

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)
Approved Meeting Minutes April 15, 2021
Meeting held via Zoom due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Present via Zoom: Members: Ted Cooley (Chair), John Miller (Vice Chair), Craig Putnam, Carl Schmidt, Carl Cassel, Fran Plaisted, Emily Bryant

Meeting called to order 7:02

Fran Plaisted and Carl Cassel were seated.

1/18/2021 minutes approved, 2/2/2021 minutes approved.

Reports, Surveys and Updates: No updates.

Town Meeting Preparations: Petition Article 14: revise the land use tax change %. Conservation of land in Orford has been supported by town members. It is not true that the land is taken out of the tax base. Most of the land is in Current Use before and after it is conserved.

We do meet on 5/22/2021. Reviewed the NH Association of Conservation Commissions Site (<http://www.nhacc.org/>).

Why is land conservation good? Conserved land can be used for hunting, fishing, hiking. Town does not have to build road, offer school services. It is not a net loss to the town.

Carl S. put together items to share w/ community

We are going to decide on who is going to present what in the meeting.

Harry: There should be useful information already prepared in the Niles Room.

Emily- Information is included in the NRI the data for Land in Conservation and Current Use, Chapter 4

<http://orfordnh.us/wp-content/docs/conservation/2020%20Orford%20Natural%20Resource%20Inventory.pdf>.

Carl C.- (OCC) should emphasize what we have done with the funds and show town that the money has been well spent.

1. Paid for culvert Study in town
2. Paid for the engineering surveying work, design, and NH DES Wetlands Approval process for the failing culvert and unstable water level at the Orfordville Road wetland area.

These items would have been paid for out of the general fund for the town.

John-The warrant article does not specify where the remainder of the funds go, but we assume the default is that it goes into the general fund.

Emily will look up the RSA.

Fund is now down to \$100,000. The money cannot be redirected out of the OCC. All funds must be directed toward conservations funds and utilized by the OCC to conserve land. OCC is no different than other committees, where we must obtain feedback from town members via Public Hearings.

Carl Cassel will research how much money has gone into the OCC.

Carl S. pulled together material on what we have achieved in the community, Mountain View Farm, Brackett Brook Farm, and there are more in the works to conserve more land. Should the money generated for taking land out of conservation be used to conserve the land.

Carl S. also suggests that OCC put things onto the list serve, Orford website (Orfordnh.us). Periodically put messages onto the town list serve. It may be helpful.

Conserved land benefits the town.

What constitutes lobbying on the listserv?- Ted.

Town meeting is a month away.

Carl will attempt to locate the files in the Nile Room to get this information from prior meetings.

Commissioner- we have several openings. 2 full positions. Post a message on the list serve?

Harry will ask about tables and let us know.

No invoices for last month.

Projects and Updates: Harry- Water testing: follow the same schedule that Tom set up. Currier picks up on Tuesdays. Propose the same dates. Except June 1st to June 8th, we will test first Tuesday of the month. We have testing supplies for the first few months. Supplies free from testing lab. Prior selectman wanted testing done more frequently at the swim beaches. Budget has not been approved yet. All samples have to be picked up at Harry's house. Upper Baker Pond we do the town beach and the camps do their own testing.

ULLSRPC- has been talking about doing testing along the CT River. Only being done at river outlets, not stream outlets into the CT River.

Knotweed- John project reports and Tillotson Falls Rd. Roadside areas need seasonal and annual follow-up and we need volunteers. We need recruiting as this is more work than OCC volunteers can do alone. This will take several hours of labor. Knotweed cutting to make arrangements for the coming season. Jacobs Brook 25A, Jacobs Brook watershed areas, Orford Town roadsides. Additional landowners have been reaching out for help.

NH DOT project 25A – Chris Turgeon (NH DOT engineer) agreed to address the step shelf area at Brook Road and 25A and he has failed to do so. He was asked to obtain funding for replacement plantings and he said no to that. Shelf reconstruction for DOT. OCC needs to follow-up with Ron Rhodes (CRC) for planting help. We also need to continue effort at knotweed removal along this area.

Achieved NH DES approval of the culvert design replacement at Orfordville Road wetland area. Orford Selectboard will need to put it out to bid, per agreement. Need to follow up on that.

Terry Straight –need to have a plan to dispose of the knot week cuttings.

NRI is on the town website. Chapters of the NRI would be appropriate to distribute as communication of the town. <http://orfordnh.us/wp-content/docs/conservation/2020%20Orford%20Natural%20Resource%20Inventory.pdf>

Ted reported on FERC presentation -efforts that they are undergoing to relicense the hydro dams on the CT River. Reduce the changes in the depth of the river to prevent erosion. Looking at changing water levels at dams to protect river and banks. Once in a 40 year opportunity to allow more people to access and enjoy the river.

Carl C. moved to adjourn. Craig seconded. Approved.

Meeting ended 8:17.

Minutes taken by Fran Plaisted

Ted reconvened the meeting to review invoice from Horizons Engineering for \$1000.00 for the Orfordville Road Bog Culvert. Ted motioned we pay this invoice from the OCC funds. John seconded. Motion carried.

Tom motioned we adjourn. Craig seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting ended 7:52pm

NOTE: Ted determined that meeting would have needed to be warned, so a special meeting was scheduled to address approvals for Horizons invoice payment.

Next meetings: third Thursday in February.