

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,
Meeting Minutes, January 18, 2012**

Attendees

Committee members: George Baum, Dave Ehnebuske, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach. Town Board Liaisons: Penny Ann Osborn, Lou Tartaro. Visitors: J. C. Chastang, Marty Collins, Jean Ehnebuske, Arthur Singer.

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM.

1. Chairperson's Report

Honoring Retired Chair George Baum

Before just-retired Chair George Baum arrived, new Chair Beth Herr spoke about the CAC's desire to honor George and express appreciation for his leadership over the past twelve years. At that point, Councilwoman Osborn showed CAC members a plaque for George from the Kent Town Board. As George entered the room a few minutes later, he was presented with the plaque. Beth expressed the CAC's sentiments, and George replied, "It's been a pleasure working with you all." He spoke of his appreciation for the people at the meeting and people in the community that he's known for such a long time. George will continue to serve on the CAC as a member.

CAC organizational information

The Kent Town Board appointed Beth Herr as CAC Chair and Dave Ehnebuske as Vice-Chair for 2012. Jean Ehnebuske will continue as ex-officio recording secretary.

Opening on Kent CAC

The vacancy on the Kent CAC has been publicized. Marty Collins said she is applying for the position.

2. Public Viewing of Energy Film

The Chair asked George to report on the public viewing of the PBS film, *Earth: The Operator's Manual*. George reported that the film was shown at 2 PM on Sunday, December 4, at the Lake Carmel Community Center. There were a number of people who attended besides CAC members. The issue the film presented—dealing with rising energy needs in times of diminishing energy resources—made for an interesting discussion afterward.

3. Hikes and Trails

New Year's Day hike

The Chair reported that 47 hikers showed up for the New Year's Day hike at the Fred Dill Wildlife Sanctuary. Although parking was very challenging, it was good to have so many people—adults and children alike. The Chair said it was difficult to determine what brought so many people out—the warm weather, the nearby location, interest in this particular park, etc. Dave suggested we report on our hikes on the KentCAC.info website after each one and include photos as well. Marty Collins remarked that the local papers would like that kind of follow-up, and offered to get info to them once it is sent to her.

Vernal pool inventory

The Chair and George arranged for the CAC to sponsor a survey of a vernal pool at the Clearpool Education Center. It is scheduled for Sunday, March 25, weather permitting.

Scheduling future hikes

After a little discussion, it was determined that the traditional hike to Hawk Rock will be on Sunday, May 6, at 11 AM. Councilman Tartaro asked if there will be any pre-hike publicity. Dave responded that in addition to posting information on the CAC's website, publicity also appears in the online "Schoolhouse News" that the Carmel schools produce and in Christine Torino's online "Local Putnam"

guide. Councilman Tartaro suggested that in order to avoid any scheduling conflicts with other organizations, the CAC determine and publish the dates for all 2012 hikes soon.

4. Nature Almanac

The Chair reported on the launch of the Nature Almanac—a community diary of natural observations—on January 2. Dave reported that 84 individuals—who are already subscribers to the programs information—received the first issue. Anyone who is interested may subscribe at <http://www.kentcac.info/lists/?p=subscribe>. The Chair said the Nature Almanac could work as a useful tool for communicating about conservation. Marty asked if the CAC wants wider public participation, and if so, she offered to write a press release for the local newspapers. The Chair welcomed this idea.

5. KentCAC.info Website

Website statistics

Dave reported that the CAC website gets new visitors as well as old ones every day. In the last month, there have been 150 visits. The number of visits tend to peak before hikes. There are 42 individuals who have signed up to receive info on the CAC agendas/minutes; 117 subscribers to the hikes information; and 84 subscribers for the non-hikes/programs information.

Changing the Town of Kent's disclaimer

Dave said he would like to get the disclaimer that appears on the Town's website changed. This disclaimer or “warning” appears when someone prepares to leave the Town's website to visit the KentCAC.info website. Since the warning does not show up in any other cases when individuals wish to visit a non-Town website, it would appear that the CAC is being singled out. Councilman Tartaro suggested that Dave meet with Tim Curtiss to discuss this.

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

The Chair commented that she plans to attend a full-day ELLA-sponsored workshop, “Water Words That Work,” on Saturday, January 21.

7. Mt. Nimham Fire Tower Committee

George plans to continue stewardship and maintenance on the Mt. Nimham Fire Tower. He will get others to help him, and let the Chair know their names and contact information. An immediate concern is that the fence along the side of the stairs needs to be replaced. George has received one estimate so far, but that estimate of \$6,000 was for nothing more than providing advice and materials. It was pointed out that the Town gives the CAC \$700/year. The Chair mentioned that fundraising ideas should be on our agenda soon.

8. Other

Acknowledgment of visitors

The Chair invited a first-time visitor, J. C. Chastang, to introduce himself. He is a regular hiker, and lives in Mahopac.

Local CACs and county EMCs (Environmental Management Councils)

The Chair expressed interest in learning how many towns/villages in Putnam County have CACs. Lou stated that Carmel has one, and that it is charged with many more responsibilities than Kent's, e.g., site inspections. Beth understands that Putnam Valley has one as well. She will try to confirm this. Regarding Putnam County reinstating an EMC, Councilman Tartaro offered to check with Putnam County Legislator Rich Othmer.

Inquiry from Girl Scouts

The Chair reported that she had been contacted by a Girl Scout leader. The girls in her group are working towards earning the Gold Award. They might like to establish a kiosk at the end of

Whangtown Road. The Chair suggested that the CAC could come up with a list of projects for them. George suggested that erosion control on Washington Road might be such a project.

Collaborating with Clearpool Education Center

The Chair stated that she and George, who are members of the steering committee for the Clearpool Model Forest Project, had talked with people at Clearpool about the possibility of collaborating on programs as part of the CAC's Natural Resources Inventory. The CAC might also like to work with Clearpool on planning and carrying out a celebration for "Earth Day" in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

The next scheduled meeting of the CAC will be Wednesday, February 15, 2012, at 7 PM at the Kent Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary