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By Darlene Brady at 9:51 am, Oct 12, 2023



TOWN OF KENT

Conservation Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 11, 2023 @ 7:00pm

In attendance:
Melissa Cherniske
Carol Franken
Connie Manes
Wendy Murphy
Jos Spelbos

Members of the Public Attending:
Lynn Harrington
Lynn Worthington

Call to order

1. A quorum being present, Commission Chair Connie Manes called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.
2. Accept/Amend Agenda. *Upon a motion by Melissa Cherniske seconded by Carol Franken, the Commissioners voted unanimously to accept the agenda.*
3. Accept/Amend Minutes of Regular Meeting September 13, 2023. The minutes were amended to correct line 2 under item 7B. that Bruce Bennett is working with Rick Osborne to identify trees **throughout the town** that may need to be removed for safety and other reasons (e.g., dead ash and trees irreversibly damaged by spongy moth). *Upon a motion by Melissa seconded by Carol the Commissioners voted unanimously to accept the minutes with this amendment.*
4. Accept/Amend Minutes of Special Meeting September 28, 2023. The minutes were amended to correct item 4A. to reflect that the trees were proposed to be planted on **Bridge Street**, and that **Bruce said the Town Crew had volunteered to do the watering.** *Upon a motion by Melissa seconded by Carol the Commissioners voted unanimously to accept the minutes with these amendments.*
5. Treasurer's Report. None.
6. Public Comment. None.
7. Old Business.
Discussion items
 - A. Purchase of Street Trees. Connie referred to the materials forwarded prior to the meeting including Jos and Bruce Bennett's proposal delivered and discussed at the last two meetings, records from Liddy showing the process and parameters used by the Commission in its past tree planting initiatives, examples from other Connecticut towns that have town-sponsored tree planting programs, and an email from Bruce to Jos.

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

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Jos reported that the proposed site for tree planting was on private property. The Commissioners discussed issues of fairness if the trees and planting costs were provided to the private owners free of charge when earlier the Commission had required private owners to contribute 50% of the cost. Commissioners further discussed the benefits of gaining the engagement and commitment of private owners by requiring their written agreement to maintain the trees, as had been done in the past and was a customary part of other towns' programs.

The Commissioners discussed the desirability of having neighbors come together around a plan for their street's trees. There was interest in creating a plan for the Village, perhaps as an outgrowth of Bruce's catalog of the town's trees. The Commission will continue to develop its street trees program in the November meeting, which Bruce will attend. The Commissioners discussed the Kuga Fund and its possible uses; the prevailing opinion is that the street trees program should not spend down all the assets in the fund but take a more incremental approach.

Wendy made a motion to ask the private owners to contribute 50% of the cost of the tree planting and sign an agreement using the form the Commission has used in the past, and if the owners are willing to do this, to go ahead with the tree planting as proposed. Carol seconded the motion. There were equal votes for and against, and the motion failed.

- B. Report on Farmer Protection Ordinance Revisions. The Board of Selectmen meeting wherein the revised ordinance was to have been discussed was cancelled. The revisions are on the agenda for tomorrow night's Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Updates

- C. Materials Management in Kent – SAYT / organics recycling. A "Trash Talk" to discuss the program and take questions from the community is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25th at 6pm (zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83650926512?pwd=c1c4b3Bza2ZlVXhSckRvL0hIMW9ZZz09>).
 - D. Kent Municipal Open Space Acquisition. The P&Z meeting tomorrow night will continue the discussion of how it will implement its "Fee In Lieu of Open Space" regulation. The Commission needs to discuss further how an ordinance providing for a Land Acquisition Fund could supplement funds accrued through this regulation.
 - E. Green Energy Task Force. No update.
 - F. Housatonic Herbicide Working Group. No update.
 - G. Sustainable CT. No update.
 - H. Regional Recycling Task Force. No update.
 - I. POCD – Planning & Zoning Regulations Updates; Chapter reviews. Jos reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission has begun discussing revisions to its subdivision regulations. The Commission plans to take additional time in its review and to solicit input from various groups (which may include the Conservation Commission) before publishing a second draft. Jos asked the Commissioners to read through the portions of the draft concerning open space set asides prior to the November meeting.
8. New Business.
- A. KCC 2024 Meeting Calendar. The Commissioners reviewed the proposed 2024 meeting dates distributed prior to the meeting. *Upon a motion by Melissa seconded by Wendy the Commission unanimously approved the meeting dates. Connie will file the schedule with the Town Clerk.*

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9. Correspondence.

A. CACIWC Annual Meeting Saturday, November 11, 2023.

10. Adjourn. *There being no further business before the Commission and upon the motion of Wendy seconded by Melissa the meeting was adjourned.*

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday November 8th @ 6:30pm

Respectfully submitted by: Connie Manes, Chair

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