Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting on March 17, 2016

Commissioners Present: Harry Pease, Craig Putnam, Carl Cassel, Tom Bubolz, Carl Schmidt; Alternate Present: Fran Plaisted; Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Harry asked Fran to serve as Commissioner for the vacant position.

Approve the Minutes of the February 18, 2016 public Hearing and Monthly Meeting: Carl Schmidt recommended one spelling correction. Carl Cassel moved we approve the minutes with Carl Schmidt’s correction, Tom seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mason Pond Project Update: Harry reported that he had not heard from LCHIP for several weeks until today. They have approved the Project Agreement he sent at the end of January. UVLT is nearly done with the Baseline Documentation Report, Management Plan and Deed Language. UVLT is still planning to close in mid-April. We had more discussion about celebrating the project’s success and thanking the project’s supporters, including having an event at Mason Pond. Anne suggested that we do something on Orford Day. Carl Schmidt agreed to review this option with the committee organizing that event. Orford Day is scheduled for August 13, 2016.

Planning for Participation in the Fairlee Forest Festival, July 2, 2016: We had previously decided to have a booth at the festival. After discussion, we agreed that it should have maps, photos and information about conservation activities and outdoor recreation opportunities in Orford. It should include work we are doing at the Orford Conservation Land and the Mason Pond Project. It could also include the Connecticut River Boat Landing, the other great ponds in Orford, hiking and snowmobile trails, bird and wildlife watching, etc. We will discuss this further at our next meeting.

Savings Special Places Workshop, April 9, 2016: Harry reminded everyone about the workshop. Registration by April 1 is only $60 and can be done online. It will be held in Alton this year and we can carpool if more than one person attends.

Upper Valley Land Trust Conservation Commission Gathering, March 29, 2016: Harry reminded us about the annual gathering from 6:00 to 8:00 pm in White River Junction. In addition to networking and learning about local conservation activities there will be two short films; one about international conservation and one about local conservation. Anyone planning to attend should contact Lorie Hood at UVLT. We can carpool as in past years.

Summer Water Testing Program: The Town Administrator was notified that the State of New Hampshire is raising the price of water testing from $20 to $30 per sample. The State tests the water at the Indian Pond Beach monthly from June through August each summer. We raised the question of why the State doesn’t test at the beaches at Upper and Lower Baker Ponds as well since they are both Town-owned like Indian Pond. As a first step, Harry agreed to check with Camps Moosilauke and Merriwood at Upper Baker Pond and Camp Pemigewassett at Lower Baker Pond to see if they do water testing. If not, we may ask the State if they will do it.

Anne reported a discussion she had with Sherry Godlewski of the NH Department of Environmental Services regarding adaptation to climate change. Sherry is willing to come to Orford to talk about the impacts climate change could have on our town. It was agreed that we would accept her offer and set it up for a public presentation in a few months.

Carl Schmidt discussed ideas he has for future actions after the Mason Pond Project. He suggested we review our objectives in the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) to see how we are doing, renew previous efforts to conserve land along the Connecticut River, and consider trying to establish a Town Forest as some surrounding towns have done. Harry reminded us that we agreed a few months ago to update the NRI beginning this summer. We will also ask Jeff about his initiative to set up a meeting with the Lyme Conservation Commission.

Jeff did a monitoring visit of the Richardson property in January and filed the report electronically for the first time. The Forest Society has a question about a related property which Jeff is researching. Jeff has joined the NH Audubon Society and will lead a bird walk at the Orford Conservation Land in 2017. John O’Brien told us where we can acquire buckthorn baggies to use on invasive plants at the Orford Conservation Land. He plans to use them on some land he manages in Hanover that has a lot of buckthorn. Andy Boyce from UVLT has nearly completed the map for the kiosk at the Orford Conservation Land. We also plan to include a list of birds compiled by Jeff and a list of plants from Sarah Schwaegler at the kiosk.

Tom Bubolz moved to adjourn, Carl Cassel seconded and the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Fran Plaisted