

## Town of Kent Conservation Advisory Committee

Public Meeting Minutes  
January 20, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Attendees: Bill Volckmann, Chair, Bill Buck, Anne B. Campbell, Pamela Wadler  
Town Board liaison: Chris Ruthven Guest: Liz Baird

Meeting called to order 7:07 PM

The minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2020 were approved.

### Chair's Report

Expanded Polystyrene Foam Container and Loose Fill Packaging Ban

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/120762.html>

- Passed as part of NYS FY21 budget negotiations, planned to take effect January 01, 2022
- Bans EPS foam containers used in grocery stores, restaurants, as well as EPS loose fill packaging, known as "peanuts."

Discussed potential impact on the program for re-use of EPS loose fill packaging at the Kent Recycling Center (KRC) – likely minimal as the community will change over to biodegradable materials.

Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling legislation

- Passed by NYS in 2020, will take effect January 1, 2022
- Large education and planning effort initiated for 2021 to help restaurants, food service companies and municipalities and haulers to prepare for food waste recycling

Online conference held on January 20, 2021. PowerPoint and video of conference will be made available shortly.

NYS DEC web site on Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling legislation:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/114499.html>

NYS DEC web site on organics management for businesses:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/96166.html>

Possible solutions for the Town:

1. Hire a composting service. A company in CT had made a proposal to the KRC but there would be a fee and additional volunteer time would be needed to manage the program, which is not feasible during covid.

2. Purchase a large-scale composter/ Bill V. cited an example of a low-cost composter being used in a community in the Adirondacks, serving about 300-400 people at a cost of about \$15,000, as opposed to about \$100,000 for a commercial model. This could be an option for the KRC, but the concern about adequate staffing remains.

#### Trees for Tribs

- Program offering free trees and shrubs for replanting of stream-side forests for eligible landowners in the Croton Watershed
- Bruce Barber, Town of Kent Environmental Planner, will be meeting with East of Hudson Watershed Forester on January 25, 2021 to conduct site inspections for possible tree plantings
- Lake community and/or other sites which may benefit from tree plantings should contact the CAC and/or Bruce Barber to be added to the site review list.
- <https://www.nycwatershed.org/forestry/implementation/trees-for-tribs/>

Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) has announced that they are accepting grant applications for 2021 for management and outreach activities related to invasive species in the Lower Hudson Valley region. Applications are due by Feb. 22, 2021 <https://www.lhprism.org/apply-projects-or-funding>

PRISM will be returning to work on the eradication of invasive water chestnuts at the Putnam County Park in 2021. There is no need to re-apply for support for this. They removed over 20,000 water chestnuts in 2019 and about 7,000 in 2020. It may take several more years to effect complete removal, so long as no new sources are introduced.

Discussed source of the water chestnuts. They have not been observed in any other bodies of water in the town. As part of the County Fire Training program, water is pumped from the Hudson River and discharged into the lake at the park. The town fire departments engage in similar activity at local lakes but do not take in water from the Hudson River. Discussed working with DEC and State Legislature Rep. Sandy Galef to try to have legislation enacted to prevent pumping and discharge activities that may spread invasive aquatic species. Bill V. will look at correspondence on file from DEC about this issue and model legislation from another state. The next steps would be to speak with representatives at DEC that deal with controlling aquatic invasives and to provide suggested wording and background information to Rep. Galef. Anne will search for research literature on this issue.

#### Scenic Hudson Virtual Conference – Using Scenic Hudson’s Solar Mapping tool

- Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 5:30PM
- Registration link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join-link>

Discussed whether solar farms are a permitted use in the Kent zoning law, and whether homeowners need to obtain permits to put solar installations on their property.

NYS DEC Land Use 101 webinar series <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html#Training>  
NRI planning meeting next week

#### Kent Lakes Association

Meetings to be generally held virtually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7PM using Zoom. Link to be posted before each meeting. Next meeting is scheduled for Thurs., January 21, 2021 at 7PM.

#### **Climate Smart Communities (CSC)**

Work is proceeding on the website.

#### **Kent Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)**

Putnam County Soil & Conservation District will be sending a request for proposal and application form in March. The KCAC will submit a proposal seeking funding for the NRI based on the estimate of \$40,000 obtained from Hudsonia.

Kent Biodiversity Inventory project: Work on cataloguing species is continuing. A volunteer has offered to help catalogue insects. This person's expertise is helpful due to the sheer numbers of different species. For example, NYS has over 300 species for crane flies. DNA sequencing is being done on a unique fungus discovered at the Boyd's Corners reservoir.

Discussed grant funding opportunities:

<https://www.efc.ny.gov/GreenGrants>

This program might be used to fund stormwater programs for the town, but the deadline is quite near. Chris will discuss with the town's environmental consultant Bruce Barber and with Supervisor Fleming. Bill V. will bring it up at the Kent Lakes Assoc meeting. Another possibility might be to seek funding for a more energy efficient back-up boiler for Town Hall if the new model will meet the grant's criterion for improvement in energy efficiency.

Discussed the long-range plan to add electric vehicles to the town's fleet and install EV charging stations at the Town Center complex. The KCAC will ask the town's grant-writing firm to look for funding opportunities for this.

#### **Other CAC projects**

- Highlands Trail / North Putnam Greenway trail project with NYNJ Trail Conference – no updates

#### **Development Projects in Town of Kent**

- No updates per Phil Tolmach

- Discussed the proposed amendments to the town code regarding soil removal permits.

### **Hikes and events**

Discussed possibilities for self-guided or socially-distanced hikes. The Town Recreation Department has a protocol for events with group size limitations and pre-registration. They have had successful hikes, including hikes on the new trail system at Huestis Park. The KCAC might work with Kent Rec to offer a hike to Hawk Rock in the spring and/or other events.

### **Social Media Outreach Report**

Anne has been posting information from DEC and other sources as time permits on the KCAC Facebook page. The Nimham Fire Tower page is active with comments from hikers.

### **Kent Conservation Foundation Report**

Kent Conservation and Kent CAC are always building and maintaining a list of volunteers who are interested in working on the Nimham fire tower and related stewardship activities

Updates on Nimham Mountain fire tower stewardship

- NYS DEC Forest Preserve Fire Tower Stewardship funding opportunity
  - Funding available for maintenance and projects related to fire towers
  - Funding available for stewardship project staffing expenses
  - Applications due by February 12, 2021
- Nimham fire tower will require another painting when the weather warms up, date TBD
- Trash pick-up is needed, TBD
- KCF and CAC will establish a plan to clear brush around the corbelled stone chamber on Nimham mountain in Spring 2021

Meeting adjourned 8:55 PM

The next meeting will be February 17, 2021 at 7:00PM via WebEx