till next meeting. Ted requested that members send their edits to the full OCC so everyone can see them before the next meeting.
2. **Water Testing:** Harry checked with Mike Dexter of the testing lab (Eastern Analytics), who said that there are no delays due to the corona virus. John will meet with Harry on June 2 to help take the first water samples of the year and to learn the procedure. Harry emailed Tom Steketee to see if the Selectboard wants any extra sites tested this year in addition to the 10 sites that are already tested -- High Bridge(Archertown Brook), Dublin Road, Creamery Bridge, Heritage Center, Antique Barn Company, Town Road 79, Mousley Bridge, Indian Pond Beach, Upper Baker Pond Beach, Lower Baker Pond Beach. Last September they requested an additional site to see if it explained some high readings, but it turned out that the results were high all along the brook. Ted mentioned that the State said they would not look into high test results unless they are above 1200. Jeff MacQueen gave Harry all the supplies he had. The procedure will be for the lab to pick the samples up from Harry's house at 10:00 am on the day the samples were taken.
3. **Invasives.** John reported that he and Sarah Schwaegler visited the triangle of land at the intersection of High Bridge and Tillotson Falls Roads, where there is Japanese Knotweed. Not far from there is a plant of special interest that needs to be protected. After speaking to members of the knotweed subcommittee, John feels we could go ahead with the Knotweed control test project. The hardware cloth and smothering methods could be used in the triangle area, and repeated cutting method for occurrences along the roadside (subcommittee members and/or volunteers would cut the knotweed every two weeks). He has been in touch with Doug Cygan of NH DES about whether there is some standard way to report on the results of the procedures. John estimated cost of materials at about \$20 for hardware cloth and \$100 for black plastic.
Motion (John/Harry): That the OCC authorize expenditure of no more than \$250 from the Conservation Fund to purchase materials for the Knotweed control project. The motion passed. Craig suggested talking with Sarah S. about what needs to be done to protect the plant.
>>> John will talk with Sarah about this.
4. **Orfordville Bog culvert.** John reported that Horizons Engineering has told him that there is a cost overrun on the design/permitting of the culvert project of about \$1500; they suggested splitting the cost between themselves and the Town. The overrun issue is due to a change in permitting procedures, among other things. The OCC is awaiting a detailed accounting of the overrun before making any approval. The contract is between HE and the town (not the CC). HE apparently did not alert the town to the overrun.
5. **Natural Resources Inventory.** John polled the group to see if using Google Docs was working out for those working on the NRI and suggested using whatever method is best for them. Ted or John could help if there are technical problems.
6. **Land Use Agreement (for Orford Conservation land and Boat Launch land).** Ted received the revised land use agreement back from the attorney and requested that members check it over. Jeff had mentioned in an email that there are bobolinks nesting at the Orford Conservation Land and suggested investigating whether mowing could be delayed until the bobolinks have hatched.

Harry suggested that this could be written into the agreement – it would make sense since it is the CC who manages the land, and this is a conservation issue, and the license agreement holders are not paying to farm the land. Emily suggested that we need to have a specific date for when mowing can start; Harry thought it might mean that the farmer would lose one cutting of hay (out of several).

>> Harry will check with Jeff about what date to use for delayed mowing.

>> Emily will check with USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Upper Valley Land Trust to see if they know what date to use.

Ted suggested using the same wording for the Boat Launch land use agreement, but changing the information on the tax map lot number, etc. Emily retrieved that information and sent it to Ted.

>> Harry will ask Jeff if there are bobolinks on this property as well.

7. **Invoices.** 1) Horizons Engineering – Orfordville Road Bog Culvert: \$222.75.

Motion (Ted/John): to pay the Horizons Engineering invoice for \$222.75 to be taken from the Conservation Fund. The motion carried.

2) Town Attorney 2.3 hours, \$533.00 for review of license agreement.

Motion (Ted/Tom): to pay the town attorney \$533.00 to be taken from the Conservation Fund. The motion carried. Harry expressed concern over how long it took to get a response from the attorney.

8. **Trail Map.** Emily emailed to the members an Orford trail map she developed a few years ago. Carl S. had suggested that a trail map would be a good thing send to the Orford Listserv in this time of the Covid-19 virus when people are looking for outdoor activities. Harry suggested it could go on the Web Page. Emily wondered whether there should be a waiver, or any hiking guidelines added to the map.

>>> Ted requested members to look over the map so we could approve it at the June meeting.

9. **Membership terms and recruitment.** Carl S. suggested Harry Bird (River Road) and Daniel and Melissa Stern (recently bought Marino's house) as possible recruits. Craig mentioned that it would be good to maintain female representation on the commission.

>>> Craig with contact Deenie Bugge to see if she has interest in being a CC member.

10. **Events and Outreach:** We are working on the trail map. Ted also reminded members about sending in photos. There is also the Facebook page.

11. **Other business.** Paul Goundrey would like some help in maintaining the Indian Pond Heritage Trail – there are blowdowns to remove and brush clearing to be done. He also is taking suggestions on what color blazes to use on the trail. It was noted that the AT uses white blazes, the Cross-Rivendell Trail uses blue, and AT property boundaries use yellow, and surveyors sometimes use red. We should take that into account in choosing a color.

Next meetings: (likely via Zoom): June 18, 7 pm, July 16, 7pm

Motion (Tom/John): to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm
Minutes taken by Emily Bryant.