

Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent
Meeting Minutes, January 21, 2015

Attendees

CAC members present: Bill Buck, Dave Ehnebuske, Phil Tolmach, Bill Volckmann. CAC members absent: Anne Balant-Campbell, Marty Collins, Beth Herr. Visitors: George Baum, Jean Ehnebuske.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Chairperson's report

The Vice-chair, Dave Ehnebuske, stated that Chair Beth Herr had asked him to run the meeting since she could not be present.

2014 Annual Reports

Dave stated that he would post Beth's Annual Reports on googledocs so CAC members can read them. Beth submitted three different reports: one to the Town of Kent, one to the DEC and one to the DEP.

Reappointments

Beth Herr was reappointed as Chair of the CAC by the Kent Town Board. Phil Tolmach was reappointed as a CAC member for a five-year term.

Liaison reappointed

Councilman Michael Tierney was reappointed as the liaison to the CAC from the Kent Town Board for a second year.

Eagle Scout project

Boy Scout Patrick LaFontaine is continuing to put together his proposal for work at the Mead Farm and Hawk Rock sites. He and Beth met recently with the DEP's Lori DiLorenzo to discuss his plans. Patrick hopes to install an informational trail kiosk at the Mead Farm site (perhaps including a QR code); prepare an informational brochure; mark the trails as per DEP requirements; and clear out the invasive barberry at the Mead Farm site. He would do this work under the stewardship agreement the CAC has with the DEP. It's up to Patrick to raise the funds he needs, recruit volunteers to help him, and figure out the work schedule. He hopes to begin the work in March and complete it by September.

2. Websites

Kentcac.info

Dave reported that the CAC's website continues to draw visitors and subscribers. Dave suggested that those who subscribe to the Kent Nature Almanac should be encouraged to invite their friends, neighbors and family members to subscribe to it, too.

Town of Kent website

Dave stated that he has viewed an "under construction" version of the town's website and that the town hopes the contractor that was hired will have it up and running soon. According to what he's seen, Dave said it appears the new website will not be as restrictive as the current one and may well be interactive.

3. Kent Nature Almanac

Dave referred to the photo competition that was announced in the December 2014 issue of the Kent Nature Almanac. He reported that Beth had provided details about the competition to Marty Collins who used it to write a press release. Dave said he created [a page](#) with those same details on our Kentcac.info website. The competition has been announced in two online issues of the "Schoolhouse News" that the Carmel school district publishes each week.

4. Hikes and programs

Report on New Year's Day Hike

George remarked that this hike in the Nimham Mountain State Forest, co-sponsored with FrOGS, drew 14 hikers. He said it was a beautiful walk that took hikers through stands of conifers and maples, past a nameless pond, and across meadows. He added that the hike was a very nice way to start the new year.

Set calendar for 2015

Dave pointed out that, as shown on tonight's agenda, the dates and times of several hikes and programs have already been set. He mentioned that he would be willing to contact someone at FrOGS to see if their organization would like to co-sponsor some upcoming hikes and programs with the CAC.

Already scheduled:

- Winter Walk (FrOGS event), Lakeside Park, Pawling, Sunday, February 28, noon
- "The Bear Reality," with CT Master Wildlife Conservationist Felicia Ortner (FrOGS event), Trinity-Pawling School, Sunday, March 15, 1:30pm
- Annual Amphibian Hunt, Clearpool Model Forest, Sunday, April 12, 1 – 3pm
- Invasive Plants ID and Control Strategies, Mount Nimham State Forest, Nichols Street, Saturday, April 25, 1pm

Hikes and programs to schedule tonight:

- Possible showing of the film "Bag It" (See: bagitmovie.com), April, TBD.
Dave commented that he wished Anne Balant-Campbell had been able to come to the meeting so she could talk about this idea she introduced. It was suggested that maybe the CAC could collaborate with Arts on the Lake or the Kent Public Library in hosting a viewing and subsequent discussion of this film.
- Annual Hike to Hawk Rock. After some discussion, CAC members chose Sunday, May 3, 11am, as a tentative date for this hike.
- Photo Competition Winners Exhibit, Kent Public Library, June, TBD. Since Beth is orchestrating this endeavor and has all the information about it, the CAC deferred discussion about it until the next meeting when Beth will be present.
- Firefly Social. This event would take place in the evening and include refreshments at the end of the program. There was discussion about where to hold the program, with an emphasis on holding it in an area that is not too challenging to get to after dark. No decisions as to place were made. CAC members also discussed the importance of planning the event for an evening when the moon would not be too bright. Possible dates suggested were either Saturday or Sunday evening on the weekend of June 13-14 or Saturday or Sunday evening on the weekend of June 20-21. Dave will check the Carmel school district calendar to see if either June weekend conflicts with any big school district events—e.g., testing, prom or graduation.
- Butterflies, July, TBD. Since this is Beth's idea, CAC members decided to let her decide the date, time and place.

- **Fire Tower Celebration.** George Baum is planning this commemorative event, and he suggested that the CAC hold the celebration on the same day as the Fall Foliage Hike. After discussion, CAC members decided that the tentative date for the hike and the celebration should be Sunday, October 11. George is already looking into finding performers, speakers and musicians for the event. He plans to ask Arts on the Lake for help finding local musicians. Among other things, a work party will need to be organized to spruce up the site (mow the grass, zap tall weeds, pick up any trash), and volunteers will need to be recruited to help promote the event, send invitations, find (a) tent(s), locate a port-a-john, etc.
George expressed his concern regarding the issuance of a Certificate of Liability. He explained that in the past, the DEC has required a Limited Liability Certificate of one million dollars for events like this, and that the CAC has met this requirement through an amendment added to the Town's liability insurance with Spain. Bill Volckmann commented that this requirement may have changed, and said he would contact Jeff Wiegert at the DEC to clarify things. If the requirement is still in force, George would pursue this issue with our liaison, Councilman Michael Tierney.

5. Fire Tower Committee

Floor and murals

Dave emphasized the importance of pinning down a specific date or date/s in March or April with David Tomkins, the contractor who volunteered to install the floor and murals in the fire tower cabin. Bill V. will contact David to set the date/s.

6. Report from the Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF)

Dave, who was elected President of the Board of Directors of the KCF by the five other directors (George Baum, Jean Ehnebuske, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach and Bill Volckmann), reported that the organization met for the first time on January 9. Its second meeting will follow tonight's CAC meeting.

7. Other

Initiate plastic bag campaign

Dave remarked that Anne, along with George, is very interested in this topic. Perhaps Anne might want to lead the effort, but since she is not present tonight, this item will be tabled until next month. CAC members commented that in launching this initiative, we would need to be able to count on support, leadership and action by the Town of Kent and by Putnam County.

Press about the CAC's fire tower projects, the Kent Nature Almanac, hikes, the KCF, etc.

Dave stated that Beth really wants to bring the CAC's activities higher profile by publishing more information about them.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.

The next meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, February 18, at the Kent Town Hall. All meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary