

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)
Meeting Minutes: March 17, 2022
Meeting held in person at the Niles Room in the Town Offices and via Zoom

Present in person: Members: Ted Cooley (Chair), Craig Putnam, Carl Schmidt, Harry Pease; Alternates: Emily Bryant.

Member of the public: Jordon Sutherland.

Present via Zoom: John Miller (Vice Chair)

Meeting called to order 7:05.

CC Members whose terms were up as of this year and are to be reappointed: Ted C and Carl S. Ted has received his letter; Carl will inquire about his.

Emily was seated as a member for the meeting.

This is the first in-person meeting since 2020.

1. Minutes

Emily will check the status of the November 2021 minutes.

2. Invoices: None as of now. Alan Dyke is willing to mow at the Richmond Property this year. Last year the OCC voted to let the Chair pay the invoices without having to wait for a meeting.

3. Orford Conservation Land (aka Richmond property)

>>> Ted will take on the weed whacking of the trail and welcomes assistance. Beware the timing of mowing and trail work to avoid nesting bobolinks.

4. Water Testing. Harry reviewed the testing schedule for last year. Ted noted that the Selectboard approved a CC budget for this year that includes the same amount of testing as last year. Harry made the point that the Selectboard as the Health Officer of the town have an obligation to post the beaches when the test results are high (88 or above). Test cost \$28 each last year.

Motion (Harry/Craig) To do water testing monthly, June – September inclusive, 1st Tuesday of the month, at 6 points long Jacobs Brook, 1 point on Brackett Brook, and at the 3 town beaches (Indian Pond, Upper Baker Pond, and Lower Baker Pond), and weekly on Tuesday in the intervening weeks, June – beginning of September, at the three town beaches and at any other site where the E. coli test results were high the previous week. The motion passed.

John and Craig are willing to help Harry with the water testing this year.

>>> John will ask Bob Palifka once again for permission to cross his land to get water tests.

5. Knotweed eradication: should it continue? Emily thought that we should at least keep on working on the triangle and the roadside on Tillotson Falls Road.

Motion (Emily/Carl S.) to keep working on knotweed eradication with the Tillotson Road area as top priority and along Rte 25A near Brook Road as time and energy permit.

Craig noted that knotweed eradication is a very hard task.

John noted that there is also the issue of the plantings along Rte 25A near Brook Road – the ones that were mowed over by the state DOT, and the culvert work that changes the flood bench area. DOT had said they would restore the flood bench area, but it has not yet happened.

>>> John will reach out to Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Conservancy about this.

Jordon S. suggested contacting Rivendell Academy to see if students in the Outdoor program could help with the knotweed control.

>>> Ted will email Maggie Stoudnour of the Rivendell Trail/Outdoor program to see about student help with knotweed and with trail maintenance on the Orford Conservation Land.

Jim Kennedy (wetlands consultant with knowledge of relevant state people) has retired and so may not be able to help with this.

The motion about knotweed was never voted on.

6. Milkweed and pollinators. Ted mentioned the “live pollinators” web site, based in Blairsville, Georgia:

<https://www.livemonarch.com/free-milkweed-seeds/>

which has a program to distribute free milkweed and other pollinator seeds. Craig mentioned the Pollinator Pathways program. How about having a model pollinator garden in front of the Town Hall? Or in the field behind the town offices?

>>> Craig will follow up on this.

7. Member recruiting: Two long-time members have stepped down (Tom Bubolz and Carl Cassel – we need new members.

8. Town Trees. Carl S., prompted by the sudden removal of the old maple tree near the post office, suggested that the Conservation Commission should perhaps have a role in planning for the trees such as that one, that are on town property. Jordon asked whether there is anything in the Town Master plan about Town trees. After some discussion, it was decided that it would be good to invite the tree warden, Bill Wilson, to a CC meeting and see how we might be able to coordinate with him.

>>>Harry will talk with Esther about what the budget is for Town Trees and will contact Bill Wilson.

Then we will invite him to a meeting.

9. Connecticut River dam relicensing (FERC): no update at this point.

10. CC outreach, etc

We need website updates.

Event ideas: Bird walk ? (Would Jeff MacQueen be willing to come down and lead one?)

Speakers?

Star party (with UVLT at Mountain View Farm)?

Harry: how about encouraging people to look for the largest trees of various species in town? Perhaps we could coordinate with Bill Wilson on this.

11. Election of Officers: We usually do this in April – Ted suggested we table the vote till then.

12. Representative to the Board of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. Ted mentioned that he (as CC chair) has been a representative, but if anyone else is interested he would be happy to turn it over. If interested, contact Ted. They meet every 2 months, and do things like approve grants that UVLSRPC takes on. A lot of UVLSRPC work is with transportation issues.

13. Orfordville Road Bog project. John noted that come this fall it will be the fourth year that this has been underway. John and Ted noted that the selectboard said at a meeting (at least verbally) that if the CC paid for the design of the culvert, the Town would pay for the construction. The work needs to be done in dry season (Sept-Oct), and needs to be done within 5 years of the permit being issued. Terry Straight (road agent) understands that something needs to be done at this location. We need to follow thorough with the Selectboard to see that this gets done before the permit runs out.

Motion (Harry/Carl S.) To adjourn. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Minutes taken by Emily Bryant.