

Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent
Meeting Minutes, February 17, 2016

Attendees

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

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

1. Chair's report

Welcome Town Board liaison Scott Chin

Mr. Chin did not attend the meeting.

Correspondence

Programs

Beth reported that she received information from the Carey Institute of Ecosystem Studies about [upcoming programs](#) open to the public at their campus in Millbrook.

Funding for pollinator research

Beth shared this information from the Cornell Cooperative Extension newsletter of Winter 2015-16: "As part of the Governor's task force on pollinators, Cornell University and the NYS Integrated Pest Management Program will focus on research about the best land-management practices that enhance foraging habitats, encouraging pollinator-friendly planting and pollinator-conscious pest management. The current New York State Budget includes \$50,000 to Cornell University for honey bee research as well as \$500,000 for CU and the NYS Integrated Pest Management Program to further this research on pollinator health and the impacts on agriculture in the state."

Conference

The Chair shared information she received from the Native Plant Center regarding their one-day spring landscape [conference](#), "Inspired by Nature: Designing with Native Plants." It's scheduled for Monday, March 14, from 8:30 AM to 3 PM, at the Gateway Center of Westchester Community College.

2015 Annual Reports to NYSDEP, NYCDEP and Town of Kent

Beth stated that she has not yet submitted the reports because she is waiting for Bill Volckmann to send her information on the number of hours contributed by volunteers so she can include that in the reports. Bill has been out of town for several weeks, and does not have that information with him.

NYCDEP project

Beth talked a little about a project proposed by the NYCDEP off Dixon Road at the southwest corner of Kent. It is part of the Barrett Pond Forest Management Project, and plans are in place to take out declining and diseased trees from the property. The removed trees would probably be used mostly for mulch. Phil Tolmach, who serves on the Kent Planning Board, plans to walk the property with Amanda Locke, a Watershed Forester with the NYCDEP. Beth asked Phil to please ask the Kent Planning Board members if she might be allowed to accompany them on the walk.

CAC member Anne Balant-Campbell's online GIS course

The Chair stated that Anne has begun her coursework, and asked Anne to share some comments about the class. Anne said that although it is a very challenging and intense course, she feels that what she learns will be very beneficial to the CAC. Beth added that creating a map of all the open space in our town—with the opportunity to add various features to it—would be so valuable.

Hand lenses purchased

Beth reported that she bought 20 hand lenses for use in the upcoming program on Saturday, February 20, as well as for future programs and events. She was hoping to give Town Board member Scott Chin her receipt for reimbursement at tonight's meeting.

NYCDEP request for liability insurance upgrade

Although the co-chairs, Beth and Dave Ehnebuske, have emailed Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming more than once, neither have had any response regarding the CAC's request for an upgrade to the liability insurance. Unless the CAC receives the upgrade approval from the Town, the Eagle Scout project proposed by Ian Troge cannot move forward. Also, the CAC's annual spring hike to Hawk Rock will have to be canceled. Beth was hoping that our Town Board liaison could help the CAC get this request handled. But because Mr. Chin did not come to tonight's meeting, Beth and Dave will try again to set up a meeting with Supervisor Fleming.

2. Outreach communication

Feel-better cards

Jean Ehnebuske brought a card for CAC members to sign for George Baum. George is recovering well from his hip replacement surgery. Beth said she would send an e-card from the CAC to Bill V., who is recovering in Florida from surgery.

Report from Communications Committee

Because the four-member Communications Committee has not yet met, there was no report. Members of the committee are: Dave, Bill V., Anne and Jean Ehnebuske.

Kent CAC Facebook page

Beth said she planned to post information about the February 20 all-ages hike to "Discover the Kent Town Center's Backyard" on the Kent CAC Facebook page. The hike is one of many CAC events planned for the Town's "Winterfest." (More details below.)

Mount Nimham Facebook page

Since Bill V. was absent, there was no report. Beth said she wondered if there really needed to be two Facebook pages that basically cover the same news. She added that perhaps the Communications Committee could address that issue when it meets.

Town of Kent's website

CAC members agreed that the Town's recently revised website leaves a lot to be desired. First, there are many other invalid sites that show up in a google search that appear to be the Town's "real" website but are not (e.g., www.townofkent.org). Also, navigation is challenging, and information on it is often not updated and/or is incorrect.

Kent Nature Almanac

Both Dave and Beth reported that they had received positive comments about the most recent issue.

Kentcac.info

Dave reported that the website is consistently viewed by many individuals, and that people continue to sign up for subscriptions to various kinds of information. The Kent Nature Almanac alone draws many views each month.

3. Hikes and programs

Valentine's Day Hike for Nature Lovers

Beth reported that due to the bitter cold temperatures, she had to cancel the hike around Lake Gleneida. "Discover the Kent Town Center's Backyard"

Beth said she is hoping the day will be perfect for the walk that is planned at 1:30 PM on Saturday, February 20, in collaboration with the Kent Public Library. Offered as an option for the Town of Kent's "Winterfest," participants of all ages are invited to come. Everyone will meet briefly in the library before heading outdoors to learn to identify trees and look for other interesting things in the woods.

Beth, Dave and Bill B. will be meeting to scope out the property and finalize plans on Friday, February 19, at 2 PM. Historian Judy Kelley-Moberg of FrOGS will be on hand for the walk.

Woodcock Walk

Beth reminded CAC members of the hike the CAC is co-sponsoring with FrOGS to watch for

woodcocks and observe their mating flight rituals. This event is scheduled for 6 PM on Saturday, March 19, at the Great Swamp Wildlife Management Area just off Cornwall Hill Road in Patterson.

4. Fire Tower Committee

Replace missing nameplates on steps

Dave reported that George sent him the list of the donors' names that were on nameplates on the steps of the fire tower. There are only a few missing names; the list is mostly complete. Dave stated that George sent him the name of the fabricator, too. So when it comes time to replace the nameplates, we are all set. The Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF) will provide funding for the project.

Marty Collins mentioned that she had recently attended a meeting of the [Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley](#). They are an organization funded by private money that gives support to various worthwhile projects. The CAC might consider looking into that organization as a funding source for identified CAC projects that need support.

Status of engineering report

Bill V. has been in Florida undergoing surgery and recovering from it for several weeks. It is not clear yet when he will be able to return home. Because of these circumstances, Bill has not yet called Frank, the engineer recommended by David Rocco to do an inspection of the Mount Nimham fire tower. David is the individual who was primarily responsible for the restoration of the Mount Beacon Fire Tower.

Given the uncertainty of Bill's current situation, CAC members voiced that contacting an engineer needs to be done before much more time goes by. Dave said he would be happy to make the contact with Frank on Bill's behalf. Phil added that he could also give Dave the name of the Town of Kent's engineer. Dave said that Phil should do that.

New gate installed

Beth stated that Putnam County installed a new gate in place of the former destroyed and useless one at the base of the gravel road to the fire tower. She commented that it appears to be sturdier and more substantial than the prior gate.

5. Report from Kent Conservation Foundation

Dave stated that because there was not a quorum last month, the KCF could not hold a meeting.

6. ELLA (Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance)

Beth stated that ELLA is hosting a workshop, "Reconnecting Streams through Dam Removal and Culvert Mitigation," on Tuesday, March 1, at the Teatown Lake Reservation.

7. Clearpool Model Forest

Invasive Plants Management Day

Beth reported that Clearpool is planning a workshop for the public on how to manage invasive plants. No other information has been released yet.

8. Other

Phil mentioned that he would like to revisit the idea of engaging (a)certified archaeologist(s) to survey and assess the land at the Mead Farm. Anne commented that she knows a professor at SUNY New Paltz, Joe Diamond, that she could contact if CAC members wanted her to pursue it.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, March 16, at the Kent Town Hall. All meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary