Orford Conservation Commission

Minutes: July 19, 2018

Present: Ted Cooley (Chair), Jeff MacQueen (Vice-Chair), Tom Bubolz, Emily Bryant, Craig Putnam, and Fran Plaisted (Secretary)

Also Attending: Megan Chapman from UVLT

Ted requested that Fran Plaisted and Emily Bryant serve as commissioners.

1. Harry Pease will not be attending the meeting tonight because we will be discussing the Brackett Brook Farm project; he also will not be participating in any future OCC discussions about potential funding of the project.
2. We have received a letter from an Orford resident requesting, under the Right To Know Law, some past  meeting minutes, agendas, and communication with attorneys.  Ted passed out an information sheet from the NH Municipal Association entitled: "RSA Chapter 91-A, New Hampshire's Right to Know Law,  Brief Municipal Overview on Governmental Records."

<https://www.nhmunicipal.org/resources/viewdocument/403>

This sheet and other information can be found at:

<https://www.nhmunicipal.org/service/right-to-know>

The sheet outlines rules by which the meeting is to be conducted. The sheet further lists availability and exemptions. The information is highly useful and relevant.

1. Reviewed June Minutes, including changes from Megan Chapman and from the Board. Tom moved that we accept minutes as amended. Jeff seconded. Motion carried.
2. Megan Chapman updated us on the Brackett Brook Farm project, specifically focusing on funding. A grant was awarded from Appalachian Trail (AT) Landscape Partners for $30,000, $5,000 less than the $35,000 that was requested. UVLT requested $10,000 from the OCC to assist with the Brackett Brook Farm Project. The estimated budget figure was $5,000.

Ted reviewed the process regarding taking funds out of Conservation Fund. The steps include a vote by the OCC whether to support the motion in principle. If so, a public hearing is held to solicit citizen comments, followed by an OCC vote whether to allocate to the project the proposed amount from the Conservation Fund. If the OCC approves the allocation, then funds are sent.

A NH LCHIP site visit is scheduled for 8/14/2018

The easement is an Agriculture Easement – no residential structures allowed on the conserved land except for the land around the existing home. Public access to the land is a requirement of LCHIP. Access can include hunting, fishing and walking etc. UVLT has the right to afford public access. Ted moved that OCC agrees in principle to donate $10,000 to the project cost of $160,000 for the Brackett Brook Farm Conservation Easement with UVLT. Tom seconded. Motion carried. Fran Plaisted moved that we hold the public hearing on whether to provide UVLT with $10,000 for this project on principle. Emily seconded. Motion carried. Public Hearing tentatively scheduled for 8/9/18 at 7:00 p.m. in the Niles Room, if required notice can be given in time.

1. Megan Chapman provided a flier on a BioBlitz (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BioBlitz>) to be held on 7/21/18 at Mountain View Farm in Orford, NH. Meet at the Town Hall Heritage Center at 10:00 a.m.
2. No updates on other easement projects.
3. Tom B. conducted monthly Jacobs Brook water sampling on 7/2 (see test results). The water quality off of Dublin Road is above the swimming threshold (88 counts E-coli per 100 ml water). Town Health Officer, Faith Knapp, has been notified.
4. Invoices: Jeff presented an invoice for $80 from Alan Dyke for mowing in June.
5. OCC is still on the agenda to meet with the Select Board for next Wednesday night, 25th July, but we are awaiting confirmation.

We still have not heard back from the Select Board about our request for Commissioner appointments.

1. Craig asked about when we can speak to the Selectboard about Jacobs Brook and looking at flood mitigation. We would like to obtain Selectboard approval to seek a fluvial geomorphic study of Jacobs Brook adjacent to NH Route 25A in Orfordville. Craig drafted a letter asking whether the state geologist return to Orford to do the study. OCC has been discussing flood mitigation and resiliency steps, and restoring / maintaining aquatic life. How do we enhance the flood resiliency of this watershed so that town roads are not frequently washed out? We reviewed the draft of this letter. We will send the draft letter to the Select Board for their review and approval. If we obtain approval, we will mail the letter to the State requesting the study. If the state declines the study, we may consider paying a professional to conduct the study. Initially, we work with the state. Craig is going to send his letter out to the OCC and if there are any recommended changes/ edits, let him know by Monday.
2. Showing of the Eagle Huntress (Mongolian) by Bradford Conservation Commission, Woods Building, Bradford, VT on 8/16/18. We discussed having the OCC sponsor a similar event in cooperation with Orford Social Library.
3. Jeff MacQueen has six students with whom he is focusing on invasive species. This week, he and the students are looking at Ash Trees and searching for any signs of the Emerald Ash Borer at Tom Thomson’s tree farm. No signs noted to date. He also caught rusty cray fish (invasive) at Lake Morey. He and his students have set traps at Lower Baker Pond to see if there are any rusty crayfish there.
4. Tom moved that the meeting be adjourned; the motion was seconded by Craig.
5. Meeting adjourned at 8:36.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fran Plaisted