



KENT CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Using Zoom Video Conferencing Technology
Sept 8, 2021 – 7:00 pm
MINUTES

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86919526088?pwd=TFdrSWhzcmxYRkVKVWYwakVQdE9YUT09>

Meeting ID: 869 1952 6088 Passcode: 667234

Attending were Jos Spelbos, Connie Manes, Carol Franken, and Wendy Murphy. David Yewer attended as a Member of the Public.

Call to order at 7:04.

1. Accept/amend Agenda. Connie asked for any changes, none were offered. Wendy moved to accept the agenda and Connie seconded it. The motion carried.
2. Greetings to Mike Benjamin skipped temporarily awaiting his arrival.(Eventually cancelled)
3. The Draft Minutes for July 21 were approved. The Minutes for June 16, a Regular Meeting, and for June 24, a Special Meeting, have not been made available as yet but will in the next few days according to Secty Wendy Murphy. Those for June 24 now contain corrections from the May Minutes. If there are changes to be made today in the July Minutes they will appear here in the body of these Minutes, following new guidelines. Hearing no amendments to the July 24 Minutes, Carol made a motion that we approve them. Wendy seconded. There being no objections the July Draft Minutes were approved.
4. Treasurer's Report. Liddy could not attend but sent her report. No expenditures in this fiscal year to date made,
5. Public comment. David Yewer saw that we were planning to discuss the Conservation Easement amendment this evening and he sent us a letter on his objections and decided to attend as well. The discussion that followed picks up in Old Business, below...
6. Old Business:
6A and 6B. Planning & Zoning Regulations and an Application for Conservation Subdivision along the west side of Rte 7 north of town. Six letters from the public to the P&Z have been copied to us with the meeting notice [link to the P&Z materials on the application](#). One of these letters was from David Yewer and his wife who have four acres immediately south of the property in question. David observed that the development and its amendment as now proposed do not support the 2010 POCD goal of "keeping Kent rural" but rather permits a distribution of houses to a density that is virtually suburban. Jos agreed with this assessment. And Connie added that the KCC probably does not have much influence in this matter but could speak to the specifics of where the conservation easement is located. Yewer says that because the conservation easement is in the rear of the property along the railroad tracks it cannot be shared by the public. KCC's best way to weigh in on the open space set-aside is to make an advisory on its design and not on the density of the settlement. Connie cautions on pushing too hard on our opposition because the developer
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could easily decide to not use the conservation easement at all, claiming it was too much trouble, and do a conventional subdivision without open space instead.

Carol reiterated her understanding of the developers' options. They have added a 25-foot strip along Rt. 7 to satisfy the public's desire for the often quoted visual known as the "Northern Gateway", book-ending the existing Southern Gateway that lies at the southern edge of the village. Jos felt that the developers' insertion of the 25' strip was "greenwashing" rather than a genuine effort to keep Kent rural or to preserve the rural viewshed that the public and the POCD have come to think would be a permanent feature of Kent.

Connie said that she thought it was totally appropriate for the KCC to comment on the large discrepancy between the Town Character Study areas and the 2012 and 2000 POCDs which had encouraged the P&Z to take these matters into consideration in writing their regulations. As to whether we could call upon members of the KLT board to speak individually at the Hearing tomorrow night on their objections, it is very clear that the KLT had a chance to purchase this land at the time it was put on the market and failed to do so.

Whether the KCC can make a difference or not, the consensus of our meeting tonight was that we should have a couple of commissioners testify tomorrow. Jos and Wendy both indicated that they would attend and testify. Wendy said that she wants to remind the P&Z of the enormous importance the preservation of the Southern Gateway has been to the vitality, attractiveness and economic development of Kent. Jos also brought up the long-term goal of incorporating affordable housing units within developments, but other KCC members differed, saying this hearing and this application are not the place to do it. Nor is the KCC the group to promote it, however good an idea it may be.

6C. Waste Management in CT and CT. Transfer Station Update. Carol reports that the Swap Shop will be reopened soon. And that Rick Osborne is working on new and more effective signage for the Transfer Station. Jos pointed out that people who do not use the Transfer Station currently have no viable way to recycle glass as their waste collection company does not separate. The KCC might look into some way to open up this possibility for people who do not have access to the Transfer Station. Connie commented that we are at the whim of producers who continue to produce a stream of waste packaging that we have no way of reclaiming or recycling. Black plastic containers are an especially irksome example as they are treated as garbage currently.

6D. Sustainable CT. No update. Wendy said she has contacted Kent's Sustainable CT chair to offer some help.

6E. Kent POCD Update. Connie commented on the survey being sent around to residents to tap their recommendations before the POCD is drafted. The survey is being widely mentioned on social media etc. and Melissa may post some public reminders on the KCC website as we get closer to the deadline. Wendy asked what the best way would be to raise specific concerns relating to preparing Kent for Global Climate Change on the local level, especially as they apply to the inspection of private property dams and driveway culverts whose engineering may not reflect anticipated changes in

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storm precipitation wastewater management. The HVA has done an excellent survey of public road culverts but not of private culverts.

6F. Pollinator Pathway Update. Whitney Troy, our summer intern, went back to college recently. The Pollinator Pathway project will be taken over by our new full-time intern, Luciana Borrelli, a Terra-Corps Service intern. She will remain here until next July. Our recent presentation on P.Ps was not well-attended but very valuable to those who did and will be something we want to continue to support, owing to the importance of the information shared.

6G. WCCAA Update. Wendy reported that the anticipated report from Dr. Kristina Wagstrom and her UConn graduate students is not available for publication as yet because there are some additional items the WCCAA board asked them to investigate. (Predominant wind directions at the high elevations of the CVEC stacks in Dover Plains and some explanation of why CVEC is operating at 25% capacity.) But the bottom line is that thanks to the Covid shut-down which reduced ambient auto and factory emissions, and the fact that the plant is not running at levels above 25% capacity, we have no evidence that the gas-powered generation facility is reducing the area's ambient air quality which remains very good. We have also had lingering difficulties with our testing equipment which turn out to be very cranky and needing a lot of maintenance. So we will continue to collect data until our instruments and our research money run out next summer. At that point we can consider next steps including shutting down the study altogether if that makes the best sense. We will have by then a lot of baseline information in the bank if we need to ramp up studies later. And we have demonstrated to the State Legislature and to CT DEEP the need for them to remain alert to environmental problems that may lie beyond CT's borders; that is probably our greatest achievement. Jos raised the question of what impact CVEC's partnership with GE in developing hydrogen as a source of generation fuel will have on our air quality. Wendy reported that most people in the know think this hydrogen story is a diversion with no importance. It won't even be readied for trial for 10 years and then not likely a solution to anything. Bill Kish, Wendy's source of advanced technological info, has published a thoughtful examination of the subject under the banner of Stop Cricket Valley News.

6H. Post/Pre Legislative Session. Nothing new to add.

6I. *Kent Trails: A Hikers Guide* continues to sell actively and appears to have spurred other towns to do something of the same.

7. New Business

A. Announcements:

A1. John Kaminski Celebration of Life event Club Getaway Sunday Sep 19, 4-6pm

A2. Douglas Tallamy recorded Zoom program from the Sept 1 presentation

"Nature's Best Hope" can be found at www.marktwainlibrary.org. Carol and Connie

urge all of us to watch and promise to let us know when it becomes available on line.

8. Correspondence. None

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9. Adjournment. Connie called the meeting to an end at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Murphy, Secretary
September 15, 2021