

Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent Meeting Minutes, July 15, 2015

Attendees

CAC members present: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Marty Collins, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach, Bill Volckmann. CAC members absent: David Ehnebuske. Visitors: George Baum.

Note: Ex-officio secretary Jean Ehnebuske was absent. She would like to thank CAC member Anne Balant-Campbell for recording the minutes for her.

1. Chair's report

KCAC and KCF presentations to Rotary Club of Carmel, July 2

Chair Beth Herr reported that both she and Dave Ehnebuske gave presentations to an audience of about 25 members. Beth's presentation can be found [here](#), and Dave's [here](#). Beth discussed the Federal law 47-103 which was promulgated after the first Earth Day in 1970, and which recommends the formation of conservation advisory committees. The Kent Conservation Advisory Committee was added to the Kent Town Code in 1976. She described the charter of the KCAC and explained how its activities align with that charge. Topics she covered included the hike programs, the upcoming butterfly count event, the Kent Nature Almanac, the KCAC web site, the native plant garden at Arts on the Lake, the history of the Mount Nimham Fire Tower and the efforts to preserve it. Dave followed with a presentation on the purpose and work to date of the Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF). Informational KCF brochures were distributed. The Rotary members asked many questions and several signed up to receive the Kent Nature Almanac.

Future presentation to Carmel-Kent Chamber of Commerce

Beth will be meeting with the Carmel-Kent Chamber of Commerce in the near future. She indicated that the current presentation she is using would benefit from having more photos showing community members engaged at KCAC events and programs.

Status of other CACs in Putnam County towns

Beth outlined that status of other conservation advisory committees in Putnam County. The County no longer has an Environmental Management Committee. The towns of Philipstown and Putnam Valley also have conservation advisory committees. The Philipstown Committee mostly works with the planning board and does site visits. The committee in Putnam Valley has just completed a natural resources inventory. At one time, the town of Patterson had a conservation advisory committee, but it is no longer extant. The KCAC does not provide consultation to the Kent Town Planning Board. Given the high proportion of open space in the town (60%, with 42% of the town's acreage owned by the DEP), there is very little development. Beth showed a map of the town's open spaces, and indicated the locations of two partially-completed greenway trails that run perpendicularly across the town.

Presentation at Kent Town Board meeting, July 7

Following the release of Marty Collin's article about the butterfly count event, Beth was invited to speak about the count at the Kent Town Board meeting on July 7, 2015.

Eagle Scout project update

Eagle Scout Patrick LaFontaine has nearly completed his project. The kiosk has been installed near the parking area at the end of Whangtown Road, and he is working on the brochures. The trail to Mead Farm and Hawk Rock has been marked.

NYCDEP increased liability request for permit

After communication with the DEP about the Eagle Scout's project, the DEP has increased the liability coverage that the town must provide from \$1,000,000.00 to between \$2,500,000.00 and \$5,000,000.00. This increase has been requested by the KCAC, but the town has not yet responded. In the interim, the KCAC probably cannot work on the DEP property, and it may mean that the CAC cannot lead hikes to

Hawk Rock. Of course, as always, individuals who have DEP permits can walk to Hawk Rock on their own.

2. Outreach communication

Kent CAC Facebook page

The page is up and running. It was suggested that those who use Facebook encourage their contacts to “like” the page. Beth can set KCAC members up so they can post on the page.

Kent Nature Almanac

The June issue has been distributed. There were four new subscribers.

Website at kentcac.info and subscription lists

Since Dave Ehnebuske was absent, there was no update on the status of the webpage and the subscription lists.

3. Hikes and programs

Butterfly count event

Marty's newspaper article and a notice on the kentcac.info website promoted this event and provided the information that it would be held on Saturday, July 18, 10 AM – Noon. Participants were asked to meet at the parking lot for the Nimham Mountain State Forest area on Gypsy Trail Road. To be valid for the butterfly count that is sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association, there would have to be at least four volunteers counting butterflies over a 6-hour period, which might not occur at this time. The choice of site was challenging because there is not much true meadow habitat in the town. Before the event, Beth will double-check that the advertised site is still suitable. If necessary, the group may go to multiple sites.

4. Fire Tower Committee

Acknowledge Dave Tomkins

Bill will purchase a gift certificate for a local restaurant to thank volunteer contractor Dave Tomkins for renovation work on the fire tower cabin.

Plan fall work day

Beth reminded KCAC members of the date for the work day to prepare the grounds, remove debris, etc. It's Saturday, October 3, 10 AM – Noon. Specific plans will be made at the September meeting.

5. Kent Conservation Foundation report

This report was deferred to the KCF meeting to be held upon adjournment of the KCAC meeting.

6. Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance (ELLA)

On June 25, Beth attended the ELLA-sponsored Natural Resource Inventory training. Led by Laura Heady of the NYSDEC, under the Hudson River Estuary Program, the workshop was held at Teatown Reservation. Participants were given a helpful guide that identifies resources for mapping a variety of natural features (geography, geology, soils, etc.); specific guidelines for conducting an inventory; and samples of natural resource inventories.

7. Other

Beth reminded KCAC members that the Mount Nimham Fire Tower Celebration, scheduled for Sunday, October 11, will be in the final planning stages at the time of the September meeting, and that a press release will need to be ready for submission.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

The next meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, September 16, 2015, at the Kent Town Hall. All meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Balant-Campbell for Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary