

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent
Meeting Minutes, April 15, 2015**

Attendees

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

Note: Jean Ehnebuske, ex-officio recording secretary, was absent. She would like to thank CAC member Bill Volckmann for taking the minutes for her.

Chairperson Beth Herr called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

1. Chairperson's Report

Frogs

Beth reported that she made recordings of the new discovered species of leopard frog, *Rana kauffeldi*. She added that frogs have been noticed at Ice Pond on the Bullet Hole Road side, and noted that glacial pools are a good place to find frogs. She commented that such observations are important because they are part of the natural resource inventory which the CAC is charged with compiling.

Presentations to the Kent Town Board on April 7, 2015

Report on the Conservation Advisory Committee

The Chair stated that she gave a 10-minute presentation about recent and future activities and programs of the CAC. The Supervisor and all town board members were present except Councilman Michael Tierney. Beth told CAC members that she included information about upcoming hikes, the screening of "Bag It," the Firefly Social, the Butterfly Count, and the Fire Tower Celebration. She also talked about the CAC's commitment to compiling the natural resource inventory and to maintaining an index of open spaces. She spoke about the stewardship agreements the CAC has with the DEC and the DEP. She also reported on the success of the Kent Nature Almanac. Beth also took the opportunity to promote the CAC's photo competition and to remind people that the deadline for submissions is May 15.

Report on Kent Conservation Foundation

Dave Ehnebuske, president of the KCF, gave a brief report on the structure, mission and goals of the newly-formed, not-for-profit organization, the Kent Conservation Foundation. Basically, the KCF will be securing funding for and managing CAC-identified projects that the Town of Kent cannot fund. He stated that the KCF is in the process of getting its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and would be recruiting individual and business members soon. Dave explained that the KCF's first project will be replacing the floor in the cabin of the Mount Nimham Fire Tower. The next project will be making necessary repairs and doing critical maintenance on the Fire Tower. The KCF is seeking a civil engineer who has the expertise and experience to inspect the fire tower and determine what needs to be done to preserve it.

Comments from Kent Town Board members

Town board members remarked that they subscribe to the Kent Nature Almanac and like it very much. They mentioned that they plan to recommend the CAC for an award. Kent Clean-up Day, scheduled for Saturday, April 25, was announced as well as the locations for clean-up along Rt 52, Rt 301 and Rt 311. Clean-up Day has not happened for a long time, and the town board is hoping many people will participate. Note: There was a brief discussion at the CAC meeting regarding why the CAC was not aware of this event earlier.

Councilman Huestis mentioned that he would like to see the 100 acres at Huestis Park on Farmers Mills Road utilized, perhaps by creating a trail winding from Huestis Park close to the Madden Outdoor Education Center and beyond. He asked for the expertise of the CAC. Beth indicated that the CAC would be willing to look at the project. Councilman Huestis also recommended making a presentation about the CAC to groups of 25 or more—to the Rotary Club of Carmel, for instance.

2. KentCAC.info

Webmaster Dave Ehnebuske was absent, but the Chair shared his report stating that there were 244 distinct users who visited the website last month. They looked at 594 page views. There are currently 147 people subscribed to the hikes list.

3. Kent Nature Almanac

Beth remarked that the deadline for submitting entries for the Kent Nature Almanac Photo Competition is May 15. She will be promoting the photo competition when she speaks at the meeting of the Rotary Club of Carmel in two weeks.

4. Hikes and programs

“Bag It”

The Chair said that arrangements had been made to show the film “Bag It” in the community room of the Kent Public Library on Saturday, April 25, from 1 – 3 PM. She said she would appreciate the help of a few CAC members beginning at 12:30 PM. She will provide refreshments.

Hike to Hawk Rock

This annual hike is scheduled for Sunday, May 3, between 11 AM and 2 PM.

Firefly Social

This event is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, at 8 PM. The place has yet to be determined.

Planning for future hikes and events

The Chair expressed that she would like the CAC to plan a year's worth of hikes and events at its May meeting. That way, the public can be informed about CAC activities in advance.

Beth reminded CAC members that two visitors at our March meeting—Eli Campbell and Michael Tierney—offered to lead hikes to Hawk Rock and Mead Farm during the summer. She suggested the CAC put off scheduling summer hikes until after Eli and Michael have returned home from college and could participate in making plans.

5. Mount Nimham Fire Tower Committee

Floor replacement

Bill reported that he received Certificates of Liability insurance on Tuesday. He submitted them to the DEC and received a completed Temporary Revocable Permit (TRP) on Wednesday. It's important to have the TRP on hand during the work since DEC rangers may ask to see it.

Phil Tolmach sent Bill V. the contact information for the wood vendor who specializes in hardwoods (ipe and other woods). Bill plans to contact the vendor.

Bill also said that the proposed date of construction is next week, although it may be too late to schedule volunteers that quickly. He plans to check with David Tomkins about the schedule.

Since the closure of the fire tower will be 1 – 2 days, it was proposed that a press release about the work on the fire tower work go out to inform the public.

It will also be necessary to notify the DEC of the formal date/s of construction so it can update information on its website and kiosk.

Other fire tower issues

Bill reported that he has done multiple trash pick-ups and collections at Nimham Mountain—including emptying the garbage pails that belong to the CAC (not the DEC). He has made collections on the trails, the roadway and the area on top of the mountain. He said he has collected about 3 pick-up trucks' worth of trash since last March, and that spring has brought an increase in activity.

Phil talked to the town engineer and asked for names of qualified people who could inspect the fire tower and offer input.

Fire Tower Celebration on Sunday, October 11, 2015

The overall planning committee has met. George Baum will need three additional committees to take responsibility for the work that needs to be done—a program committee; a site work committee; and a staff work committee. George is asking for ideas about activities people can do while listening to music. Two suggestions came up: inviting people to sign a sheet/board/book expressing the reasons they like and value the fire tower; encouraging people to subscribe to the Kent Nature Almanac.

5. Report from Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF)

In Dave's absence, Beth reported that Dave applied for 501(c)(3) status. She presented a draft of one of the brochures so CAC members could review it, and noted that she, Dave and Jean Ehnebuske had spent considerable time creating it. The KCF Directors will be reviewing and discussing the brochure at their next meeting on Tuesday, April 28.

6. Plastic bag ban

The Chair reported that Putnam County Legislator Dini LoBue would like to meet with her and other interested CAC members to discuss the topic of a plastic bag ban and to brainstorm ideas. Beth also remarked that Legislator LoBue was very receptive to talking about re-establishing the Putnam County Environmental Management Committee (EMC) and asked for all documentation on previous EMCs.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.

The next meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, May 20, at the Kent Town Hall. All meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Volckmann for Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary