

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,  
Meeting Minutes, May 18, 2016**

**Attendees:** CAC members present: Dave Ehnebuske, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach, Bill Volckmann. CAC members absent: Bill Buck, Anne Balant-Campbell, Marty Collins. Ex-officio recording secretary: Jean Ehnebuske. Town Board Liaison: Did not attend. Visitors: Jim Baker, George Baum.

Chairperson Beth Herr called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

**1. Chairperson's report**

Correspondence

No report.

New York WAVE training program

Chair Beth Herr reported that an “overflow” workshop for the NYSDEC Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) program will be held on Wednesday, June 1, at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook. This additional session had to be scheduled because not all those who were interested could be accommodated in the earlier workshop.

Meeting of the Putnam County Health, Social, Educational and Environmental Committee

The Chair stated that this committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19, at 6:30 PM in Room 318 of the Putnam County Office Building. One of the topics is plastic bag fees. Both the Chair and George Baum plan to attend, and will give a report about what happened at the CAC's June meeting.

Ian Troge's Eagle Scout project

Beth announced that she, CAC co-chair Dave Ehnebuske, Ian Troge and others will be meeting with a representative from the DEP next week to review his plans.

She commented that the map created and displayed by Dave in the kiosk built by prospective Eagle Scout Patrick LaFontaine looks very professional and will be very helpful. She added that she also likes the trail markers Patrick created and posted as part of his Eagle Scout project.

**2. Outreach communication**

Report from Outreach Communications Committee

Chair Dave Ehnebuske stated that the four-member committee met on Monday, May 16. Committee members are Dave, Jean Ehnebuske, Anne Balant-Campbell, and Bill Volckmann.

*Electronic presence*

Committee members discussed the four places the CAC has an electronic presence: the Kent CAC website at <http://kentcac.info> (managed and updated solely by Dave); a section on the Town of Kent website at <http://www.townofkentny.gov/conservation-advisory-committee> (managed and updated solely by Dave); a Kent CAC Facebook page (managed and updated solely by Beth, with Anne as a current administrator); and the Mount Nimham Fire Tower Facebook page (managed and updated by Bill V. who allows anyone to post original content there).

Discussion started with talk about some glitches in the new Town of Kent website and the presence of a dead and outdated town website that is still up. Dave reported that he already contacted Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming, and that she was very helpful in providing the name of the individual who manages the Town's official website. His name is Rich Harris. Beth mentioned that the Putnam County website points viewers to the town's outdated website, and that Rich should be made aware of that. Bill V. suggested that Dave talk to Rich about the town buying up related domains, e.g., biz, com, gov, etc. Dave said he will pursue all these issues and problems with Rich when he talks with him.

*Media presence*

The committee also discussed the CAC's media presence. A list of media contacts from 2013 had been provided by Marty Collins and passed along to Dave and Jean so they could send out press releases

announcing last fall's Fire Tower Festival. They learned that many of the media contacts were no longer working for the various publications, and that some of the publications were no longer in business. The committee agreed that maybe Marty would be willing to go through that list and update it.

To help spread around the work of public relations, and thereby relieve Beth of some tasks, the committee agreed that Dave should ask Beth to appoint him as an administrator of the Kent CAC Facebook page. Dave made the point that since he will already have the text of the press releases that he posts on the Kent CAC.info website, he would be happy to post that same text on the CAC's Facebook page.

#### Kentcac.info website

Dave reported on the continually growing subscription requests he receives. As of May 6, there are 178 subscribers to the Hikes list; 148 subscribers to the Kent Nature Almanac list; 143 subscribers to the Programs list; and 57 subscribers to the Agenda and Minutes list.

### **3. Hikes and programs**

#### Family Day at Madden Outdoor Education Center, Saturday, May 14

Beth reported that only two families attended. They picked up some brochures, so Beth is hoping that perhaps they will decide to become members or make a donation.

#### Hike to Hawk Rock, Sunday, May 22

The Chair expressed that she is looking for a beautiful day that will bring a large turnout of hikers.

#### Nature Walk Behind Kent Public Library

Library Director Carol Donick contacted Beth to ask if she would consider organizing and leading another nature hike in the woods behind the town complex sometime during the July 4 weekend. Beth reported that she told Carol "yes," and Dave commented that he would be happy to help. Carol has not yet chosen a date.

#### Dark Sky Star Party

Beth stated that she and Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming scheduled a date for the Star Party. It will be Friday, August 5, with a rain date of Saturday, August 6. Beth said she also contacted the Westchester Amateur Astronomers, and the members of this group committed to bring telescopes for this family event.

CAC members briefly discussed the name for this event. The consensus was that it should be named and promoted as a "Star Party" since the words "Dark Sky" might be confusing to some people.

### **4. Fire Tower Committee**

#### Status of engineering report

Dave and Mark Day, the individual recommended to Phil Tolmach for doing the inspection of the fire tower, had scheduled a date and time to meet along with Bill V. and George. Sadly, Mark hit a deer on his way to work that morning, and had to cancel the meeting. Luckily, he was unhurt. He apologized, and said he would find three other dates when he is available and send that info to Dave. Dave will run the dates past Bill V. and George to check their availability on those days.

Bill V. said he would like to see the CAC get another estimate for comparison, and said he should talk to Frank (the person David Rocco hired to inspect the fire tower at Mount Beacon).

Jim Baker emphasized the importance of keeping up maintenance on the fire tower, noting that it is one of the most popular sites in Kent. He also suggested using video cameras to deter and catch vandals.

### **5. Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF) Report**

Dave said that since there was no meeting on April 20, there was nothing to report.

Beth commented that she would like to talk about possible future exhibits featuring the CAC and KCF, but that she would save that discussion for the KCF meeting.

#### **6. ELLA (Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance)**

There was no report.

#### **7. Clearpool Model Forest**

Since Beth missed their meeting, she had nothing to report.

#### **8. Program report on “The Future of Oak Forests”**

Bill V. attended this session that was hosted by the Cary Institution of Ecosystem Studies located in Millbrook. He reported that it was very worthwhile. Participants met at the Great Mountain in Connecticut (very close to the border with Massachusetts) where oaks have been harvested for the last quarter century. Participants made observations and engaged in discussion about the future of oak forests and the steps being taken to achieve regeneration.

Bill suggested posting relevant information about upcoming programs or hikes offered by the Cary Institute on the Kent CAC website.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

**The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, June 15, 2016, at the Kent Town Hall.** As always, all meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,  
ex-officio recording secretary