

**Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, Town of Kent,  
Meeting Minutes, November 28, 2012**

**Attendees**

Committee members: Anne Balant-Campbell, Bill Buck, Marty Collins, Beth Herr. Town Board Liaison: Lou Tartaro. Visitors: Ilene Thompson, Bill Volckmann.

Chairperson Beth Herr called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

**1. Chairperson's Report**

Correspondence

*From George Baum*

George states that with Beth Herr and David Ehnebuske as new leadership of the Kent CAC, and with Bill Volckmann to care for the Mt. Nimham fire tower, he wishes to release himself of further responsibilities to the Kent CAC. George will continue to participate as a member of the public with CAC activities and will convey knowledge of the Mt. Nimham fire tower history. The CAC Chair states she will accept George's resignation. The open position on the Kent CAC will be presented at next Kent town board meeting by Councilman Lou Tartaro and advertised accordingly.

*Letter to Supervisor Doherty*

Chair Beth Herr inquired if residual funds for the Kent CAC could be carried over year-to-year to accumulate for future Mt. Nimham fire tower maintenance and repair, which could be costly. Town attorney Tim Curtiss stated that public funds cannot be used for a quasi-private project such as the Mt. Nimham fire tower. Lou Tartaro explained that CAC funds may be used for CAC-related activities, such as educational programs and outreach, pamphlets, flyers, possibly for travel for CAC-related meetings with proper justification to the town board, etc. But the Mt. Nimham fire tower committee and project are considered semi-private.

**2. Mt. Nimham Fire Tower Committee**

Funds and funding

Discussion ensued around funding, and agreement was that independent fund raising will need to be on the horizon. Bill Buck suggested hosting a fund-raising bake sale, selling t-shirts, soliciting donations, etc., with an event held in early spring (Mar – Apr time frame) when the newly painted mural panels are to be installed. Lou Tartaro suggested a raffle which might attract donors who may not want to or be able to hike to the tower, but who wish to participate in the fire tower restoration and maintenance. The Mt. Nimham fire tower committee originated as a “Plan Kent” project, and Sal Tripi maintains an account with some funds left over from previous fund raising for the fire tower. Bill Volckmann will contact Sal Tripi for information.

Discussion ensued about previous Mt. Nimham events to attract people to the fire tower for fund raising and education and about reviving these event. These could be combined with different aspects and events to attract different crowds, not necessarily just hikers. Shuttling people from lower DEC lot to the mountain would be necessary due to insufficient parking in the Mt. Nimham Court lot.

The suggestion was made to look for possible state funds or federal funds or grants for fire tower restoration and maintenance. Considering the tower is on DEC (state) property and was originally funded by a federal program, perhaps there is funding available for fire towers. Another possibility is to look for funds as part of the NYS Historical Preservation funds. The name of Bill Starr was suggested as a contact. He is the State Director of the Forest Fire Lookout Association.

Other Fire Tower/Lookout groups

It was also suggested to invite the fire tower restoration fund group to a CAC meeting to trade ideas.

#### Fire Tower murals

Mural artwork for the fire tower is coming along at the middle school.

#### Staircase brace work

Neither George Baum nor Bill Volckmann have heard from Brewster Iron Works. Followup is needed to find out if Brewster Iron Works can produce bracing and to obtain estimate of work.

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

Nothing new to report.

### **4. Kent Town Board**

No news to report to CAC.

### **5. DEC**

The CAC has a 5-year stewardship agreement with NYS DEC which is due for renewal. Chair Beth Herr will arrange a meeting with DEC contact to review and renew contract.

### **6. Meeting with Putnam County Executive**

Councilman Lou Tartaro met with the Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell recently. Putnam County has a push for attracting tourism into the county. Lou feels the CAC can work with the Putnam County Tourism Office to utilize the Mt. Nimham fire tower as a tourist attraction. Putnam County may have funds available for fire tower work which may not be available through the town funds, or possibly have inroads into NYS or Federal funds or grants available for fire tower restoration and maintenance.

### **7. Hikes, trails, other nature events**

#### Post-Thanksgiving Day hike

There was discussion that due to scheduling, the CAC missed hosting the annual “walk off the turkey” hike on the day after Thanksgiving.

#### Annual New Year's Day hike

The CAC would like to continue the annual New Year's Day hike. Discussion ensued around possible hikes for this date. The 2012 New Year's Day hike was well received and attracted around 70 people, resulting in insufficient parking at the hike location (Fred Dill Wildlife Sanctuary). There was discussion around finding a location which has a larger parking lot and/or shuttling people to the hike start/end point.

The 2013 New Year's Day hike (the 5<sup>th</sup> annual hike) will be around White Pond at 1 PM. Chair Beth Herr will write a press release and advertise the hike. White Pond has a nice-size parking lot and some parking alongside White Pond Road as well.

#### Trails in Kent

There was discussion of established trails in the Town of Kent and how this may be incorporated into plans of the Putnam County Tourism Office. Kent has the Tom Morgan Trail at the end of Whangtown Road. Discussion ensued about tying in a meal or other event after hikes to extend the event and provide a further attraction for tourists.

### **8. Clearpool Model Forest Hike**

The hike had to be rescheduled due to the hurricane. A new date is to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

**The next meeting of the Kent CAC will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, January 16, at the Kent Town Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Volckmann for Jean Ehnebuske,  
ex-officio recording secretary