

Town of Kent Conservation Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for February 19, 2020

Committee Member Attendance: Bill Volckmann (chair), Bill Buck, Ed Iliano, Phil Tolmach

Meeting called to order at 7:05PM.

Review and approve minutes from previous meetings (Nov & Jan)

Minutes from the CAC meeting on November 19, 2019 were approved. Minutes from the meeting on January 15, 2020 were approved as amended.

Chair's Report

UPDATE FROM KENT LAKES ASSOCIATION

No one from the CAC attended the January or February meeting. The next meeting is on March 21 at 8:45AM at Town Center. Clearpool has a pancake breakfast scheduled for that same morning.

CAC MEMBERSHIP APPEAL

A few people have expressed interest in joining but were not available that evening. Appeals have been sent to some local sportsmen's groups. We are hoping the upcoming biodiversity inventory will attract some new members.

ECO OPPORTUNITY FORUM – February 20 @ 3–5PM @ Kingston City Hall

This event is sponsored by Scenic Hudson. Bill V. will attend. He tried to attend a previous meeting that was cancelled.

NYS DEC FOREST ACTION PLAN

The plan has been received. It is a 10-year strategic plan for forest management. The extensive document needs to be reviewed to see if it affects our stewardship of the Fire Tower.

KCAC Projects

AMPHIBIAN MIGRATION AND ROAD CROSSINGS – NYS DEC project for local volunteers

Bill V. took the training class when Anne was unavailable. Specific road crossings need to be identified in advance of the migration. Bill V. will work on that. We are relying on DEC to give us some idea when the migration might occur since it is climate-dependent.

HIGHLANDS TRAIL PROJECT

Bill V. met with Gary Haughland to discuss the project and how best to avoid arsenic-contaminated areas.

KENT NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

Bill V. met Julie Ruben of the Putnam Valley CCE (CAC) at Teatown and had a brief discussion around Putnam Valley's NRI experience. He and Julie plan to meet again to have a more in depth discussion.

Possible sources of funding and support for the NRI were briefly discussed. The DEC itself has grants to pay for these (see November 2019 minutes) that require a 15% match. The spring 2020 announcement is not out yet. We also discussed working with the local land trusts. The unofficial boundary between the Hudson Highlands Land Trust and the Putnam County Land Trust is the Taconic Parkway. Since the Town of Kent is on both sides of the Taconic, we will contact both. Bill V. will contact Judy Terlizzi, President of PCLT.

Bill B. talked briefly about Hudsonia, based at Bard College, who has done a number of other regional NRIs. Bill B. has been in contact with the Executive Director of Hudsonia, Erik Kiviat, and is waiting to have a phone conversation with him and Gretchen Stevens (in charge of NRIs) about costs.

Kent Biodiversity Inventory

Bill B. gave an overview of plans for the upcoming biodiversity inventory. He has been in contact with Al Breisch, a herpetologist in the Albany area who is a coauthor of the New York State reptile and amphibian guide. He expressed interest in helping with the inventory in the spring. Bill B. also spoke with Bob Hansen, President of the Oasis Sportsmen's Club, about Oasis assisting with a fish inventory in Kent, possibly by sponsoring a micro-fishing contest (i.e., catching fish less than 3" long with hook and bait). Bill B. and Bill V. will attend the next Oasis meeting on Monday, March 2 at 7:00PM. Bill B. also talked to someone with Bat Conservation International about doing a bat survey in the Town.

Pros/cons of a separate, unique web-based inventory/database tool

The advantages of a unique web-based inventory tool is that it can be customized to exactly what you want. The disadvantage is that when development of it ends, it quickly becomes out of date. With limited resources, using pre-existing data platforms seems best, at least initially. For plants, the database of the herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden will be used. Each plant specimen collected will be databased with the record fully accessible online. All vascular plants will also be imaged and additional field-gathered images can be added to the records (see iNaturalist discussion below).

When meeting last fall, Bill B., Ed and Beth Herr had already decided to use iNaturalist as a tool for documenting animal diversity in the Town. Beth has extensive experience with iNaturalist. Ed was familiar with it but had not used it very much. He said that he was getting ready for a one-day training session with iNaturalist.

Ed reported that the Kent Historical Society is interested in participating in the Kent NRI. They are specifically interested in aspects dealing with old homesteads, paper roads, old stone walls, old trees, Native American archeological sites, etc.

CLIMATE SMART INITIATIVE

Anne and Chris to co-chair the committee

Because neither Anne nor Chris were present at the meeting, discussion was mostly postponed to the next meeting. Bill V. got a copy of the Town's Climate Smart resolution and will give it to Anne to pass onto the DEC.

Town Development Projects

MINING LAND-USE ZONING AND TEMPORARY SOIL REMOVAL MORATORIUM

The public meeting on this was the night before our meeting, i.e., February 18, 2020. The moratorium is not yet in effect.

KENT COUNTRY SQUARE

Should the Kent Comprehensive Plan of 2008 be renewed? When presented it was noted that it should be renewed every 10 years.

Hikes and Programs

KENT CAC HIKES/EVENTS

Woodcock walk: Saturday, April 4, 2020 @ 7:00PM

Expert ornithologist and nature educator, Beth Herr, has volunteered to lead the walk when she returns from California. Anne will put out a public announcement & post the walk on our e-mail list

Hawk Rock: Saturday, May 30, 2020 @ 11:00 AM

Anne and Ed have volunteered to lead this hike. Anne will get out the publicity in advance.

Mushroom walk at Clearpool:

Initially scheduled for Sunday, September 19, 2020, the date seems to be changing and now October 3 is most probable. We want to tie this walk into the biodiversity inventory. Lou Tartaro would be one of the leaders, along with others from COMA (a Connecticut-Westchester mycological group).

Astronomy night: date and location TBD – reached out to Westchester Astronomers Club. Proposed using Huestis Park.

Town Supervisor, Maureen Fleming, has requested that the astronomy night be held at Town Center. She confirmed that the lights around the Town Center can be turned off, as they have been in the past for the Pumpkin Glow event.

Kent Clean-up day – Coordinated by Kent Beautification Committee: April 18, 2020 (rain date April 25, 2020) @ 9:00AM – 1:00PM

Ed will coordinate the CAC activities but can't be there himself because of a conflict with a hike by Cornell Cooperative Extension. The CAC area will once again be along White Pond Road. Because of several years of cleaning in this area, it may be that we can finish there and move to Farmers Mills Road.

Social Media Outreach Report

FB AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS

There has been more interest recently in the Fire Tower FB page.

KCF Report

FIRE TOWER MAINTENANCE

A date needs to be chosen in the spring for painting the fire tower. We need the weather to be warmer for the paint to stick.

Set next meeting date – Wednesday March 19, 2020 @ 7:00PM at Kent Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM.