

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent  
Meeting Minutes, October 21, 2015**

**Attendees**

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

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

**1. Chair's Report**

Correspondence

Chair Beth Herr passed around a brochure she received in the mail from Senator Sue Serino. Beth pointed out that it clearly states dates for the beginning and end of each hunting season in New York. The Chair alerted CAC members to an interesting session, "Laying the Groundwork for Success," that ELLA (Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance) is hosting.

July presentations to the Rotary Club of Carmel about the CAC and KCF

In the interest of having enough time to debrief about the Fire Tower Festival, Beth tabled the presentations until the November meeting.

NYCDEP increased liability request for permit

The Chair has heard nothing as yet from Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming regarding this issue. Beth will bring it up once again.

CAC funding in 2016 Town Budget

Dave Ehnebuske reported that he had corresponded with Supervisor Fleming via e-mail, and had learned that although there is no line for the CAC in the proposed budget, the Town Board would not mind paying for essentials the CAC needed (e.g., the \$75 membership fee due each year to the state).

**2. Outreach communication**

Kent CAC Facebook page

The Chair reminded CAC members that she launched a Facebook page for the CAC and encouraged those who have accounts on Facebook to add it to their "likes." She mentioned that just recently she had posted a nice photo taken by Dod Chahroudi during the Fire Tower Festival.

Mount Nimham Facebook page

Bill Volckmann launched a new page that replaces the former page created and maintained by someone else. Bill received assurance from Facebook administrators that he has sole control of that page. Bill said that as of now, there is only one photo of the Fire Tower Festival activities posted there. He plans to post more photos that volunteer Renee Fleury will provide.

Kent Nature Almanac

Beth stated that she had linked the Kent Nature Almanac to the CAC Facebook page.

Website at [Kentcac.info](http://Kentcac.info) and subscriptions

Dave said that as usual around the time of an event or program, there was more activity on the website when information about the Fire Tower Festival appeared. Since then, activity is down somewhat. Dave also reported that he updated the information about the CAC on the new website the Town of Kent has recently unveiled. He has added past and current meeting agendas and minutes and also posted CAC meetings on the town's calendar page.

Committee suggested

Dave introduced the idea of forming a very small committee to discuss and figure out how to coordinate all the outreach efforts. Dave, Bill V., Anne Balant-Campbell and Jean Ehnebuske will serve on the committee. It's likely that the committee will need to meet only once or twice. Dave will take responsibility for setting up the meeting.

### **3. Hikes and programs**

#### Report on Volunteer Clean-up Day, October 4

Beth reported that the records show that 55 volunteer hours were logged that day, and that the volunteers drove a total of 600 miles to do the work. She acknowledged the hours and effort put in by Bill V., George Baum and Renee Fleury in particular.

### **4. Fire Tower Committee and Mount Nimham Fire Tower Festival**

The Chair noted what she felt worked and what didn't as she led CAC members through a debriefing of the festival day on October 11. She asked CAC members for their comments, too. She said she had recorded her own observations and would include those of others so the CAC would have that information when planning for another such event.

#### Comments from Beth and CAC members regarding what worked:

##### *Attendees and program*

Beth stated that it was so great to have so many young people there. She estimated the crowd at about 120 people, and Bill V. agreed that figure was about right. Many of those were people in their late teens, twenties, and early thirties. Although many had probably been drawn to the event to see their favorite bands, some obviously enjoyed seeing the fire tower for the first time and climbing to the top. The program was arranged by George. Kevin Platt, who asked the Whiskey Neat band to perform, commented that he wished there could be a festival every year. Marty suggested that in writing any follow-up story for the media, Beth might want to showcase the young bands in the title. Children came with their parents, of course. Beth and Dave both reported they were happy to have been introduced to a few potential Eagle Scouts who may help the CAC with future projects.

##### *Volunteers and contributors*

Bill V. stated that 38 volunteers helped with the festival that day, logging 164 hours of labor. Collectively, they drove a total of 515 miles in support of the event. Beth thanked CAC members who volunteered or contributed to the event—before, during and afterward. Bill V. will send Dave photos. Beth thanked Marty Collins for picking up the donuts and apples, and acknowledged Bill Buck's contribution to cover the cost. She commented that festival-goers said they were grateful for the snacks and water.

Beth also applauded Jeff Hodges for video recording the event from start to finish at no charge. Jeff plans to send Dave the recording at some point.

Bill V. expressed that he was grateful for Rix Seacord of PEARL (Putnam Emergency and Amateur Repeater League) who opened up their building to provide us with electricity, thereby eliminating the need for (a) generator/s.

Beth stated that she is working on compiling a list of individuals she wants to thank.

#### Comments from Beth and CAC members regarding what didn't work:

##### *Physical set-up of festival site; condition of road to top*

George said that the arrangement of the tables should have been a little different. The registration/sign-in table should have been the first table festival-goers saw, and the sign-in forms for the volunteers should have been placed there. Because hardly anyone came to the registration table, Kaye Baum had to take the sheets around to people sitting in the chairs under the canopy and standing in the clearing. The jar for donations as well as the informational brochures about the Kent Conservation Foundation also should have been placed on that table in plain sight.

Marty commented on the miserable condition of the road. Even though gravel was put down by the county in July, later rain storms took their toll in washing it out. A brief discussion ensued about how to approach this issue with the county.

##### *Missed opportunities; absent invitees*

Beth said she regretted she didn't publicly acknowledge the efforts of those who came before us who took the initiative ten years ago to get repairs and renovations done to maintain the fire tower.

Beth said she wished she had been able to find time to create t-shirts featuring Mount Nimham in time for the festival. There was a brief discussion about how to proceed with this.

A few CAC members commented that it was disappointing not to have many elected officials attend, but that they were happy to see Town Clerk Lana Cappelli and Councilwoman Penny Osborn at the event. (Penny is a member of the Nimham Mountain Singers.)

Other comments:

Beth showed CAC members the notebook she created with information she had researched from the archives. It was on display at the festival. Anne suggested creating a digital version.

Dave reported that although there was no media coverage, he hadn't received one "bounce back" from the media contacts list he had received from Beth.

**5. Report from Kent Conservation Foundation (KCF)**

President Dave Ehnebuske reported briefly on checks received for memberships and donations, and stressed that the KCF needs to become more active in recruiting members. Anne suggested it might be helpful to find the contacts list from the renovation project ten years ago and mail membership brochures to those individuals. She also said the KCF might want to consider creating a website to promote the organization and provide information and a Go Fund Me site to help fund projects. Dave asked what projects, besides the fire tower renovations, the CAC wanted the KCF to support. Bill V. commented that there are maintenance issues that need attention at the Mead Farm and stone chambers there.

**6. ELLA (Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance)**

Please see notes under Chair's Report, above.

**7. Clearpool Model Forest**

Beth gave a report about the September 28 meeting of Clearpool's advisory committee. She passed around a 2013 report from the NYCDEP that she received at the meeting. She said the report, entitled "Wetlands Inventory for Clearpool Model Forest," might be helpful to the CAC in compiling its own natural resource inventory.

She also stated that Clearpool will be hosting an educational forum on Saturday, February 27, 2016, for homeowners and contractors.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.

**The next meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, November 18, at the Kent Town Hall.** All meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,  
ex-officio recording secretary