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By Darlene Brady at 11:41 am, Sep 11, 2023

TOWN OF KENT
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 13, 2023 @ 7:00pm

In attendance:

Liddy Baker
Mike Benjamin
Melissa Cherniske
Carol Franken
Connie Manes
Wendy Murphy
Jos Spelbos
First Selectman Jean Speck

Guest: State Representative Maria Horn
Members of the Public Attending: Lynn Harrington

Call to order

1. A quorum being present, Commission Chair Connie Manes called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
2. Accept Agenda. The agenda was amended to add 8B. Housatonic River Commission Letter. Jos noted that for item 7B, the acronym for the Town's new organics-diversion program at the Transfer Station is "SAYT" – Save As You Throw. *Upon a motion by Melissa Cherniske seconded by Liddy Baker, the Commissioners voted unanimously to accept the agenda.*
3. Accept/Amend Minutes Regular Meeting June 14, 2023. *Upon the motion of Melissa Cherniske seconded by Mike Benjamin the Commissioners voted unanimously to accept the minutes with no changes.*
4. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Liddy Baker reported that there were no expenses in the last month, which marked the end of the Town's fiscal year. The Commission ended the year with \$991 remaining in its budget. The balance of the Kuga Fund is now at \$11,035.84. Our inventory of trails books is down to 15. *The Commission determined that Liddy should order 50 more books.*
5. Public Comment. None.
6. Old Business.
Discussion items
 - A. Legislative Watch: The Commission welcomed Kent's State Representative Maria Horn. Rep. Horn provided a summary of the session including background detail and insight on many of the proposed bills listed in the Commission's Watch List. She encouraged commissioners to get in touch early regarding priority legislation, and in particular called attention to the following bills that are likely to be raised again next year:
 - Zero Carbon Emissions
 - Rodenticides/Neonicotinoids
 - Single-Use plastics, polystyrene

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Rep. Horn answered questions about certain bills and discussed the bill granting authority to the CT Green Bank for waste disposal construction. The Commission thanked her for her representation.

- B. Materials Management in Kent – SAYT / organics recycling. The Town is planning a soft launch of the program as early as this weekend. HRRA has had representatives providing information at the Transfer Station each of the last few weeks. Jennifer Heaton Jones and Connie are trading emails. HRRA has asked for the Commission's help but has not been specific as to what it hopes we will do – we expect it will be about volunteering to get information out to the public. The Transfer Station's webpage has been updated to include information about the program, and a link to HRRA provides additional information and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

Updates

- C. Protection of Farms and Farmers from Nuisance Claims. We continue to await feedback from the Town Attorney on our proposed draft.
- D. POCD – Planning & Zoning Regulations Updates; Chapter reviews. No update.
- E. Kent Municipal Open Space Acquisition. No update.
- F. Green Energy Task Force. Wendy continues to work with the regional group to have a full-time position at the NHCOC serving all COG towns on renewable energy programs, grants and policy. *Jean will mention this effort at the COG meeting on Thursday, July 13th.*
- G. Housatonic Herbicide Working Group. Jean met with Bruce Bennett who wants to better coordinate the 5-6 river towns in making outreach to the railroad, as town-by-town outreach has not been effective.
- H. Sustainable CT. Jean met with the NHCOC's Sustainable CT fellow, who will help to organize and collect Kent's information for Sustainable CT application. Jean continues to seek 2-3 new members for the Town's committee. The Commission once again invited the fellow, or any other Kent person working to assemble information about Kent's environmentally related sustainability activities, to attend a meeting of the Conservation Commission and interview us.

Summary article [What passed CT's legislature this session? Here are the bills to know \(ctinsider.com\)](http://ctinsider.com)

SB 73 Requiring Local Representation on Siting Council **Passed, but vetoed by Governor**

SB 896 DEEP and Tree Removal in State Parks **PASSED**

SB 962 The Use of Certain Rodenticides **Died in Senate – this will be an Audubon priority next year**

SB 963 Neonicotinoids for Non-Agricultural Use **Died in Senate**

SB 1147 An Act Concerning The Environmental Justice Program Of The Department Of Energy And Environmental Protection. **PASSED**

HB 5278 - Increasing List of Invasive Plants Prohibited from Sale in CT **Died in EnviComm**

HB 5400 The Preservation of Stone Walls in the State **Died in Senate**

HB 5608 Photovoltaic Facilities on Prime Farmland, Farmland of State-wide Importance or Core Forests **PASSED**

HB 6397 Zero Carbon Emissions **Died in Senate – Rep. Horn unsure what killed it in Senate; thinks it will be raised again next year**

HB 6481 Prohibiting Release of Certain Balloons **Died in Senate**

HB 6482 Raising the Bonding Limit to 25K for Greenways/Bikeways/Rec Trails **Passed within the Bond Bill**

HB 6483 Enabling Bonding for State Open Space (OSWA) - 10M **Passed within the Bond Bill**

HB 6484 An Act Concerning Certain Harvesting of Horseshoe Crabs **PASSED**

HB 6485 Authorizing Green Burial Companies to Receive Open Space Funds **Died in House; likely more conversation about this next year – divided opinion but lots of interest around this**

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HB 6486 EPR for Tires **PASSED**

HB 6606 The Use of Certain Products Made From Polystyrene **Died in Committee**

HB 6607 Nighttime Lighting of State-Owned Buildings at Certain Times for the Protection of Birds **PASSED**

HB 6608 The Distribution of Single Use Plastic Straws by Certain Restaurants **Died in House – perhaps due to its major proponent moving off the Environment Committee, likely to be raised again next year**

Good models may exist in Maine, New Mexico

HB 6610 "No Net Loss" of State Forest Lands **(never moved) Rep. Horn says start earlier to present the issue**

HB 6942 Bonding Measure **PASSED \$3M for Rec & Natural Heritage program**

\$500M from CT Green Bank authorized for waste disposal facility construction

7. New Business.

A. Conservation issues at Emery Park. The Town is currently in conversation about its recreational facilities and how best to apply funding in the 5yr capital plan. The Conservation Commission's interest is in ensuring that the natural resources present at Emery are cared for. The deed contains restrictions that "the premises...shall be used for recreational, park or educational purposes by the Grantee or a nonprofit or public corporation". The Commission discussed whether the non-developed portion of Emery Park could be restricted for conservation value and if this might generate funding for the Town to apply for recreational improvements at the Park or elsewhere.

B. Housatonic River Commission Letter. Connie received a survey 2 hours before the meeting from the Housatonic River Commission gathering input as they update the Housatonic River Management Plan. *She will circulate the letter amongst commissioners for discussion and completion at the September meeting.*

8. Correspondence. See above.

9. Adjourn. *There being no further business before the Commission and upon the motion of Liddy seconded by Wendy the meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.*

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday September 13 @ 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted by: Connie Manes, Chair

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