

Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent Meeting Minutes, January 20, 2016

Attendees

CAC members present: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Marty Collins, David Ehnebuske, Beth Herr.
CAC members absent: Phil Tolmach, Bill Volckmann. Recording secretary: Jean Ehnebuske. Visitors: None.

Chairperson Beth Herr called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Chairperson's report

New Kent Town Board Liaison

Chair Beth Herr announced that newly-elected Town Councilman Scott Chin had been appointed as the Town's liaison to the CAC. Co-chair Dave Ehnebuske sent Councilman Chin an email to invite him to tonight's meeting. Dave also provided him with background material about the CAC, information about the kentcac.info website, etc.

Correspondence

Beth shared information she received about a multi-state initiative, the [Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge](#), a proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a nature preserve including some 2,000-plus acres in northern Dutchess County, NY and Litchfield County, CT. Beth stated that public comment is invited through March 4, and that input could be sent via email to northeastplanning@fws.gov with "Great Thicket LPP" in the subject line.

Beth received information about [a lecture series at the New York Botanical Garden](#). The three-part series begins on January 28, with a presentation by renowned botanist and landscape architect Ulf Nordfjell, "Modern Gardens: The Essence of Nature." Two other sessions are slated as well.

"Kiosk Keeper"

Beth stated that Doris Balant has volunteered to be the "Kiosk Keeper" for the DEP Horsepound Unit kiosk that was installed at the end of Whangtown Road by Patrick LaFontaine. Constructing and installing it was part of his Eagle Scout project. Doris will make sure the kiosk is maintained and will also report any vandalism. Beth expressed her thanks that Doris had volunteered.

Annual Reports

The Chair announced that she completed the annual reports for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Town of Kent. CAC members discussed posting links to those reports on the Town of Kent website in the section pertaining to the Kent Conservation Advisory Committee.

Ideas for a forum

Beth said she would like to see the CAC sponsor a town-funded "Community Forum" this year, perhaps modeled after [Bedford's "2020 Summit"](#). The purpose would be to bring Kent residents together to hear presentations from recognized speakers and discuss environmental issues and concerns.

Reappointment

The Chair announced that she had been reappointed by the Kent Town Board as a CAC member for another five-year term, and also as the Chairperson of the CAC.

Eagle Scout project

Both Beth and Dave were approached by an aspiring Eagle Scout, Ian Troge, at the Fire Tower Festival regarding possible projects he might pursue for the CAC. Since then, he has determined that he would like to construct a boardwalk with handrails across the low, wet area where the marsh marigolds appear on the way to/from Hawk Rock. This would greatly facilitate hiking. To proceed, he needs to get his approvals from the Scouts, and the CAC needs to get approval from the DEP.

2. Outreach communication

Report from Communications Committee

The Communications Committee has not yet met, so there was no report.

Kent CAC Facebook page

Beth reported that statistics show an outreach of 732. At this point, there are 51 people who have “liked” the page.

She stated that she would be posting the info about the proposed Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge on the Facebook page.

Mount Nimham Facebook page

Since Bill Volekmann was absent, there was no report.

Kent Nature Almanac (KNA)

Dave said that with each new issue, he receives requests from individuals who wish to subscribe. The count is now at 132. He added that he continues to receive positive feedback from time to time. Marty Collins asked if any thought had been given to the CAC publishing the content of the KNA as a book. Dave replied that that idea had not come up.

Kentcac.info and subscription lists

Dave reported that he is keeping up the website—posting news of hikes and other announcements and handling requests for subscriptions to various lists as they come in.

Approve Hawk Rock and Mead Farm trail map for kiosk

Dave reported that he completed the trail map based on input from CAC members who responded via email to his request for comments some time ago. He would like to have it printed on metal or get it laminated. Beth said she would check prices at a local printer she uses and get back to him. Anne Balant-Campbell suggested that Dave insert arrowheads on the map that would provide information regarding the trail and sights along the way. She also suggested that Dave create a key explaining the traditional trail markings.

3. Hikes and programs

New Year's Day Hike

Beth gave a brief report on the hike. Hikers seemed to enjoy it. She posted photos on Facebook.

Plan for 2016 hikes and programs

The Chair shared her proposed plans for 2016 with CAC members:

Hike for Nature Lovers, 1 PM, Sunday, February 14, Lake Gleneida. A short walk along a flat trail around the lake should be just the thing for Valentine's Day.

Discover the Kent Town Center's Backyard—Nature in Winter, 1:30-2:30 PM, Saturday, February 20, Kent Public Library. This collaboration with the Kent Public Library is part of the Town of Kent's Winterfest. There will be a small skating rink on the town green; activities organized by Kent's Recreation Department; refreshments from the Carmel-Kent Chamber of Commerce; and, depending on the weather, a snowman-building contest. The library will be providing lots of activities for children, this one among them. Children will meet in the library and then go on a walk to learn to identify trees and rocks in the woods outside the library's back door. If there is snow on the ground, they will probably see some animal tracks and learn to identify them. The children will be loaned magnifying lenses on lanyards, and be given collecting bags to hold their “finds.” Beth, Dave and Bill Buck will meet at 2 PM on Friday, February 19, to scope out the area and prepare for the program.

Woodcock Walk, 6 PM, Saturday, March 19, Great Swamp Wildlife Management Area just off Cornwall Hill Road in Patterson. A suggestion was made that perhaps a recording of the sound of the woodcocks could be made available via a link as part of the announcement of the hike on kentcac.info.

The Nature of Kent, 7 PM, Tuesday, April 12, in the downstairs program room of the Kent Public Library. Beth and Dave will present information about all the natural treasures of Kent and introduce attendees to the CAC and KCF.

Wildflower Walk, 1 PM, Sunday, April 17, William Clough Preserve in Patterson. This 58-acre preserve, donated to the town of Patterson in 1973, is located off Farm to Market Road near the Southeast town line. The preserve is a mostly hemlock forest, and offers a hiking trail that leads to Ice Pond.

Hike to Hawk Rock, 11 AM, Sunday, May 22, DEP property at the end of Whangtown Road. Hikers are advised to pack water and a lunch.

4. Mount Nimham Fire Tower Committee

Replace missing nameplates on steps; replace landings

CAC members agreed that this is a priority. It was suggested that the CAC ask George Baum and Jim Baker if they have a list of the donors whose names appear/ed on the steps.

Another priority item is to replace the wooden landings.

Status of engineering report

Because Bill V. will be out of town for several weeks, Dave is going to text Bill to get the contact information Bill planned to use to connect with the engineer recommended by David Rocco (the individual who managed the restoration of the Mount Beacon Fire Tower). Until the CAC and KCF have an estimate for the cost of maintenance work on the fire tower, neither group can move forward. So this is definitely a priority as well.

5. Report from Kent Conservation Foundation

Dave said that although the KCF is scheduled to have a meeting right after the CAC meeting is adjourned this evening, not having enough people to comprise a forum will make it impossible to conduct any real business.

Marty Collins reported that Bill Nulk, the president of the Carmel-Kent Chamber of Commerce, wants to invite Beth and Dave to make presentations about the CAC and KCF at an upcoming meeting.

6. Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance (ELLA)

No report.

7. Clearpool Model Forest

Beth stated that the meeting originally scheduled for Monday, January 11, had been postponed to Monday, February 1. She plans to attend.

8. Other

Nothing was brought up or reported.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, February 17, at the Kent Town Hall. All meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary