**Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)**

**Meeting Minutes: December 20, 2018**

Present: Board members: Ted Cooley (Chair), Craig Putnam, Jeff MacQueen, John Miller, Tom Bubolz, Carl Schmidt, Harry Pease, Emily Bryant (alternate).

Select Board Representative: Dave Smith

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC): Meghan Butts

Public: Tom Thomson

Meeting was called to order at 7:00

Emily was seated as a member.

1. **Culvert inventory**. Ted explained that culvert location information was collected earlier, now we are looking into adding more information about the culverts. This would help plan for the future. Meghan Butts of the Upper Valley - Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) came to give the commission (OCC) information on the culvert inventory service they can provide. Here are some points discussed:
   1. What data they collect: UVLSRPC is trained by the state to use the standardized “Statewide Asset Data Exchange System” (SADES) to collect the data. This standardization makes it easier for the town to apply for state aid. She provided the OCC with paper copies of the SADES Field Manual. (Online at <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/documents/culvert-assessment-protocol.pdf>). Data can be collected for stream crossings or for drainage culverts or both. There are 80 characteristics that they collect for each stream crossing (including aquatic organism passage, geomorphic compatibility, hydrologic capacity), along with photos. This can (among other things) serve as baseline information in case there is damage in the future.
   2. Culvert scores: They develop scores for each culvert based on the data collected– the scoring system can be developed in collaboration with the town. Culvert work can be prioritized based on the scores.
   3. Costs: UVLSRPC can cost-share 50% with the town. Meghan’s estimate for the town’s portion of an inventory (of Town roads only, not State) - for stream plus culverts: $10,000; for streams only: $6500. There was discussion on how to fund it: one suggestion was to use the Conservation Fund for at least part of the Town cost. Meghan said that it could be phased (e.g. streams first, then culverts)
   4. Timing: they would hope to start as soon as the snow is gone – April-May 2019. The inventory would be done by the end of the summer. They do this on a first-come-first serve basis, and Orford is first in line.
   5. Inventory products includes: All data, photos, simplified excel sheet, large maps, map book. Minor updates to the inventory would be covered by the town’s annual dues to UVLSRPC. Meghan brought examples form the inventory they did for Lyme.
   6. How to pay?: Dave inquired how the Town part of the costs might be covered. Ted said that the Conservation Fund might be a possibility.
   7. Private land: If the survey involved UVLSRPC going on private land, Meghan said the Town would be responsible for getting permission from the landowners involved.
   8. State roads: Since much of flood damage has been to State roads (Rte 25A in particular) could culverts on state roads be included in the survey? Harry suggested he would hesitate to spend Town money on State roads; others agreed.
   9. Other possible sources of funding: >>> *Harry will ask Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Conservancy whether they can help fund the inventory.*
   10. Culvert maintenance: Tom T. emphasized that maintenance of culverts is important, and Orford has not had a culvert maintenance program. He said that in the recent floods, 70% of the damage to town roads and 100% of damage to state roads was due to plugged culverts. He also mentioned that there are 281 culverts in Orford, correcting the number that had been mentioned earlier.
   11. If OCC wants to pursue the culvert inventory, we would make a recommendation about it to the Select Board, then get the information by the end of summer – this would be good timing in terms of budgeting for repairs in 2020.

**A straw poll** was taken on whether the OCC wants to pursue having UVLSRPC do a stream and/or culvert inventory. The sense of the meeting was yes - we do want to pursue it.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** 
   1. Nov. 15, 2018: **Motion:** (Ted/.John) to table the approval of Nov 15 minutes till the Jan., 2019 OCC meeting. The motion carried.
   2. Dec. 6, 2018: (meeting re: $200 fee for Jim Kennedy’s application to NH DES): **Motion:** (Ted/Craig): to accept the Dec 6, 2018 minutes with minor corrections. The motion carried.
2. **Reports**
   1. Jacobs Brook: Ted reported that Jim Kennedy did pick up the $200 check for the application to DES for a permit for the work proposed for Jacobs Brook. He also said that Ron Rhodes is working on the grant to pay for the work; a concept proposal to the Mitigation and Enhancement Fund (MEF) is due 1/14/19.
   2. Water testing: Tom B. said that the water testing schedule for 2019 will likely be the first week of the month May – Sept. People thought it would be good to have a second person to learn the water testing routine and serve as backup if needed. Jeff and Harry indicated that they would be willing to help.
   3. Jacobs Brook Subcommittee update: Craig has not heard any more from the State (Shane Csiki, Silver Jackets program, etc).
   4. Conservation Fund logistics: Ted attended an information session about Conservation Fund use. The sense he got from the session was that paying for the culvert inventory from the Conservation Fund would NOT require a public hearing; but he also said that he thought it would be a good idea to let people in town know about it if we proceed with it.
   5. Sawyer Brook: No update on State action.
   6. Beaver/road issues. No further word on the Orfordville Rd. Dave said that the Select Board is getting a certified trapper to trap the beaver on Archertown Road (near intersection with Indian Pond Road) and that the Road Agent thought this situation was a potential problem. The Town got permissions from the landowners. Craig expressed concern over removing beaver – aren’t they an asset to mitigate flooding? Dave said the Select Board would contact Craig and the Conservation Commission the next time there is a beaver issue. John indicated that Vermont has beaver management best practices, in which killing the beaver is a last resort after trying beaver deceivers, etc. Tom T. said that if beaver impact the infrastructure of the Town, they need to be eliminated.
3. **Invoices:** The last payment for mowing ($80) has been approved and paid.
4. **Appointment terms.** Four members’ terms are up for renewal in March of 2019: Tom B., Ted, Carl S., and Diane (alternate). Tom B, Ted, and Carl S. agreed to be reappointed; Ted will check with Diane.
5. **Easements** (Harry recused himself)
   1. LCHIP has agreed to fund PART of the Brackett Brook Farm easement with the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT), leaving a funding gap of $20,000. UVLT asked whether the OCC would consider adding $10,000 to the amount that we voted to contribute on 8/9/18 (also $10,000). Ted explained that this would require another public hearing. Carl asked whether we should consider fund raising. Ted said Megan Chapman of UVLT will look for the remining $10,000; he also asked whether she could get more than that.
   2. Previous easement issue: UVLT is looking for other options on the easement discussed in earlier meetings.
   3. Carl mentioned that an assessment of the barn on the Mountain View Property is being done – the report is not in yet.

**Motion** (Tom B/Harry) to adjourn. The motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Emily Bryant