

ORFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES: NOVEMBER 21, 2024

Meeting held in-person at the Niles Room in the Town Office

Present-in-Person: Commission members: Ted Cooley, Co-chair; Alternates: Fran Plaisted, John Miller, Emily Bryant. Kevin Follensbee attended representing the Selectboard. Bob Hedges could not attend at the last minute due to being caught in traffic

Meeting was called to order at 7:02PM.

Fran, John, and Emily were seated.

1. **Additional Meeting:** The OCC will meet Tuesday 11/26 at 7:00pm in the Niles Room of the Town Offices so Bob Hedges can be there to address some items that were on tonight's agenda.
2. **Approval of the minutes from October 17, 2024:** The draft minutes were reviewed and discussed. No wording changes were suggested. Motion: Fran moved to approve the minutes. John seconded. Motion carried.
3. **Plans for the Indian Pond Heritage Trail:** This item is tabled till the 11/26 meeting.
4. **Hiking and other activities:**
 - a. Hikes: None for November, but possibly a hike on the Indian Pond Heritage Trail on Sat. Dec 28 (daylight). Moonlight Snowshoe: Bob and Emily have been in touch with Cassie Bernyk of the Upper Valley Land Trust about having the moonlight snowshoe hike at Mountain View Farm on Sunday January 12.
 - b. Indoor activities: Ted reached out the Chris Crowley about giving a talk. He is a photographer.
 - c. Birding: Ted has been in touch with birders for possible outings at Mountain View Farm and the Orford Conservation Land (aka Richmond Property)
 - d. Stargazing: Emily mentioned that Bob has already been in touch with Cassie B. of UVLT about planning for the Stargazing event in August 2025. Bob may have more to report.
5. **Town Meeting awareness:** The OCC can reserve a table for Town Meeting by signing up with Esther. It was suggested to restart soliciting photos from residents. Fran can send out an email on the listserv. The photos could be emailed to the OCC, put on an online site, and displayed in a computer slide show at Town Meeting. We could also include photos from 2024 Hike Orford and the work on the Indian Pond Heritage Trail. Could also post the schedule for Hike Orford 2025 and trail workdays.
6. **2025 Budget:** It is up by \$125 due to an increase in water testing costs. Kevin reported that the budget did not seem to cause any problem for the Budget Committee or Selectboard.
7. **Info Kiosk at Lower Baker Pond:** Harry has more information on this; perhaps he can fill us in on it when he can attend.
8. **Weed Wrench Tool.** Emily brought in and demonstrated the Weed Wrench tool. Motion: Emily moved and Fran seconded to give the Weed Wrench to the Orford Free Library so they can lend it out, pending assessment of risk factors in doing so. The motion carried.
9. **Sign posted on Orford Conservation Land:** Ted noted that there is a No Trespassing sign posted on the land abutting the conservation land. We should check where the property boundary is

and respect it, and also introduce ourselves to the abutting owners, and see how they feel about use of their land.

10. Recruiting and Nominations: Ted has reached out to someone he knows about considering joining the OCC.

11. Other Business:

- a. John has spoken with a knowledgeable and energetic person about helping out with the OCC.
- b. He and Emily attended the Planning Board meeting on Nov 12 at which Andy Schwaegler was presenting plans for their property around Indian Pond. John and Emily sent out notes from the meeting. John found it very interesting and suggests that it would be good for the OCC to have someone at the Planning Board meetings on a regular basis. We need to make sure there is no quorum and that no meeting or appearance of a meeting is going on. It would be best to limit the number of OCC members attending to one or two.
- c. John noted that a representative from the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission was at the Planning Board meeting talking about resilience measures. John wanted to make sure that Kevin and the other Selectboard members are aware that UVLSRPC already did a culvert inventory for Orford that prioritized culverts for replacement.

Motion: A motion was made by Fran to adjourn the meeting. John seconded. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

Minutes were taken by Emily Bryant.