Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting on April 21, 2016

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Harry requested Emily serve as a Commissioner for the vacant position.

Approve the Minutes of the March 17, 2016 Meeting: Tom moved that we approve the minutes, Carl Schmidt seconded and the motion carried.

Mason Pond Project Closing: Closing between David and John Bischoff and the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) took place today, April 21, 2016. A second closing will take place in the near future between UVLT and the Town of Orford acting through the Conservation Commission and the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). The Conveyance Deed at the second closing will include the conservation restrictions and covenants for the property and will convey Primary Executory Interest in the property to the Town of Orford acting through the Conservation Commission and Secondary Executory Interest to LCHIP. The Conveyance Deed language is currently being worked out between the parties. The Conservation Commission and LCHIP will provide their respective contributions of $60,000 and $92,500 to UVLT for the purchase at the second closing. Carl Schmidt suggested that we request that UVLT do a press release at the time of the second closing. Harry will discuss this with UVLT. We are still hoping to celebrate the project’s success in conjunction with Orford Day on August 13, 2016. Carl Schmidt will discuss that with the Orford Day Committee. In addition, Carl Schmidt, Chair of the New Hampshire Barn Committee has suggested that the Barn Committee come and look at the old barn and shed at the property as part of their services regarding restoration, use, etc. Carl received a favorable response from the Committee that they would be willing to take a look at the barn on July 12 or 19, 2016 and provide their opinions. Harry and Carl will discuss this with UVLT.

Planning for Participation in the Fairlee Forest Festival, July 2, 2016: The festival will run from 11:00 a.m. to late afternoon on July 2, 2016. Our display will have maps, photos and information about conservation activities and outdoor recreation opportunities in Orford. It will include work we are doing at the Orford Conservation Land and the Mason Pond Project.

Summer Water Testing Program Follow-up: The Town Administrator was notified that the State of New Hampshire is raising the price of water testing from $20 to $30 per sample that they conduct at Indian Pond Beach three times each summer. Harry learned that the State has a program to inspect the summer camps at Upper and Lower Baker Ponds each summer which used to include water samples at the camp beaches, but that the water testing program ended in 2013. More follow-up with the State and camps is needed before deciding if we should test water at the Upper and Lower Baker Pond beaches.

Update of the Natural Resource Inventory: Harry reported that Nate Miller, Executive Director of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) and Amber Boland, UVLSRPC staff, will attend our May meeting to discuss how they can help us update the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI). The Conservation Commission hired UVLSRPC to assist with the original NRI in 2011. It was agreed that Commissioners would review the current NRI and begin to identify areas that need updating before the May meeting.

Ideas for an Orford Town Forest: Carl Schmidt discussed ideas for an Orford Town Forest. He suggested that we start by meeting with the Lyme Conservation Commission since they have a Town Forest to see how they went about getting it established, how it’s managed, etc. In addition, we could discuss areas of mutual interest and share conservation ideas and priorities. Jeff agreed to talk to Blake Allison, Chair of the Lyme Conservation Commission, about a joint meeting.

Tree Planting at the Orford Conservation Land: Harry reported that additional tree planting in the riparian buffer is scheduled for April 28 starting at 9:30 a.m. We will replace the few trees that did not survive from last year and plant additional trees in the buffer. Trees and the planting crew are being provided at no cost to the Town by the Connecticut River Watershed Council. Harry will put out a notice on the listserv about the planting. We also will have the planting crew look at the remaining invasive plants on the property to give us an estimate for their removal. Jeff reported that Andy Boyce of the UVLT has a map of the property for posting on the kiosk. Jeff will arrange to get it and put it up.

Election of Officers: Emily moved that the slate consist of the current officers. Tom moved that the secretary cast one vote for the slate of nominees, Carl Schmidt seconded and the motion carried. Fran cast a vote for Harry Pease, Chair; Carl Cassel, Vice Chair; and Fran Plaisted, Secretary.

There was a general discussion about options to increase publicity and interest in conservation by using Facebook and videos. It was agreed that it may generate more interest and that we would explore the idea further at a future meeting.

Carl Schmidt brought up permitting issues regarding riverfront property. He said that there used to be a process a number of years ago where the Selectboard and Conservation Commission sent a joint letter to new owners of riverfront property providing information about permitting requirements for changes or alterations to the land. Carl will find the old letter and bring it to our next meeting to see if we want to start sending it again.

Jeff reported that he spent time on the Orford Conservation Land removing invasive plants and working on the trails. Next month we will take up getting Mike Bald paid for the invasive plant removal work he performed.

Tom moved to adjourn, Carl Cassel seconded and the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Fran Plaisted