

Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent
Meeting Minutes, March 18, 2015

Attendees

CAC members present: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Dave Ehnebuske, Marty Collins, Beth Herr, Phil Tolmach, Bill Volckmann. Absent: None. Visitors: George Baum, Eli Campbell, Jean Ehnebuske, Emma Link, Heidi Link, Michael Tierney.

Chairperson Beth Herr called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. She asked the visitors to please introduce themselves with a few words and that CAC members do the same.

1. Chairperson's report

Meeting with Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming

The Chair stated that she met with Town Supervisor Maureen Fleming to discuss a variety of issues.

Go Green Club murals

She thanked the Supervisor for supporting the continuing display of the Go Green Club murals just inside the entryway of the Town Hall.

CAC's photo competition

She said the two of them also discussed exhibiting photos from the CAC's photo competition on the walls in that area, as well as replacing the photos in the small meeting room where the CAC generally holds its meetings. The Supervisor liked those ideas. Beth reported that she also urged her to get on the agenda for an upcoming Town Board meeting to promote the photo competition to a wider audience. Marty Collins commented that Beth might want to make a presentation about the photo competition at the Kent-Carmel Chamber of Commerce meeting. Jean Ehnebuske suggested that Rotary might be another place to promote the photo competition.

Eagle Scout project

The Chair stated she described Patrick LaFontaine's Eagle Scout project and asked the Supervisor if she would write a letter of support for Patrick. In the time between their meeting and now, the Supervisor wrote the letter. She also took care of having the certificate of liability required by the NYC EP—New York City Environmental Protection—formerly known as the NYC DEP—sent to Lori DiLorenzo at the NYC EP.

Beth reported that she also showed Supervisor Fleming the trail marker Patrick designed. It is round and has the image of a hawk's head on a red-maroon background with the letters NYC EP on it.

Plastic bag initiative

The Chair presented the idea of Kent initiating a plastic bag ban. The Supervisor responded that she felt she could not endorse it because there are no big grocery stores in Kent and a bag ban would really hurt the small retail businesses.

Other items

Beth reported that she told the Supervisor about the CAC's recent hikes and also about the formation of the Kent Conservation Foundation.

Correspondence

Invasive species forum at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

Beth announced a forum, "[Invasive Species in the Hudson Valley](#)," that will be held on Saturday, March 21, 9AM – noon, at the Cary Institute in Millbrook. Bill Volckmann said he plans to attend.

Invasive species in New York

The Chair passed around [a list](#) she received from the DEC of prohibited and regulated invasive species in the state of New York.

Clearpool Model Forest

The Chair said that now that Clearpool is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays, it has published

rules for visitors. The rules are not online, but Beth passed around the document with the rules that visitors receive when they sign in.

"Let's Solarize Bedford-Mt. Kisco" campaign

Beth mentioned that the town of Bedford is encouraging the installation of solar panels by residents and businesses. Click [here](#) for more information.

Eagle Hill Institute summer seminars

Beth passed around a brochure with information about summer courses in the Sciences, Arts, Culture and Human History at the [Eagle Hill Institute in Maine](#). She mentioned that Bill Buck will be the instructor for a session titled, "Independent Study of Moss Identification." The list of science seminars is [here](#) and the list for art seminars is [here](#).

Massachusetts Wildlife Magazine

The Chair brought the most recent copy of this magazine to pass around because it features an article about bobcats. She said it is a fine publication that is published four times a year. Subscriptions are only \$6 per year. For more information, click [here](#).

2. Websites

[Kentcac.info](#)

Dave Ehnebuske reported that there were 133 distinct visitors in the past month and that they visited 199 times. He also stated that new people continue to sign up for Kent Nature Almanac subscriptions.

Town of Kent website

Dave remarked that the town's improved website looks like it's getting ready to "go live" fairly soon.

3. Kent Nature Almanac

Dave reported that he received an e-mail from a regular Kent Nature Almanac reader, George Whipple. George intends to issue a quarterly publication, *Journal of Putnam County History*, and he wrote to Dave to find out if he can receive permission to republish the Kent Nature Almanac in his journal. After discussion, CAC members agreed that it would probably be wise for Dave to run the question by the town attorney.

4. Hikes and programs

April program at Clearpool

The Chair reminded CAC members that there would be an Amphibian Hunt at Clearpool on Sunday, April 12, from 1 – 3 PM. The Chair said that she will be orchestrating and leading the program.

Showing of the film "Bag It"

Marty Collins reported that she had checked with Kent Library Director Carol Donick and received permission for the CAC to show the film in the library's new program room. Jean mentioned that there are six copies of the film available through the Mid-Hudson Library System. George Baum, having already seen the film, suggested showing the shorter version. There was discussion about possible dates to show the film, and consensus that Saturday, April 25 would be best day. Marty said she would check with Carol Donick to see if that date would work.

Anne Balant-Campbell remarked that since she was aware Assemblywoman Sandy Galef supports a plastic bag ban, she contacted her office to find out where things are regarding a state initiative. The staff person Anne talked to said that approaching the county would probably be best since passing legislation at the state level is still several years off.

Fire Tower Celebration and Fall Foliage Hike

Date of event

At the February CAC meeting, a decision was made to hold the CAC-sponsored Fire Tower Celebration on Sunday, September 27, rather than on the date first chosen, Sunday, October 11. It was decided then that changing the date would allow the CAC to avoid having to ask the DEC to close the

mountain to hunters on that day. George reported that he talked to Gil Tarbox, and unfortunately the Nimham Mountain Singers have a prior engagement on Sunday, September 27. After much discussion, CAC members decided to go with the original date, Sunday, October 11. George will check with Gil to see if his group has this date open. Changing the date back to October will mean that Bill V will have to ask the DEC's Jeff Wiegert to shut down the mountain for hunting that day.

Committees

George remarked that in addition to an overall planning committee, he will need the help of three other committees to ensure a successful event: 1) a program committee; 2) a site work committee; and 3) a staff work committee. He said that at the moment, the overall planning committee consists of only two people, himself and Bill V. Beth volunteered to be the third member of that committee.

Program

George suggested that both Beth and Dave make presentations that day—Beth talking about the CAC and its activities, and Dave telling attendees about the new Kent Conservation Foundation. Both said they would be happy to participate.

Music

In addition to the Mount Nimham Singers, George said he would like to involve other musical groups. He reported that he had talked to Ed Durkee, interim director for Arts on the Lake (AotL), and that Ed recommended that George contact Kevin Platt, the producer for the AotL summer music program. Two of our visitors, Eli Campbell and Michael Tierney, commented that they know Kevin, and that they would be happy to help with plans for the musical entertainment when their college schedules allowed.

Youth group participation

George said he would like to reach out to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, White Pond Sprouts, Go Green Club, and other youth groups to invite their participation. (The Go Green Club is the environmental group at George Fischer Middle School that painted the murals for the fire tower under the supervision of their sponsor, Amanda O'Shaughnessy, now Amanda Lynne.) He hopes that one of those groups might act as the color guard for the presentation of the colors while the drummers from the Mount Nimham Singers are playing.

Food

George explained that water would be provided for sure. He said the DEC does not allow sales on their property but that we can accept donations for any food items we offer, for the event or for KCF.

Shuttles

Jean asked George if shuttles to and from the fire tower would be provided for those who didn't want to walk/couldn't walk to and from the event. George said that would be taken care of.

"Make a Difference Day"

The Chair remarked that she had looked over the materials for participating in this national celebration, and concluded that the CAC could probably host its own volunteer event more effectively.

5. Fire Tower Committee

Floor replacement

Date/s for installation

Bill V reported that he met with David Tomkins at the fire tower to go over the floor replacement plans. David has committed to do the work during the week of April 20, and believes he can complete it in one day. He plans to use high-quality pressure-treated lumber. Bill said that although it would be tempting to use the very strong and very durable ipe flooring (Brazilian Walnut), it is too expensive.

Volunteer help

Bill stated that the plans include recruiting four or five volunteers—one or two to help on top, and two or three on the ground to do whatever needs to be done to assist those at the top. Those on the ground would also be responsible for keeping hikers well away from the tower. Bill added that if it turns out that the installation will take more than one day to complete, it will be necessary to cordon off the site

with plastic orange fencing.

Equipment for volunteers

Bill asked CAC members if they had any harnesses or hard hats they could loan for the project. George and Phil said they each have two hard hats, and David Tomkins has two as well. Anne said she might have a harness, and that she will get back to Bill to let him know for sure.

Paperwork

Bill reported that he has a TRP ready to submit to Jeff Wiegert. He also said that David Tomkins will provide a certificate of liability with the DEC and the Kent Conservation Foundation as the named insured.

6. Kent Conservation Foundation

To acquaint the visitors with the newly organized not-for-profit, and to bring CAC members up to date, Dave Ehnebuske, president, explained that the KCF was founded to fund CAC projects the Town is unable to do/cannot do with town tax dollars. He said that the first project the CAC had identified was work on the fire tower. He added that the KCF would be meeting immediately following the adjournment of the CAC meeting.

7. Plastic bag ban

Letter to the Editor, Putnam County Times

The Chair passed around the letter she submitted to the *Putnam County Times* regarding a plastic bag ban.

Meeting of legislative committee

Beth mentioned that Putnam County's Health, Social, Educational and Environmental Legislative Committee would be meeting at 6:30 PM on Thursday, March 19, to discuss the issue of banning plastic bags. Marty added that it would be held in Room 318 in the county courthouse. Beth encouraged CAC members to attend if possible.

8. Other

Photos

The Chair reminded CAC members to send her a “selfie” or other photo for her CAC display at the Kent Recycling Center. She feels that the CAC can gain a higher profile in the community if people who use the recycling center see that the committee is composed of residents just like them.

Comments from visitors

Beth asked the visitors if they would like to make any comments about the meeting. Eli Campbell spoke up first and volunteered himself and Michael Tierney to lead hikes to Mead Farm and Hawk Rock on a regular basis this coming summer. Eli said he is knowledgeable about birds and mammals in that woods and that Michael is knowledgeable about plants. Beth welcomed their help, and CAC members expressed their gratitude as well. The visitors also commented on how disturbing it is to see graffiti and trash at the fire tower and on Mount Nimham grounds in general. They suggested that Carmel High School students might be interested in participating in a “Work Day” at the fire tower to remedy some of the most visible problems. This would offer the students an opportunity to earn community service hours. Emma Link commented that she was still reflecting on the meeting, and she was glad she had attended.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

The next meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, April 15, at the Kent Town Hall. All meetings of the Kent CAC are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ehnebuske,
ex-officio recording secretary