

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,  
Meeting Notes\*, June 19, 2013**

**Attendees**

Committee members: Marty Collins, Dave Ehnebuske, Phil Tolmach. Visitors: George Baum, Jean Ehnebuske, Bill Volckmann.

\*The meeting began at 7:10 PM. There was not a quorum, but those present informally discussed topics on the agenda.

Note: Chairperson Beth Herr was absent, so Co-chair Dave Ehnebuske presented her report and conducted the meeting.

**1. Chair's report**

Status of CAC vacant seat

Bill Volckmann reported that he had applied for the vacant seat with the Kent Town Board.

Correspondence

Dave reported that he had no correspondence to share.

George Baum said he received a letter from the DEC. He pointed out that since Beth Herr is the current Chair, it should have been sent to her, and that the DEC's Barbara Lucas-Wilson should be made aware of this. The letter stated that what has been formerly called the DEC's "The Adopt-a-Natural Resource Program" will be changing its name to "The Volunteer Stewardship Program." This means the CAC will be required to complete and submit a form. Dave will take care of it.

George added that he thinks Barbara Lucas-Wilson should be given the names of volunteers working at the Mount Nimham Fire Tower so they are covered for liability.

Conference on the Environment

Dave passed around information about the conference. It will convene in Buffalo from October 3 – 5.

Grand reopening of the Mount Beacon Fire Tower

Dave announced that the grand reopening ceremony will begin at 2 PM on Saturday, June 22 at the base of the fire tower. For those who cannot or do not want to walk to the summit (a hike of approximately an hour and a half), transportation will be available beginning at 1 PM. He passed around information with more details.

Discussion ensued about the possibility of CAC members meeting with those in Beacon who were instrumental in getting their fire tower restored. George suggested that they could be invited to present a public program in Kent about their successful project. He also suggested arranging mirror communications between the Mount Beacon and Mount Nimham fire towers as a special event.

September meeting of Mount Nimham stakeholders/user groups

Dave reported that Beth learned that Adam Stiebling, Putnam County Commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services, plans to convene a meeting in September for representatives of the various Mount Nimham user groups: the CAC, DEC, Putnam Riders (mountain biking club), amateur radio club.

**2. Kentcac.info**

Dave reported that after the recent activity at Mount Nimham, there was a spike in traffic on the website. The "hikes" list is still one of the most popular, with 139 current subscribers. There are 105 people who receive the Kent Nature Almanac; 103 receive notices of CAC programs; and 52 receive CAC agendas and minutes.

### **3. Kent Nature Almanac**

Currently on the website at <http://www.kentcac.info/almanac/> are nature observations for the months of April and May. Dave reported that Beth would like to encourage more individuals to submit their own observations.

### **4. Hikes and trails**

Dave reported that the mountain laurel hike at Wonder Lake State Park on Sunday, June 9, was really nice. Beth Herr led the hike. Even though the group was small, all the hikers—and three dogs—enjoyed the beautiful scenery, lovely day and spectacular views of the mountain laurel along the lake's eastern edge.

### **5. Mount Nimham Fire Tower Committee**

#### Mural celebration

Dave noted that the event on Wednesday, June 12, was very successful. After the four murals—one for each season—were unveiled, four students described what each mural depicted. Attending the celebration were the Go Green Club middle school students; some of their parents and/or grandparents; the club sponsors, Amanda O'Shaughnessy and Jayne Chiappone; some current and former CAC members; Putnam County Legislator Carl Albano; and a representative from Assemblywoman Sandy Galef's office. The representative read a citation from the Assemblywoman congratulating the students on their achievement and their contribution to the fire tower history.

Dave reported that there was excellent coverage by *The Journal News* in both their print and online editions. Marty Collins added that there was an article about the celebration on the Putnam County website as well.

#### Recognition of students by Kent Town Board

On Tuesday, June 25, at 7 PM, the students will present and explain their murals at a Kent Town Board meeting. Bill Volckmann will introduce the Go Green Club and their sponsors. Supervisor Kathy Doherty will acknowledge the students by presenting each with a certificate of recognition. Marty said she would try to get the word out to the media about this event.

#### Braces

Bill reported that he has not heard anything from Greg at Brewster Iron Works regarding the braces. He plans to follow up by calling him or swinging by his shop. Dave offered to help.

#### Floor repair

Bill said he had an e-mail from Anne Balant-Campbell giving him the name of the contractor, Bob McCarthy, who has done work for her. Bill plans to contact him.

Discussion ensued about the importance of getting new flooring installed soon. Although one contractor has already given a quote (see May minutes), CAC members agreed that it is necessary to get another estimate from a different contractor as well. Although the CAC normally does not meet in July and August, it is likely that there will have to be a called meeting to decide on next steps.

Bill reported that the exterior of the fire tower cabin has been spray-painted with graffiti within the past week. He plans to paint over it. He also said he would post signs about the maximum capacity for the fire tower before July 4.

#### Fire tower restoration 5-year plan

Dave again requested feedback on the 5-year plan he posted on google docs many weeks ago. He stressed that if the CAC is to move forward with fundraising in order to repaint/renovate the fire tower, it is critical to put a plan in place first. For example, in order to determine how much money the CAC will really need to raise, the first step will be to ask someone knowledgeable to assess the scope of the work. Dave said he would resend the document. He hopes CAC members will respond.

**6. ELLA** (Hudson Hills and Highlands Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance)

Phil Tolmach reported that ELLA's program on June 15 was very worthwhile. It featured presentations by Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, and Carolyn Summers, author of *Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East*. Bill offered to lend his copy of Doug Tallamy's book to CAC members.

**7. Other**

Dave announced that the next scheduled meeting of the CAC will be on September 18. No other topics were introduced.

The meeting was over at 8:15 PM.

**The next scheduled meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, September 18, at the Kent Town Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,  
ex-officio recording secretary