

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

Attendees

CAC members present: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach, Bill Volckmann.
CAC members absent: Marty Collins, Dave Ehnebuske. Ex-officio recording secretary Jean Ehnebuske, absent. Town Board Liaison: Did not attend. Visitors: None.

Ex-officio recording secretary, Jean Ehnebuske, would like to thank CAC member Bill Buck for recording the April minutes in her absence.

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

1. Chairperson's report

Correspondence

None

NYSDEC WAVE training program

Chair Beth Herr reported that training for the NYSDEC Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) program will be held on Friday, April 29, between 9 AM—4 PM, in Millbrook. Beth will attend to learn techniques. Previously Anne took the training. It involves wading in streams and sieving out invertebrates. These are sent to the state for naming and evaluation as to their indication of water quality. Participants are able to choose their own stream and some discussion ensued about the most appropriate stream in Kent.

Meeting with Town of Kent Supervisor Maureen Fleming

Beth stated that she and co-chair Dave Ehnebuske met with Supervisor Fleming on Thursday, April 7. The meeting was very successful. Topics of discussion were:

Upgrade to Certificate of Liability Insurance

The CAC received an upgrade to its Certificate of Liability Insurance. This allows Ian Troge to begin his proposed Eagle Scout project at Mead Farm and Hawk Rock and lets the CAC continue to sponsor its annual hike to Hawk Rock.

Installation of winning photos from the Kent Nature Almanac photo contest

With the consent of the Supervisor, those named as winners of the 2015 Kent Nature Almanac photo contest will have their photos displayed in the Kent Town Hall for the year. They will be replaced by the photos of this year's winners. In the lobby is a very large photo by Eli Campbell (son of CAC member Anne Balant-Campbell) of Horsepound Brook from Hawk Rock. It is a composite photo of about 25 individual photos that were merged electronically.

Dark Sky Night

As the result of a discussion between CAC members and the Supervisor, the CAC had been requested to develop an astronomy, or “star party,” program. It had been suggested that the program be scheduled on a Tuesday in week the Fourth of July falls in. The problem is that it will not be dark until at least 9:30 PM, and that seemed too late for most people to attend on a night in midweek. Another date, Saturday, August 6—the next new moon—was suggested, but even then, darkness comes late. The CAC may decide to postpone the event until the fall when darkness falls earlier. CAC members told the Supervisor that if the CAC were to plan such a program, all the lights in the Town Center would need to be turned off. She responded that that would not be a problem.

NYCDEP forestry project

Beth reported that she and Dave informed the supervisor of our interest in this project on Dixon Road and told her that we would keep her updated as the project progressed. CAC member Phil Tolmach is on the Kent Planning Board and has walked the land.

Updates on CAC activities for Supervisor Fleming and Kent Town Board

Beth stated that Supervisor Fleming was receptive to the idea of the CAC reporting twice a year on CAC-sponsored activities, projects and events. The two dates are Tuesday, June 21 and Tuesday, October 4.

Beth said she and Dave encouraged Supervisor Fleming to upgrade the facilities at the Kent Town Hall by adding a screen, projector and computer. Otherwise, speakers have to give their presentations by talking into a microphone. However, since Kent Town Board meetings are televised, this should increase the CAC's exposure.

Town of Kent Clean-up Day

Beth announced that it is scheduled for Saturday, April 23, from 9 AM—1 PM.

2. Outreach communication

Report from Communications Committee

There was no report since the committee—Anne, Dave, Jean, Bill V.—has been unable to meet due to Bill V. being away in Florida. The Chair encouraged committee members to meet soon to resolve the issue of conflicts between the Facebook pages of the CAC, Mount Nimham and the website for the Town of Kent. Currently, the Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF) does not have a Facebook page but probably should.

Kent CAC Facebook page

Beth reported that the CAC continues to receive more “likes” on its Facebook page.

Mount Nimham Facebook page

No report.

Kent Nature Almanac, Kentcac.info, subscription lists

Since Dave was absent, there were no reports on these topics.

3. Hikes and programs

“The Nature of Kent”

The Chair reported that on Tuesday, April 12, she and Dave, KCF president, presented a program, “The Nature of Kent,” at the Kent Public Library. They gave the eighteen attendees an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Kent CAC and the KCF (Kent Conservation Foundation) and also introduced them to the natural areas that are the treasures in our town. Beth used a PowerPoint presentation and an open-space map of the Town of Kent. Each of the major open spaces was presented and illustrated as well as the plants and animals found in them. Dave talked about the support needed to preserve the town's natural and recognized treasures, and encouraged attendees to consider membership in the KCF. Brochures about the CAC and the KCF were made available.

Wildflower Walk

At 1 PM, on Sunday, April 17, hikers met to see wildflowers at the Clough Preserve in Patterson. This hike, led by Beth, was a huge success. Forty people attended. It was a beautiful spring day.

Family Day at Madden Outdoor Education Center

Beth announced that on Saturday, May 14, from 10 AM to 2 PM, the Madden Center at 215 Miller Hill Road, will present “A Day of History, Science and Raptors.” This free rain-or-shine event includes talks on the history of Kent, the Knapp family and Madden; a colonial history program in the Knapp Family Cemetery; a nature walk led by Beth; and nature sketching with Mary Schreiber. Various groups, including the Kent Conservation Foundation, will have displays to acquaint attendees with what they do.

Hawk Rock Hike

Beth reported that the CAC's annual hike to Hawk Rock is scheduled for Sunday, May 22, from 11 AM to 2 PM. With the new Certificate of Liability Insurance upgrade, the CAC is in the clear to host and lead hikes there.

4. Mount Nimham Fire Tower Committee

Report on name plates for steps

The Chair reported that she and George Baum met and climbed the fire tower and recorded all the names on the plates on the steps. They also noted the ones that were missing. Of the over 100 name plates, only six are missing, but one of those is George's. At the very least, we will replace the missing ones. There are a number of plates that were never subscribed, and there was some discussion about selling these in the future. The original cost was \$100 per name plate.

Report on spring cleanup

On March 31, Bill V., along with the Putnam Riders (mountain bike group), and the Gipsy Trail Club Maintenance Team, removed trash from around the fire tower. Much large garbage was removed using a Kobota vehicle from the Gipsy Trail Club. Bill also tried out a new graffiti removal product on the entrance sign (near the parking area) that was very successful. (It also removed some of the lettering on the sign!) To deal with neon-colored graffiti on rocks, the Putnam County Highway Department just painted them matte black. Bill hopes to use the graffiti removal product (which is biodegradable) and a power washer to actually remove the graffiti rather than just cover it up.

Report on status of engineering report

Beth stated that Dave had arranged a meeting on April 26 with Mark Day, the engineer recommended to Phil by Insite Engineering. Bill V. and George requested to attend that meeting. Phil reported that the engineer charges \$135 per hour, and that the whole job, including the report, will cost about \$1000. The KCF intends to proceed with this.

5. Kent Conservation Foundation

Beth said she forgot to bring Dave's report, but remembered some of the details. Dave had a map made for the kiosk at the end of Whangtown Road, printed on aluminum. He will display it at the next CAC meeting. Anne asked that some message be added to the kiosk about "Leave nothing but footprints," because of all the garbage that has been accumulating there.

Beth is working on conserving the CCC cement plate/cornerstone at the base of the fire tower. It is approximately 1.5 x 1.5 feet and is beginning to crumble. Beth is researching conservation methods.

6. ELLA

No report

7. Clearpool Model Forest

The Chair reminded CAC members of the workshop being offered on Saturday, May 7, from 9 AM to noon: Invasives! Management tips for landowners.

8. Other

There was no other discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, May 18, 2016, at the Kent Town Hall. As always, all meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Buck for Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary