Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting on September 15, 2016

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

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

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

Minutes of the August 18, 2016 Meeting: Carl Cassel made a motion to approve the minutes, Jeff seconded and the motion carried.

Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) Update: We discussed the water resources sections. Harry suggested that the Wetlands Section include a map showing the wetlands in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and that we provide a definition of the various types of wetlands in the NWI. He also suggested that the recommendations for protecting our natural resources should include what individual landowners can do and not just what government bodies such as the Conservation Commission can do. Anne asked if there are best practices that the Highway Department should be following regarding use of salt, ditching, etc., to help protect water resources. Harry suggested that we check with the State to see what they may have for best practices. Emily suggested adding graphs showing the results of our water testing program over the years. Tom said he has all of the data to do that. Carl Schmidt thought that the write-up about the drought was too lengthy and also time-perishable, and that we should add a map showing the floodplain in Orford. Anne thought that the new beginning of the section did not have enough about Orford. She also suggested there be more about the Connecticut River and less about the water cycle and that we include something about residential drinking water quality and septic systems. Craig thought we should connect with the Planning Board on some of this. He also suggested that we include what individuals can do to protect our natural resources and make it more relatable to individuals and less like a text book. Anne suggested looking at other town’s NRIs to get some ideas. Harry asked everyone to write down their comments so that he could send them to Amber Boland at UVLSRPC.

Invoice from UVLSRPC: Harry received our first invoice from the UVLSRPC for their work on the NRI update. Carl Cassel made a motion that we pay the invoice out the Conservation Fund in the amount of $1,655.14, Tom seconded and the motion carried.

Mason Pond Celebration on October 1, 2016: The Mason Pond celebration will be held by the old Billy Brown barn beginning at 2:00 pm on Saturday, October 1, 2016. There will be some remarks from David Bischoff, the Conservation Commission and UVLT followed by an unveiling of the commemorative plaque, refreshments and a walk to the pond. Harry and Carl Schmidt will take care of publicity and signs. Harry will help David install the stone and plaque. Commissioners were reminded to bring cookies.

Conservation Fund and Budget: Harry reported that after the $60,000 payment to UVLT for the Mason Pond Project the balance in the Conservation Fund is about $145,600. Harry is working with Town Attorney Bernie Waugh and Town Administrator Sheri Clifford to obtain an invoice for legal work for the Mason Pond closing documents that Bernie worked on. Harry estimates that the costs will be a little under $1,400. Carl Cassel made a motion that we reimburse the Town of Orford out of our Conservation Fund for legal costs associated with the Mason Pond closing not to exceed $1,400, Craig seconded and the motion carried. As of September 13 we had spent $884 of our annual operating budget of $1,970.

New Conservation Commission Members: It was agreed to defer this discussion to a future meeting.

Fisher Permit Application: Carl Schmidt reported that Peter Fisher has submitted an application to NHDES for a Wetlands Permit for an extensive project along the Connecticut River, which is intended to stabilize a lengthy section of eroded riverbank. It proposes angled installation of large logs supplemented by saplings and drive in live stakes in and along the river on the north end of their property to try to prevent additional erosion. Jim Kennedy, Chairman of the Upper Valley River Subcommittee of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, together with Orford representatives Carl Schmidt and Christine Balch, plan to visit the site on September 16 and then discuss the permit application at their monthly meeting on September 19. Carl will provide feedback so that we can determine if the Conservation Commission wants to take a position on the permit application.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection: Anne reminded us that the Orford/Piermont HHW collection is scheduled for 9:00-11:00 on Saturday, October 15. Harry will put out a notice on listserv.

Tom made a motion to adjourn, Carl Cassel seconded and the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Harry Pease