

TOWN OF KENT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
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KENT TOWN CLERK
2015 March 2, 2015
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BY *Donna M. Hayes*
TOWN CLERK

FEBRUARY 25, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

The Town of Kent Planning and Zoning Commission held a special meeting on Thursday, **February 25, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Kent Town Hall.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL AND APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES IF REQUIRED

Commissioners Present: John Johnson, Chairman; Rich Chavka, Darrell Cherniske, Dennis De Paul

Staff Present: Donna M. Hayes, Land Use Administrator

3. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

No action taken.

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (ORAL):

No action taken.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

5.A. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Possibility of closure, discussion and decision on the following):

No action taken.

5.B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION

No action taken.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
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6.A. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Possibility of closure, discussion and decision on the following):

No action taken.

6.B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION

6.B.1. Interview of candidate for alternate position.

Mr. Cooper Botway was present to speak with the Commission about the open alternate position. Discussion centered around questions posed by those Commission members present with regard to Mr. Botway's sense of Kent and how he sees the land use regulations fitting into the Town; whether or not he has had to interact with the Land Use Office; how the regulations can shape the Town; how land use can impact the new sewer line within the Industrial Zone; and, how he feels about special events at bed and breakfasts. Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Botway if he could be available to attend meetings, which are currently scheduled for the second Thursday of the month. Mr. Botway said that he could.

After the discussion, Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Botway for his time and advised him that there was another candidate for the alternate position. The Board of Selectmen will appoint the alternate based on the recommendation of the Commission. Mr. Botway will be contacted once the Commission makes a decision.

6.B.2. Planning and Zoning Commission's approval of Kent Land Trust's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Application – West Aspetuck Scenic Wetlands

Mr. William Arnold, Kent Land Trust President, was present to address the Commission regarding their submission of a grant to purchase approximately 25 acres on Segar Mountain Road with a small frontage on Kenico Road. The property consists of a 9 acre beaver pond with the rest of the property able to support a house. It is outside the Town Character Area of East Kent Hamlet, but just barely. He explained that completing this purchase will ensure the protection of the West Aspetuck River watershed.

Mr. Arnold told the Commission that they have a verbal agreement to purchase the property from the current owners and that typically this type of grant will provide up to 65% of the purchase price. The remaining 35% will be raised through private donations. Ms. Hayes informed the Commission that the Inland Wetlands Commission voted to supply a letter of support at their last meeting. Mr. Arnold added that the Conservation Commission and the First Selectman also supplied a letter of support. Mr. Arnold said that the application deadline was this weekend.

Mr. De Paul asked what the current use was and Mr. Arnold said that it is currently undeveloped but is part of a subdivision that was approved in 1980. He continued that there is currently a conservation easement on the property maintained by the Kent Land Trust. The original conservation easement was held by HVA, but was transferred to them. The wetlands portion of the property represents the main portion of the easement.

Mr. De Paul asked what the tax base was for the property. Mr. Arnold said that he did not think he had that information but it is an undeveloped lot and he anticipates the taxes would be in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range. Mr. De Paul said that would be his only objection to consider although he does think that it is an excellent idea. Mr. Arnold said that is something that does need to be considered. He continued that he

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could argue that once the property is developed, the cost of the services that would be provided after development would be more than the tax base.

Mr. Johnson said that Ms. Hayes had drafted a letter for signature. Mr. De Paul read the letter into the record (attached).

Mr. De Paul moved to send the letter to the Commissioner of the DEEP. Mr. Chavka seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

7. STAFF REPORT:

No action taken.

8. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES:

No action taken.

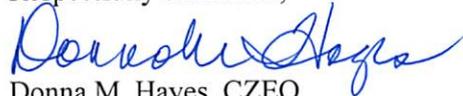
9. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

No action taken.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna M. Hayes, CZEO
Land Use Administrator



TOWN OF KENT LAND USE OFFICE

February 26, 2015

Mr. Robert J. Klee, Commissioner
CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Mr. Klee,

The Kent Land Trust is seeking Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant funding toward the purchase and protection of approximately 25 acres of undeveloped land in our Town. This property includes multiple resource access values including a state-important watershed, a Class AA watercourse, large wetlands, critical wildlife habitat including probable habitat for state listed endangered and threatened plant species and state listed critical habitat, opportunity for passive recreation, contiguity with other preserved land and the opportunity to extend a large tract greenway.

This property consists of 25.23± acres on Segar Mountain Road (Route 341) and Kenico Road and includes a large scenic wetlands as well as gently sloping forested uplands. The wetland pond comprises approximately 9 acres and is immediately downstream from North Spectacle Lake. It constitutes the upper reaches of the West Aspetuck River, designated by the Connecticut DEEP as a Class AA stream. The pond features extensive beaver activity with three lodges and a particularly large beaver dam at the outflow.

Water and wetlands, forests and farmlands dominate the landscape in Kent. These assets and the diverse ecological habitats they support are protected by a variety of means including land use regulations, open space protection and public and private land management. The Town's 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development states that "Kent will continue to work with public and private interests to ensure that these resources are protected, properly managed and, where appropriate, used sustainably." In addition, the Plan states that "additional opportunities to extend natural corridors, permanently protect scenic vistas and enhance recreational access should be pursued".

Responses to a survey that was conducted prior to the writing of the 2012 POCD revealed that: 85% agree or strongly agree with preserving open space as a high priority; 94% believe open space will contribute to a positive quality of life; 52% think open space will keep taxes low; and, 97% agree open space will maintain the Town's rural character.

The 2013 update of the Kent Town Character Study, recognized the multiple purposes of the Study. First is to ensure that quality open space lands are kept in a natural state. Second is to acknowledge those features, both cultural and natural, of Kent that helped define its character. Third is to identify those areas or features that need attention and protection. Fourth is to advocate for open space features and linkages which will enable passive access to and through these sites.

Based on the above, the Planning and Zoning Commission believes that this grant will ensure the protection of pristine water in a critical section of a Class AA watershed, protect habitat including at least two state-listed species, extend a network of existing protected properties for a 500 acre wildlife corridor/greenway, complete a goal of local, regional and statewide plans and secure public access to heretofore privately- held property.

We urge your office to approve and fully fund this application.

Sincerely,



John Johnson, Chairman
Town of Kent Planning & Zoning Commission

Cc: William Arnold, President
Kent Land Trust

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