

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent
Meeting Minutes, March 16, 2016**

Attendees

CAC members present: Marty Collins, Dave Ehnebuske, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach. CAC members absent: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Bill Volckmann. Ex-officio recording secretary: Jean Ehnebuske. Town Board Liaison: Councilman Scott Chin. Visitors: George Baum (for a few minutes).

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

1. Chairperson's report

Welcome Town Board Liaison Councilman Scott Chin

Chair Beth Herr welcomed our liaison Councilman Chin to the meeting, and asked that CAC member introduce themselves. She and Co-chair Dave Ehnebuske gave the councilman a brief overview of the mission, projects and accomplishments of the CAC, and told him about the stewardship agreements the CAC has with the NYCDEP for Mead Farm and Hawk Rock and with the NYSDEC for Mount Nimham. They invited him to join CAC hikes to these beautiful places and others, and told him about the CAC website where notices of activities can be found. Beth and Dave briefed him on one Eagle Scout project that has been completed and one that has been proposed but is currently “on hold” until the Town completes the necessary paperwork regarding an upgrade in liability insurance. Dave also told him a little about the purpose and goals of the newly-formed Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF). Beth told Councilman Chin he would always be welcome at the meetings of the CAC this year, and encouraged him to attend them.

Correspondence

The Chair reported that there was not any correspondence of note except the most recent FrOGS newsletter. She pointed out that there are a number of upcoming programs and hikes that might be of interest to CAC members. Information is available on the FrOGS website at <http://frogs-ny.org/>.

2015 annual reports to NYSDEC, NYCDEP, Town of Kent

Beth stated that she turned in these reports because she did not want to be any later in submitting them. Lacking the account of the number of volunteer hours from Bill Volckmann—who has had to be out of town for several weeks—she estimated what they were for various projects the CAC has sponsored.

NYCDEP request for liability insurance upgrade

Beth and Dave will be meeting with Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming in the next few weeks to get the paperwork handled so that Ian Troge can get started on his Eagle Scout project on the NYCDEP property at Mead Farm and Hawk Rock and so the CAC can schedule its annual hike to Hawk Rock. Without paperwork documenting an upgrade in liability insurance, Ian cannot begin his project nor can the CAC sponsor any activities there.

2. Outreach communication

Report from Communications Committee

The first meeting of this four-member committee has been indefinitely postponed until Bill V. returns from out of town.

Kent CAC Facebook page

Beth stated that she did not post too many items while she was away on vacation. She plans to post a link to the most recent issue of the Kent Nature Almanac (KNA) soon. She mentioned that she would like to post a few items of historical interest on the CAC's Facebook page as well, and will talk with someone in the Kent Historical Society about this.

Mount Nimham Fire Tower Facebook page

Since Bill V. was absent, there was no report.

Kent Nature Almanac (KNA)

Dave reported that there are two new subscribers to the KNA.

Kentcac.info

Dave also reported that there is continuing activity on the site, and that as always, visits increase when the CAC is sponsoring programs, hikes or other activities.

Subscription list

As noted above, Dave stated that there are two new subscribers to the KNA.

3. Hikes and programs

Report on “Winterfest Kent”

“Winterfest Kent: Discover Kent Town Center's Backyard,” held at the Kent Town Center on Saturday, February 20, from 1:30 – 3 PM, was a great success. Many adults and children turned out for a little nature walk in the beautiful woods behind the library and beyond. The hike was led by CAC chair Beth and CAC co-chair Dave. Helping participants learn to identify mosses was the CAC's Bill Buck. FrOGS member Judy Kelley-Moberg shared her expertise in explaining some geologic features and identifying rocks. Afterward, Kent Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming commented that she would like to see other collaborative nature-centered programs on the “town green.” She suggested starting with a “star party” to introduce attendees to the constellations, planets and stars visible in night sky above the Kent Town Center.

Announcement of Woodcock Walk

On Saturday, March 19, at 6 PM, the CAC and FrOGS are scheduled to co-host a Woodcock Walk at the Great Swamp Wildlife Management Area off Cornwall Hill Road in Patterson. Dave will post a notice on the CAC website.

4. Fire Tower Committee

Status of engineering report

Phil Tolmach gave Dave the name of Mark Day, an engineer recommended by Insite Engineering to inspect the Mount Nimham Fire Tower. This way, since it is uncertain when Bill V. will return, the CAC can move ahead to get an estimate of what the cost might be to renovate and repair the fire tower.

5. Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF)

Plan for replacing fire tower wooden landings

Dave reported that the KCF plans to replace the old wooden landings on the fire tower with new ones when the weather allows.

Plan for replacing missing or damaged nameplates on fire tower steps

KCF board members George Baum and Beth plan to make an inventory of all the nameplates on the steps and present their findings about replacing those that are missing or damaged.

Report on approach for fire tower CCC “cornerstone” preservation

Beth will be checking with experts in Westchester County regarding how best to preserve the CCC “cornerstone” at the base of the fire tower.

Plan for printing Mead Farm/Hawk Rock map

Dave reminded the CAC that he has completed the trail map for installation in the kiosk constructed by Eagle Scout Patrick LaFontaine at the end of Whangtown Road. The kiosk is located at the trail head for the Mead Farm and Hawk Rock areas. Dave has three estimates for printing the 16 x 20-inch map on metal: Adorama in NYC would charge \$74; Bay Photo would charge \$64; and the local printer, Excel, would have to charge \$125 because the job could not be done “in house.”

“The Nature of Kent”

Beth and Dave will present “The Nature of Kent,” a program introducing the CAC and the KCF organizations and highlighting the favorites as well as the little-known natural treasures residents can

enjoy inside Kent's own borders. The program is slated for 7 PM on Tuesday, April 12, in the downstairs program room at the Kent Public Library. Beth asked CAC members to attend if at all possible.

6. Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance (ELLA)

There was no news to report.

7. Clearpool Model Forest

Beth reported that Clearpool Model Forest has over 300 acres where they wish to showcase best practices in maintaining such properties.

Phil, who serves on the Kent Planning Board, reported that the board approved Beth joining the walk of the NYCDEP property where the NYCDEP intends to do some tree harvesting/thinning this year.

Councilman Chin expressed that he would also like to participate in this walk. The date and time has yet to be announced.

Clearpool will be hosting a workshop on invasive plants, but the date and time has not yet been posted.

8. Other

Marty Collins asked Beth and Dave if they would consider presenting their "Nature of Kent" program at Arts on the Lake at some future date. They responded that they would be very happy to do that. Beth remarked that she is very focused this year on finding chances for collaboration between departments and organizations within the town, and that this would present one such opportunity.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, April 20, 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