

Town of Kent Conservation Advisory Committee

Public Meeting

Minutes

April 15, 2020 at 7 PM

NOTE: This public meeting was held by video conference due to the standing Emergency Order in NYS and Putnam County mandating all in-person meetings and gatherings be cancelled, postponed or otherwise held by video or conference call to help prevent the spread of the 2019-COVID virus

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of March 18, 2020 were approved

Chair's Report

- Bill V. attended the Update on Natural Heritage Important Areas webinar (part of the NYS DEC Conservation and land use 101 webinar series) which provided useful information and databases.
 - Useful URLs
 - <https://www.nynhp.org/important-areas>
 - <https://nynhp.org/data> - topic of the webinar
 - <https://www.scenichudson.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Hudson-Valley-Conservation-Strategy.pdf>
 - <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/112137.html>
 - <https://www.dec.ny.gov/eafmapper/>
 - this last one is what they use for managing regulatory operations
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- Kent Lakes Association
 - Meeting scheduled for April 25, 2020 will be cancelled due to continued restrictions on meetings. No new meetings are being scheduled for now.
 - Meeting of Putnam County CACs scheduled for May is being organized by Michelle Smith of Hudson Highlands Trust.

KCAC Projects

Climate Smart Initiative (CSI)

- Anne will finish typing up "How Green is my Town" survey and draft press release seeking participants
- Anne will contact DEC to inquire about grant funding possibilities for 2020/2021.

Kent Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)

- Bill Buck will schedule a meeting Hudsonia to discuss NRI process and resources. The KCAC needs to establish the scope of our planned NRI so a cost estimate can be developed.
- Kent Biodiversity Inventory – NRI sub-committee project
 - Bill B. reported on biodiversity project. He is planning socially distanced field work with former KCAC Chair Beth Herr. They plan to ask local landowners for access to Dean Pond. The area has some plant species that are typical of more northern regions, so the fish may be atypical as well
 - Bill B. will follow up with Chris Ruthven about the person who is writing a book on Putnam fish.
 - Bill V. will check into insurance issues and provide names of the neighbors to approach for permission.

Other CAC projects

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

Town Development Projects

- Update from Town of Kent Planning board - not meeting
- Mining land-use zoning and temporary soil removal moratorium – no news

Town of Kent CAC hikes and events

The Town of Kent CAC encourages all residents to get out and explore our wonderful outdoors while being responsible and maintaining a safe, social distance from other hikers during the COVID19 Pandemic. There are many hiking trails available in this area where people can hike independently and enjoy time outdoors.

- Woodcock walk: Originally scheduled for Saturday, April 4, 2020 @ 7:00PM - canceled
- Hawk Rock: Scheduled for Saturday, May 30, 2020 @ 11:00 AM
 - As time approaches decision to be made whether this hike will occur
- Mushroom walk at Clearpool: Sunday, September 19, 2020 @ (time)
 - Will be led by COMA members
- Astronomy night: date and location TBD – reached out to Westchester Astronomers Club – awaiting contact from the astronomers club to review possible locations – Town Center preferred site due to parking and accessibility
- Kent Clean-up day – CANCELED/POSTPONED
 - Project being coordinated by Kent Beautification Committee, new date TBD

Social Media Outreach Report

- FB and other social media outlets continue to have moderate activity.

Kent Conservation Foundation (thekcf.org) Report

- Nimham Mountain fire tower
 - Fire tower closure ordered by NYS DEC affects all fire towers in NYS
 - Bill made barriers which were destroyed
 - Kent Highway Supervisor Othmer put up the programmable road sign at Gypsy Trail and Nimham Court indicating that only official vehicles may park on the road. A local resident expressed the view that this has improved th traffic problem somewhat. However, representative from DEC sent photos of the parking area and expressed concern about the number of cars.
 - Bill has posted new signs posted on the kiosk and at mountain top location indicating that the fire tower is closed and that hikers must carry out whatever they carry in.
 - Trash cans have been removed from parking area and fire tower location. The former trash program was supported by volunteers, not by the NYS DEC and it is no longer practical.
 - Maintenance work is needed to paint the cabin of the first tower. Date must be selected.

Next Meeting

Next meeting date will be Wednesday May, 20 @ 7:00PM. The meeting format depends on meeting restrictions in effect by this meeting time. May be held in-person at the Town of Kent Town Hall or via WebEx conference