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*By Darlene Brady at 10:35 am, Jan 12, 2023*

**TOWN OF KENT**  
Conservation Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 11, 2023 @ 6:30pm

In attendance:

Liddy Baker

Mike Benjamin

Melissa Cherniske

Carol Franken

Connie Manes

Wendy Murphy

Jos Spelbos

First Selectman Jean Speck

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Call to order

A quorum being present, Commission Chair Connie Manes called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

1. Accept/Amend Agenda. Upon a motion by Liddy Baker seconded by Melissa Cherniske, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the agenda with no changes.
2. Accept/amend minutes of Regular Meeting December 14, 2022. The minutes were amended at item 5C, to clarify that the POCD was adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission at a public meeting. Upon a motion by Wendy Murphy seconded by Melissa, the minutes of the December 14, 2022 Regular Meeting, the above amendment included, were unanimously approved.
3. Treasurer's Report. Liddy provided the Treasurer's Report. There have been no expenses since the last meeting. The Commission has spent \$254.13 of its anticipated budget this fiscal year, leaving \$2,240.87 in projected expenses. There is \$11,165.84 in the Kuga Fund, \$462.87 of which is designated for arboretum maintenance. Jos Spelbos will inspect the trees the Commission has planted at Kent Center School and elsewhere to assess maintenance needs. Melissa said that the School's Outdoor Classroom plantings seem in need of maintenance. Jos will inspect these as well as inquire about the School's maintenance plan for its grounds including the Outdoor Classroom. Jos said Bruce Bennett had mentioned the need for additional trees planted in town. Jean Speck said Bruce and the Town had planted trees donated by the Kent Greenhouse.
4. Public comment. No members of the public were present at the meeting.
5. Old Business  
*Discussion items*
  - A. POCD. The Commission reviewed a template for summarizing and reporting sections of the POCD. Connie summarized Section 3.2 Preserve Open Space. The Commissioners will report out on all POCD Sections involving the Commission. After this, the Commissioners will lead discussion specific steps the Commission can take to help implement the POCD recommendations and develop a workplan.

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- B. Kent Municipal Open Space Acquisition. The Commission reviewed a draft letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting that it be recognized as the lead Town agency for coordinating open space preservation efforts, and that the Selectmen join the Commission in working with the Board of Finance to establish a Land Acquisition Fund to receive fee-in-lieu-of-open space payments (and/or any municipal or other funds). Upon the motion of Melissa seconded by Mike Benjamin the Commission agreed to send the letter to the Board of Selectmen in advance of its meeting upcoming January 25, 2023.

*Updates (as needed):*

- C. Green Energy Task Force. Wendy has been corresponding with the people who organized last October's program at the Kent School, who confirm they are interested in continuing efforts to promote renewable energy sources. Jean will solicit additional volunteers through the Town's newsletter. They hope to meet as an informal group for the purpose of advising and working with Town agencies, businesses, and residents to learn about and adopt the use of renewables.

Wendy is working with Jean to take a renewed look at prospective funding sources for solar projects to power Town buildings. Melissa said the Board of Education has placed the plan to install solar panels at the Kent Center School on hold, due to questions about the warranty of the roof area.

- D. Kent Trails: A Hiker's Guide. 43 books remain from the latest printing.
- E. Sustainable CT. The Sustainability Team has not met in the past two months. Jean hopes to recruit new members to the team as well as to invite a Sustainable CT representative to a meeting to work with the group on strategies to make progress.
- F. Sustainable Materials Management in Kent. Jean reported that HRRA believes it is close to receiving a federal grant, administered through DEEP, to help the Town switch to a Unit Based Pricing (Pay As You Throw) system at the Transfer Station. This would include the ability to dispose of organic food waste outside of the pricing system. The Commission discussed whether the Town needs data about prospective volume and usage to help it plan for the organics program. A survey could provide data as well as help build public support and participation in the new system. Mike raised the question of whether the private schools could partner with the Town to create predictable, consistent volume.

A new state law has gone into effect expanding the types of containers eligible for redemption. New types include but are not limited to juice containers, hard seltzer, and energy drinks. Producers must update their labels to indicate the redemption, and machines must be adjusted in order to process the new containers. In the meantime, the law provides that containers produced/purchased within the state can be redeemed, allowing producers to sell off their inventory (although it is unclear how purchasers can do this).

6. New Business. None.
7. Correspondence. None.
8. Adjourn. There being no further business before the Commission and upon the motion of Melissa, seconded by Mike and voted unanimously, the meeting concluded at 7:49 pm.

*NEXT MEETING: Wednesday January 11<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm*

Respectfully submitted by: Connie Manes, Chair

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