Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of December 18, 2014 Meeting

Commissioners Present: Harry Pease, Carl Schmidt, Tom Bubolz, Jeff MacQueen, and Carl Cassel; Alternates Present: Emily Bryant, Craig Putnam and Fran Plaisted; Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Alternate Craig Putnam was asked to fill in for the meeting to replace Kathy Baker.

Minutes of the November meeting were unanimously approved after a motion by Carl Cassel and a second by Carl Schmidt.

Old Business:

Solarize Orford Update: Emily reported that Orford is currently at tier five in solar contracts: eight contracts ranging from 2.2 to 9.9 kW have been signed and two installations are in process. The Conservation Commission thanked Emily and Carl Cassel for the great job they have done organizing and coordinating this program.

Orford Conservation Land Project Planning (Proposed Invasive Plants and Riparian Buffer Meeting with NRCS, Connecticut River Watershed Council, Conservation Commission and Farmers): NRCS scheduled a meeting at 11:00 am on December 22 to discuss ordering plants for the riparian buffer at the Orford Conservation Land. Harry, Craig and Jeff will attend the meeting to represent the Commission. Although the State nursery has a lot of plant species that may be appropriate, Ron Rhodes and Fritz Gerhardt recommend that we not use the State plants since they are small and it will take an extended period of time for them to grow. They suggest purchasing 4 to 5 foot tall trees that can be purchased from a private nursery. Ron also plans to apply for a grant to help with the plant purchase for the buffer. We need to decide how to involve the public in the invasive plant removal and the riparian buffer for education and community involvement purposes. Anne said that John Adams asked if the Commission could consider getting plants to landscape around the new Newcomb Hollow Bridge in Archertown. It was agreed that we would look into getting additional plants for that purpose when we buy plants for the riparian buffer. However, this is private land and cannot be funded by the existing NRCS project. We also would need to check with the Road Agent regarding the highway right-of-way. Harry suggested that Kathy Baker take on this project as she has a background in landscaping. We could also try to involve the Garden Club. We also discussed the trees at the Orford boat landing and that there are some rare plants that should not be removed. Charlie Waterbury, Tree Warden, reviewed this in the past and is aware of the rare plants/trees that should be protected. Anne suggested that we consider some other type of community invasive plant control project, such as a purple loosestrife pull day in the summer.

Conservation Fund and Budget: Harry indicated there was nothing new to report since he had not received the new monthly reports from the Town Administrator, Tax Collector or Treasurer. He will follow up with each of them.

Update on Conservation of Bischoff Property in Quinttown**:** UVLT has been notified that they will receive a $20,000 Moose Plate grant for the project. They are working on the contract with the property owners and hope they can have it done by the end of December. We will talk about fund raising and a public meeting at our January meeting. It was agreed that we invite Jeanie McIntyre to come to the meeting in January.

New Business:

Harry reported that he will attend the next Orford Hazard Mitigation Meeting at 9:00 am on December 22 to represent the commission.

Harry reported that the 2014 Conservation Commission Annual Report is due to the Town Administrator on January 7, 2015. Harry will prepare it and share it with the Commissioners.

Harry reported that he had met with Bruce Schwaegler, at his request, to view the Conservation Commission’s presentation at the 2010 Town Meeting regarding discontinuing part of the old Grimes Hill Road, establishing the Indian Pond Heritage Trail, and his commitment to conserving the Indian Pond watershed land. (Note: Harry was not living in Orford at that time and was not aware of the presentation.) Bruce also mentioned his concern about the challenge being mounted regarding the constitutionality of the State’s implementation of Current Use. Anne provided an update on Current Use. The Selectboard received an opinion from the New Hampshire Municipal Association indicating that the current implementation of Current Use is constitutional in its opinion. She will provide a copy to the Commission.

Jeff reported that he will do the annual monitoring visit of the Richardson conserved land and file the report. He will pick a date in the next two weeks and send an e-mail to other Commissioners to see if anyone wants to go out with him.

Tom made a motion that we adjourn, Carl Cassel seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Plaisted