

Orford Conservation Commission (OCC)
Meeting Minutes: June 17, 2021
Meeting held in person at the Niles Room in the Town Offices

Present: Members: Ted Cooley (Chair), John Miller (Vice Chair), Craig Putnam, Carl Schmidt, Harry Pease; Alternates: Carl Cassel, Emily Bryant

Meeting called to order 7:09.

Carl C. and Emily were seated as members.

1. Minutes of April and May 2021: John had sent around copies of these minutes with some edits. Motion (one of the Carls/Harry) to accept the minutes of April and May, 2021 as edited. The motion passed.

2. NH state long range energy plan: John had sent an email about the plan. It is open for public comment until June 27th. John suggested that it is worth looking at, especially the section on energy incentives. See <https://www.nh.gov/osi/news-events/public-notice/index.htm>. Comments can be made via email.

3. Recruiting for Conservation Commission members: The commission has openings for 1 member and 2 alternates (possibly an additional member as well since Tom B. is likely moving out of town this summer). Ted recommended that members should be representative of town residents and that they should have a skill to bring to the commission. Emily will ask Tom Ebert; Craig will ask Deenie Bugee; Harry will ask Christine Bunten; Ted will ask Christine (Bill) Dyke; John will ask Mr. Gustavson (Brook Road).

4. Invoices

a) Eastern Analytical – two invoices for water testing: June 10: \$280.00 (10 sites), June 17: \$112.00 (4 sites).

Motion (Harry/John): To pay the two Eastern Analytical invoices. The motion passed.

b) Mowing: Ted requested that the commission authorize him to pay Alan Dyke for mowing without waiting for a CC meeting.

Motion (John/ Carl C.) That the commission authorize the chair to approve invoices for mowing the Orford Conservation Land. The motion passed.

5. Water Testing: Harry reported that the results of the 10 tests from June 8 were fine except for the Creamery Rd bridge location, which had an E. coli reading of 131.4 (88 is the max for swimming). The next test upstream (Heritage Center) was OK with a result of 16. This week (June 17) the 3 beaches were tested, plus Creamery Rd bridge, since it was high last week. Indian Pond and Lower Baker Pond were OK, but Upper Baker Pond beach was at 156.5 (last week OK at 28), and Creamery Rd bridge was at 118.7, still high. Perhaps there is something happening between the Heritage Center and the Creamery Road bridge to make those high results.

Motion (Harry/Carl C.) To gather water samples at the following locations next week (June 22): Heritage Center, Creamery Rd bridge, Upper and Lower Baker Pond Beaches, and Indian Pond Beach. The motion passed.

Ted will let the Selectboard know that the Upper Baker Pond Beach should be posted. There was discussion about the Selectboard looking into the cause of the high readings at Creamery Road bridge. It was noted that the state is not interested in looking into high readings unless they are very high – above 1300.

Craig and John were thanked for their help in collecting the water test samples.

The NH Academy of Sciences is looking for things that students can help with – perhaps water testing would be an opportunity for them.

The Connecticut River Joint Commissions has a water testing program going on on the Connecticut River; we asked earlier if they wanted to include Orford locations, e.g. mouth of Jacobs Brook, but they are only interested in larger tributaries.

6. Knotweed/ Invasives: We need to figure out what level of interest there is among CC members in pursuing the work on knotweed that was started last year. Emily expressed some interest. Harry, Craig, Carl S., and Ted all mentioned they would like to help but have time limitations. Bry Beeson has indicated he thought it would be good to have a project on pollinators.

7. Orford Conservation Land (aka Richmond Property). The trail needs mowing and the kiosk needs fixing. Ted and John will work on mowing.

8. FERC - Relicensing of dams on Connecticut River. The public comment period on relicensing is open. Issues that environmental groups have brought up include reducing how much and how often the water level changes (to lessen erosion), and providing river access points. Ted will send out information on how to make comments to FERC.

9. Web site updates: Please send photos for the web site.

10. Outreach: Now that COVID-19 restrictions are starting to be removed, there may be opportunities to have in-person events. It would be good to communicate to the town what the CC does. Some ideas mentioned were:

Stargazing (with UVLT)

Indian Pond

Bird walk

Rivendell Trail

Cellar holes in E. Orford

Could we partner with UVLT or Rivendell Trails?

11. Other: Carl S. suggested a couple of topics for the CC to consider: 1: Could we help get a charging station for Electric Vehicles? Where would it be located? 2: How could we promote agriculture in town?

Motion: (Carl C./ John) to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm

Next meetings: July 15 and August 19 at 7:00 pm. These will likely be held in the Niles Room of the Town Offices.

Minutes taken by Emily Bryant.