

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)
Approved Meeting Minutes: May 20, 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, Harry Pease; Alternates: Carl Cassel, Fran Plaisted, Emily Bryant

Meeting called to order 7:03.

Carl C. and Emily were seated.

1. *Minutes of April 2021* were tabled till the next meeting.
2. *Connecticut River Joint Commissions*, Upper Valley Subcommittee: Ted reported that at a recent meeting, representatives from the company that owns the dams on the Connecticut River were present to discuss dam relicensing. Ted mentioned that the owners indicated no interest in projects such as expanding picnic areas, making trails, providing more river access.
3. *Invoices:* Alan Dyke submitted an invoice for \$80 for mowing (May 8 and 18).
Motion: (Ted/Craig) to pay Alan Dyke's invoice. The motion passed.
4. *Water Testing.* Harry outlined the proposed water testing schedule: Monthly tests May – Sept for six sites on Jacobs Brook, one on Brackett Brook, and the three beaches (Upper and Lower Baker Pond and Indian Pond), plus intermediate weekly tests for the three beaches. The CC budget has not been voted on yet, since Town Meeting was postponed to May 22, so Harry has not scheduled the pickups yet, and the May test has not been done. Once the vote is taken, he will schedule the pickups. The monthly test will be done on the first Tuesday, except the second Tuesday in June. The other tests will also be done on Tuesdays. Craig volunteered to help Harry with the weekly tests, for Indian Pond in particular. It was noted that the cost is \$28 per test, and the money comes from the CC budget (not the Selectboard).
5. *Knotweed/ Invasives:* John reported that Leslie Garamella (Tannery Road) got help from CC volunteers to help dispose of knotweed that she had cut on her land. Knotweed growing season is upon us, and we need to have a subcommittee to continue work on knotweed control.
6. *Orford Conservation Land (aka Richmond Property).* Ted noted that the path on the lower part of the property needs weed-whacking about once a month. Harry volunteered to help Ted with this.
7. *Preparation for Town Meeting (May 22).* There is a petitioned article, #14, to change the allocation of the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) from 100% to the Conservation Fund, to 50% to the Conservation Fund and 50% to the General Fund. There was some discussion of the tax implications of the change. Harry abstained from discussion of Warrant Article 14, since he is Town Moderator. Carl S. reminded the group of the wording of the original article in 2000 that established that 100% was to go to the Conservation Fund:
"To see if the Town will vote to deposit 100% of revenue collected pursuant to RSA 79-A (the Land Use Change Tax) into a fund known as the Conservation Fund, as authorized by RSA 79-A:25 II, to be administered by the Conservation Committee to help preserve the rural character of Orford by encouraging the conservation of open land in accordance with RSA 36-A: 5 "
There was discussion of how to proceed at Town meeting to keep the 100% rate -- procedural approaches (e.g. pass over the article), and/or pointing out benefits that have come from the fund (e.g. conservation easements, culvert inventory, design of culvert for Orfordville Road bog), and the minimal effect that putting the LUCT into the Conservation Fund has on the tax rate. Carl C. reported that while in the 2000's there were a couple of large amounts put in the fund, in the past few years it has been a

matter of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars per year. Ted and Carl C. will put together handouts on Conservation Fund benefits, and on recent amounts put into the fund. The information will also be put on the Orford Listserv.

8. Recruiting CC members: Jeff MacQueen has moved away, and Tom Bubolz indicated that he will be stepping down soon, so we need two members. Fran will ask Christie Hedges; John mentioned that Chase Kling has some interest.

9. Town meeting display: probably not appropriate for this year given covid-19 restrictions.

10. Outreach: Ted encouraged us to think about possibilities: Bird/nature walks, star gazing. A townsperson had asked Ted whether the CC was doing anything about the emerald ash borer. Keep the photos coming.

Motion: (Carl C./Craig) to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:52

Next meetings: June 17, July 15 at 7:00 pm. It is not clear at this time whether this will be in person or via Zoom.