Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting on October 20, 2016

Commissioners Present: Harry Pease, Carl Schmidt, Tom Bubolz and Jeff MacQueen; Alternates Present: Emily Bryant and Fran Plaisted; Selectboard Representative: Anne Duncan Cooley; Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission Representative: Amber Boland

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

Harry requested that Emily serve as a full commissioner for the meeting.

Minutes of the September 15, 2016 Meeting: Tom made a motion to approve the minutes, Carl Schmidt seconded and the motion carried.

Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) Update: Amber attended the meeting to review the first three chapters. Since this is an update of our original NRI published in 2011, our goal is to focus on changes since then and identify actions we all can take to help protect our natural resources. We will also add a chapter on climate change and include stories from Orford residents about natural resources and conservation practices. We also plan to add more images in the text format. We hope to make the NRI more readable by changing the style to be more of a story with local vignettes. Data that can be presented using the 2011 NRI as a baseline can include changes in: land in and out of current use, farm land, forest land, timber harvesting, mining/extracting, farms and what they produce, lists of flora and fauna, and water quality. It was agreed that we should get input from the public about what to include in the NRI update. Harry will send out a listserv request.

Fisher Riverbank Permit Application: We did not receive the permit application in time to be able to comment. That issue has been addressed so that in the future the Selectboard, Conservation Commission and Planning Board will be provided copies of permit applications as soon as they are received by the Town. The Upper Valley River Subcommittee (UVRSC), of which Chris Balch and Carl Schmidt are Orford representatives, did two site visits together with UVRSC Chair Jim Kennedy. The UVRSC then met on September 19, reviewed the permit application and subsequently provided detailed written comments to the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES). On October 10, 2016 the DES approved the permit with numerous stipulations about how the riverbank stabilization is to be performed. Anne asked if the stabilization project is subject to Orford’s Flood Plain Ordnance. Since that is not within our purview Anne will ask the Town Administrator to look into it with the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC).

Operating Budget and Conservation Fund: We have spent about $1,275 to date of our $1,970 operating budget and have a few remaining expenses expected this year. Harry contacted the Town Administrator about $339.50 that still needs to be credited back to our budget account for legal fees that were incorrectly charged to us. The current balance in the Conservation Fund is $141,563.98. There have been no Land Use Change Taxes (LUCT) collected this year. Expenses paid from the Conservation Fund this year include a $60,000 contribution for the Mason Pond Project, $1,337.50 for legal fees for the Mason Pond closing, $1,100 for the plaque for Mountain View Farm (Mason Pond) and $1,655.14 for UVLSRPC work on the NRI update. Harry proposed we approve the September invoice from UVLSRPC for work on the NRI in the amount of $962.65. Fran made a motion that we pay the bill out of the Conservation Fund, Tom seconded and all approved. We submitted a level funded budget of $1,970 to the Selectboard for 2017. We discussed doing additional water testing when E-coli levels are high and additional mowing at the Orford Conservation Land to make a narrow trail down the northern edge of the upper field. It was felt that there was enough flexibility within the existing budget level to do this if we need to. Tom will do some research on water testing options that would provide better courier services and additional test parameters. We also agreed that Tom should have an alternate to assist with water sampling and reporting for when he is not available. We will look for a volunteer.

New Conservation Commission Members: We currently have six Commissioners and are authorized seven and we have two alternates. We need one Commissioner and would like a few more alternates. We will discuss potential candidates at our November meeting.

Anne reported that there is a small piece of property coming out of current use that will result in a LUCT.

Tom made a motion to adjourn, Fran seconded and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Fran Plaisted