

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)

DRAFT Meeting Minutes: April 21, 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; Alternate: Emily Bryant.

Orford Tree Warden: Bill Wilson

Present via Zoom: Member John Miller (Vice Chair)

Meeting called to order 7:01.

Emily was seated as a member for the meeting.

1. Bill Wilson, Tree Warden. Ted mentioned that the OCC is interested to see if there are ways they could help with the Tree Warden's duties. Bill gave some background on what he does, and mentioned that the Tree Warden has powers to take down trees even without Select Board approval. He can use the Town's Tree Fund, which is budgeted at about \$10K this year. There are 50-60 trees around town that he cares for including by cemeteries, along the commons on Main Street, and by the Town Offices. The tree that was taken down near the Post Office was at the lot corner for the Church and the Post Office; that corner is due to be surveyed. They plan to plant a new tree, but the replacement would not be planted right at the corner. He mentioned that after a certain point, if you keep trying to trim up a tree that is not doing well, you may be losing time when you could remove it and be growing a new tree in its place. Assessing landscape trees is different from woods trees – you have to take into account public safety, landscape value, and health of the tree. Harry asked whether Bill could let the OCC know when he is planning to take a tree down. The next tree that may be cut is the big maple near Brenda Smith's house, and after that there is a big oak at the Dame Hill Cemetery that is not doing well and is overhanging a number of monuments. Carl asked about the remaining trees along the West Common; Bill said they he thought they were doing OK at this point. Emily asked about the possibility of having Town "champion" trees.

2. Election of Officers. Ted indicated he was willing to be Chair for one more year, John agreed to put his name in for Vice Chair, and Emily agreed to be "Associate" Secretary (Fran Plaisted was not at the meeting to say whether she would be willing to continue as Secretary).

Motion (Harry/Carl): To elect Ted Cooley as Chair, John Miller as Vice Chair, and Emily Bryant as Associate Secretary of the OCC for the coming year. The motion passed.

Notes: Ted said the Town Treasurer serves ex officio as the OCC Treasurer. The OCC Finance Committee (primary duty- check that Land Use Change Penalty funds get put into the Conservation Fund as appropriate) has been dormant. Emily and Carl Cassell have previously served on this.

3. Minutes

Motion (Ted/Harry) To accept the November 18, 2021 minutes as modified (change "motioned" to "moved"). The motion passed.

Motion (Harry/Craig): to accept the minutes from March 17, 2022 as written. The motion passed.

4. Invoices.

None at this point.

5. Mowing >>>Ted will check to see whether Alan Dyke can do the mowing at the Orford Conservation Land this year.

>>> Carl will check with Sean's Lawn N' Garden Services (Sean Norton 802-299-0882,

slagsnhvt@gmail.com) to see if they could mow if Alan can't.

7. Water Testing: Harry has touched base with Eastern Analytics about testing this year. He has enough collection supplies for now and it is easy to get more. Ten sites will be tested monthly with additional tests if there are high readings, and the three ponds will be tested weekly. Cost last year was \$28/test.

8. Pollinators. Ted reached out to the folks at the “Live Pollinators” website about the free milkweed seeds, but has not heard back. Craig reminded us of the Pollinator Pathways program, an effort to get people town by town to plant pollinator-friendly plants. Perhaps we could get someone to come and give a talk about the program.

9. Trail Walks. Emily suggested that it might be good to have a series of walks/hikes on trails in town. She will ask around to find out more about what would be involved.

10. Membership recruiting. The OCC has had two members step down, and needs more members. Craig and Ted mentioned people who might be good to ask.

11. Earth Day: Earth Day is tomorrow; The Town sent out a boxholder saying that May 7 is Greenup Day and also Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day in Piermont for Orford and Piermont residents.

12. FERC: Dam relicensing process is ongoing.

13. Other.

- Ted will ask Jeff MacQueen about the timing for haying on the Orford Conservation Land to avoid disturbing nesting Bobolinks.
- Carl mentioned that the group that manages the conservation easement on the property by the school hasn't met recently.
- Emily wrote up about how to monitor the Richardson and Schwaegler conservation easements. Ted suggested putting this online on OCC's Google Docs. >>> Ted will send out a reminder to the members about how to get on Google Docs.
- Ted Received an email from Marcus White, III (Cole Tree Farm) who will be taking the Coverts program in April and May, with a special interest in how to protect the Indian Pond watershed's forests from the Emerald Ash Borer. Harry wondered whether after the course, he could give a talk about this to the OCC and/or the Town.
- Carl wondered what the status is of the vehicle charging station. Ted mentioned that the Energy Committee is reviewing its status as a committee and had no further information about the charging station.
- John reported that
 - 1) Terry Straight said that the culvert for the Orfordville Road bog has been put out to bid.
 - 2) Knotweed work needs to start in June.
 - 3) The issue about the “bench” along Jacob's Brook/ Rte 25A needs to be followed up on with NH DOT.

Motion (John/Harry) to adjourn. The motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Minutes taken by Emily Bryant.