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**By Darlene Brady at 8:31 am, Nov 28, 2023**



## TOWN OF KENT

Conservation Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 8, 2023 @ 6:30pm

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

Members of the Public Attending:  
Bruce Bennett  
Jean Speck

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### Call to order

1. A quorum being present, Commission Chair Connie Manes called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.
2. Accept/Amend Agenda. *Upon a motion by Melissa Cherniske seconded by Mike Benjamin, the commissioners voted unanimously to accept the agenda.*
3. Accept/Amend Minutes of Regular Meeting October 11, 2023. *Upon a motion by Melissa seconded by Connie the commissioners voted unanimously to accept the minutes.*
4. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Liddy Baker received a confusing statement from the Town Treasurer suggesting that the Commission's budget had been cut drastically. She will check to confirm the status of the budget. There is \$10,673 in the Kuga Fund and an additional \$387 in funds allocated to tree maintenance. There are 65 Kent Trails books in inventory.
5. Public Comment. None.
6. Old Business.  
*Discussion items*
  - A. Street Trees. The commissioners welcomed Bruce Bennett, Kent's Tree Warden.
    - i. Catalogue of town trees. Bruce has nearly finished a town-wide assessment of hazard trees to ready Kent for a new federally-funded program offering grants for removal of hazard trees. He estimates that Kent may receive as much as \$100,000 for this purpose and noted that Eversource spent about \$400,000 on tree removal in Kent last year.
    - ii. Other towns' sponsored tree planting programs. The commissioners took note of programs in other Connecticut towns for planting street trees including provisions for private property owners to care for and pay a proportion of the cost for trees planted on their land. Bruce and the commissioners discussed past town and commission-supported tree plantings in Kent.

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- iii. Kent Street Tree Planting Program. Following discussion, the commissioners agreed to move forward with a program that includes private landowner cost share and maintenance. Bruce has identified as many as 50 prospective planting locations. Bruce also found grant programs that can support town tree planting including grants offered by Sustainable CT. *Upon a motion by Liddy seconded by Wendy the commissioners indicated willingness to allocate funds from the Kuga Fund to support the program. The program would be first come, first served up to a certain amount each year, and would provide funding for up to 50% of the cost for trees purchased and planted, beginning in 2024. The commission will develop guidance and forms for publication and administration of the program, such forms to include a form for obtaining the written commitment of property owners.*
- iv. Swift Lane proposal. The commissioners discussed the proposal to plant a memorial Linden tree for shade and aesthetic benefit to residents and visitors to Templeton Farms. *Connie made a motion to approve the allocation of \$350, to be matched by at least that amount by the landowner, to purchase and plant a native Linden Tree on Swift Lane. Melissa seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Connie will correspond with the landowner.*
- B. Report on Farmer Protection Ordinance Revisions. The Planning and Zoning Commission discussed the proposed revisions at its meeting on Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup> and suggested a few slight revisions as indicated in the materials sent prior to the meeting. The commissioners reviewed and *upon the motion of Melissa seconded by Mike Benjamin, adopted the changes.* The revisions still need to go before the Board of Selectmen prior to a Town Meeting for discussion and vote.
- C. Materials Management in Kent – SAYT/Organics Recycling. There was no report about the October 25<sup>th</sup> Trash Talk. The commissioners discussed the issue that the Transfer Station has been instructed not to accept black plastic for recycling by Winter Brothers, which reportedly says that its sorting equipment does not have the ability to pick the black plastic out of the stream with other plastic, leading to contamination and inefficiencies. *Connie will write a letter to Winter Brothers to ask what can be done to address the issue, including whether a separate collection would work.*
- D. POCD – Regulation revisions to Open Space set-asides. Jos reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission has recommended environmentally-beneficial changes to open space set-aside provisions within the Subdivision Regulations. There will be a Special Meeting of the P&Z on November 16<sup>th</sup> to continue working on the regulations concerning Conservation Subdivisions.

#### *Updates*

- E. Kent Municipal Open Space Acquisition. No update.
  - F. Green Energy Task Force. No update.
  - G. Housatonic Herbicide Working Group. Bruce Bennett reported that the Housatonic Railroad has refused to engage in communications with the group. The HHWG next plans to work with the Housatonic River Commission.
  - H. Sustainable CT. No update.
  - I. Regional Recycling Task Force. No update.
7. New Business.
- A. Succession Planning. The commissioners discussed the role of Chair. Connie said she will not continue as Chair beyond April 2024.

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8. Correspondence.
  - A. CACIWC Annual Meeting Saturday, November 11, 2023.
9. Adjourn. *There being no further business before the Commission and upon the motion of Melissa seconded by Carol the meeting was adjourned at 8:11pm.*

*NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday December 13th @ 6:30pm*

Respectfully submitted by: Connie Manes, Chair

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