Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of February 19, 2015 Meeting

Commissioners Present: Harry Pease, Carl Schmidt, Jeff MacQueen, Kathy Baker, and Tom Bubolz; Alternates Present: Fran Plaisted, Emily Bryant and Craig Putnam; Upper Valley Land Trust: Jeanie McIntyre

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

Harry asked Craig Putnam to fill in for Commissioner Carl Cassel who was absent.

Old Business:

Conservation of Bischoff Property in Quinttown: Jeanie McIntyre was present to discuss the status of the Bischoff property contract. At 7:05 p.m. Kathy Baker made a motion that we enter into a non-public session to discuss this real estate transaction, Jeff MacQueen seconded and it was unanimously approved.

At 7:37 p.m. Kathy Baker made a motion that we conclude the non-public session, Tom seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Craig Putnam brought up the issue of fund raising and/or whether we should use the Conservation Fund to help cover some of the costs of the project. Craig felt that we should use the Conservation Fund and since we have sufficient funds available and it would be a good use of some the money. Fund raising would be an option for other future conservation projects as needed. The Commissioners generally agreed but no decisions were made since are not yet at a point in the project to make a funding decision.

Review/Approve Minutes of January 15, 2015 Meeting: Carl Schmidt proposed a correction in the date for the Connecticut River Source to Sea Clean-up scheduled for September 25 and 26, 2015. Carl Schmidt moved to accept minutes as amended, Tom seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

Orford Conservation Land Project Update and Next Steps: Ron Rhodes has obtained a grant that will help fund the cost share portion of the project that is not funded by NRCS. Harry will set up a follow-up meeting with Ron, NRCS and Tullando Farm to discuss implementation of the project. Based on the last meeting, we would plan to remove invasive plants in the riparian zone in April and plant trees in the riparian zone in early May. We will need to publicize this event with the intent of involving the schools and local community members as both an educational opportunity and to assist with removing invasive plants and planting trees.

Conservation Fund and Budget: There wereno changes since the January meeting.

New Business:

Planning for Town Meeting:We will have an information board on display at Town Meeting about the Bischoff property conservation project with maps and photos provided by the UVLT. Jeff reported that posters were up and collection boxes were set up at the libraries for the annual Orford Outdoors Photo Contest. We discussed ideas for contest prizes, including maple syrup and gift certificates for local businesses.

Planning for Public Meeting for Bischoff Property (Non-Public Session): This discussion was tabled for a future meeting since the project needs further development before a public meeting is held.

Other New Business: Carl Schmidt reported that Chris Crowley has produced a self-published booklet with photographs of the flora and fauna on his property, as well as history of the property. There is a copy at the Social Library. Carl suggested that we consider asking him if he wants to do a talk/presentation in the future. Commissioners agreed this is worth pursuing.

Emily reported that the Solarize Orford project resulted in 14 solar contracts. She also mentioned that Alcott Smith is going to lead a nature hike with animal tracking information.

Craig suggested getting the Orford Photography Club to take photos up at the Bischoff land in Quinttown that could be shared with Orford citizens.

Jeff reported that he will be leading a bird walk at the Orford Conservation Land the second week in May. Jeff said that the Bald Eagles near Reed’s Marsh did not produce any fledglings last year. Jeff also reported that he saw a new bird in town, a red bellied woodpecker, which is the 189th bird species identified in Orford.

Tom moved to adjourn the meeting, Kathy Baker seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Plaisted