

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,
Meeting Minutes, May 15, 2013**

Attendees

Committee members: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Marty Collins, Dave Ehnebuske, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach. Town Board Liaison: Lou Tartaro. Visitors: George Baum, Jean Ehnebuske, Bill Volckmann.

1. Chairperson's Report

Status of vacated seat

Bill Volckmann stated that he will be submitting his application for the vacant position on the CAC.

Correspondence from DEC's Barbara Lucas-Wilson

Chair Beth Herr contacted Barbara Lucas-Wilson to let her know about the Mural Celebration on June 12 and invite her to attend. She accepted the invitation, and plans to come. She told the Chair that a sign has been placed at the kiosk located at Mt. Nimham Court acknowledging the CAC's stewardship of the Mt. Nimham property.

FOIL request

The Chair reported that she talked to Town Clerk Lana Cappelli regarding the recently-received FOIL request. The Chair asked CAC members to send the Town Clerk any e-mail messages they sent to or received from Supervisor Kathy Doherty and/or members of the Kent Town Board between January 2010 to the present. She also said that if CAC members had *not* sent or received e-mails to or from the Supervisor or Town Board members, they should let the Town Clerk know that, too. Although no deadline for responding was specified by the Town Clerk, the Chair urged CAC members to comply as soon as possible. The Town Clerk may be reached at the Kent Town Hall at 225-2067. Her e-mail address is lcappelli@townofkentny.gov.

Update on video request

At the March CAC meeting, the Chair reported that she had received a request for a VHS tape from David Hirsch, a grandson of Ray Singer. The tape he requested was one featuring a debate between Martin Brech and Jim Baker that took place at the Mead Farm many years ago. George Baum had a copy of that particular tape that he had converted to a DVD, and he gave it to Dave Ehnebuske. Dave added titles and credits to the original and made several copies. The Chair thanked Dave for his work. She will mail a DVD to David Hirsch in Swansea, MA.

2. Kentcac.info website

The Chair encouraged CAC members to check out the newly-revised CAC website that Dave Ehnebuske created. She commented that it is "new and fabulous," easy to navigate, and very attractive with its series of photos that feature the natural beauty in the Town of Kent.

3. Kent Nature Almanac

The Chair is hopeful that individuals within the Kent community will begin to contribute their observations to the Kent Nature Almanac, including CAC members. Currently, 103 people receive the Kent Nature Almanac via e-mail subscriptions.

4. Hikes and trails

Hike to Hawk Rock, Sunday, May 12

Dave Ehnebuske reported that although the hike was sparsely attended, it was a perfect day for the hike with seasonal temperatures and periods of sun and clouds. Those who participated were rewarded with the sight of various wildflowers, glades of graceful ferns, trees leafing out, and insects crawling or scurrying along the trail.

Carol Gracie Program at Arts on the Lake, Tuesday, May 14

The Chair remarked that the book talk by Carol Gracie—an internationally-known wildflower photographer, artist, and author—was very well attended. Carol spoke about some of the wildflowers she features in her most recent book, *Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast: A Natural History*. After her talk, she invited and answered questions from the audience. The Chair commented that those who attended really enjoyed an evening where “books, art and nature” were the focus.

Mountain Laurel Hike, Sunday, June 9, 1 PM

This CAC-sponsored hike will take participants to Wonder Lake State Park to view the mountain laurel there. Those who plan to attend should plan to meet in the parking lot just off Ludingtonville Road.

5. Fire Tower Committee

Mural Celebration

Date/s, place/s, time/s

The Chair reminded CAC members that the Mural Celebration at the fire tower has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 12. There had been some prior discussion about where to hold the event—at the fire tower or at the Kent Town Hall. As it turns out, recognizing the members of the Go Green Club from George Fischer Middle School and displaying their murals in both places will be possible. Councilman Lou Tartaro suggested honoring the students at the June 25 Town Board meeting, and after making a call to see if that would work, he announced that the CAC should proceed with plans to do so. He also suggested videotaping the celebration at the fire tower. Someone mentioned that the Kent Public Library might loan the CAC its camera for the occasion, and the Chair said she would check on that.

Schedule of activities at the fire tower on Wednesday, June 12

The Chair reported that the middle-school students will be leaving their campus by bus at 9:30 AM. She expects the bus will arrive at the parking lot in Mount Nimham Court around 10 AM. She plans to meet them when they arrive and walk them up to the fire tower, pointing out various features along the way. Parents/family members of the middle-schoolers—and anyone else attending the event—would be welcome to join the group. The Chair anticipates that the group would arrive at the fire tower around 11 AM. Their murals would be nicely displayed at the base of the tower.

Invitations and invitees

Dave said he would draft the invitation and send it to CAC members for feedback/review as soon as possible. He will also send CAC members the list of proposed invitees for review and will ask CAC members to send him any additional suggestions for invitees. Dave suggested adding former CAC members to the list of invitees, and asked George if he could provide their names and addresses. George suggested adding the President of the Carmel-Kent Chamber of Commerce, Henry Boyd.

Program

CAC members discussed possibilities for the program. There was agreement that it should last about a half hour (11 – 11:30 AM), and include a welcome by the Chair; recognition of each of the students; an explanation of the murals by four students (one student for each mural); a brief account of the history of the fire tower by George Baum; and an opportunity for brief remarks by elected representatives and other officials. After the program, the students would be given time to climb to the top of the fire tower. Afterward, they would walk back to the parking lot to board the bus back to campus by either noon or 12:30. The Chair will verify which time is correct with the Go Green Club sponsor.

Media/publicity

Marty Collins said that she would share her list of media contacts with the Chair. The Chair will draft a press release and send it to CAC members for feedback next week. Bill Buck suggested creating posters about the event and placing them around town. Another suggestion was asking Sue Dieck, Public Information Officer for the Carmel schools, to list the event in her e-letter, *SchoolHouse News*.

Logistics, other details

There was discussion about how to transport invitees who would prefer not to hike with the students or

on their own from the parking lot to the fire tower and back again. CAC members suggested that we could use a limited number of vehicles to make two shuttle runs to and from. Information about how to reserve a seat in a shuttle will be included on the invitations.

The Chair said she wondered if the CAC should weed-whack the area at the base of the fire tower prior to the Mural Celebration. No decision was made.

Plexiglass for covering murals

The Chair received information from Home Depot about two types of plexiglass. One type (one-eighth of an inch thick) is available for \$53/sheet; a more substantial type (one-quarter of an inch thick) is available for \$100/sheet. She will check with Home Depot about the possibility of getting the plexiglass as a donation or at least at cost.

Braces

Bill Volckmann has heard nothing from Greg at Brewster Iron Works.

Floor repair

The Chair was unable to get her flooring contractor to assess the flooring situation in the cabin of the fire tower. George had better luck with John Hamel—an independent contractor—and received a quote of \$1950 total. The quote includes materials and labor for removing the existing flooring and installing a new floor consisting of planks made of pressure-treated pine or locust. The quote also includes removing the current railing and installing a new railing that is higher than the existing one. To take on the job, John would need to arrange for insurance for himself.

CAC members agreed that they would like another estimate. Anne Balant-Campbell said she would try to get an estimate as soon as possible from Bob McCarthy, a contractor who has done work for her.

The Chair had checked with Sal Tripi and learned that the CAC has approximately \$2200 in an account. The cost for replacing the flooring along with the cost for the plexiglass sheets to cover the murals would nearly use up those funds.

Bill Volckmann reported that the DEC's Barbara Lucas-Wilson wants to be informed about the dates the flooring replacement will take place. The Chair hopes the work can be completed prior to the Mural Celebration on June 12.

Maximum occupancy of fire tower

The Chair expressed her concerns about the large number of people who viewed fireworks from the fire tower on July 4 last year. Bill Volckmann said that he had contacted Barbara Lucas-Wilson about this, and she will be mailing him a “maximum occupancy” sign or signs to install at the fire tower. She also told him that she will arrange for a ranger to be at the fire tower on July 4 this year.

Response to fire tower restoration five-year plan sketch

The Chair said that given the late hour, she would table this agenda item until the June meeting. In the meantime, Dave will resend the document to CAC members for their input.

Between now and the June meeting, the Chair said she will check on the viability of the PLAN Kent organization and Friends of Mount Nimham.

6. ELLA (Hudson Hills and Highlands Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance)

The Chair announced upcoming programs ELLA is sponsoring. On June 15, ELLA is hosting Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, and Carolyn Summers, author of *Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East*.

7. Other

No topics were introduced.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

The next meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, June 19, at the Kent Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary