

KENT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Kent Town Hall  
41 Kent Green Boulevard  
Kent, Connecticut 06757

REGULAR MEETING  
January 14, 2015 – 7:00 PM

MINUTES

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
KENT TOWN CLERK

2015 FEB -6 A 9:03

BY *Debra Brady TC*  
TOWN CLERK

Present: Commissioners Melissa Cherniske, Carol Franken, Rick Levy, Connie Manes, Wendy Murphy, Addors  
Laurie Doss, Jos Spelbos. Absent: Liddy Baker.

1. Call to order.

There being a quorum present, Chairperson Connie Manes called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

2. Accept/Amend Agenda.

The agenda was amended to add under item 13. Correspondence “19<sup>th</sup> MLK Legacy of Environmental & Social Justice. Yale-Peabody Museum. Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> 12-4 and Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup> 10-4. Free. Carol Franken made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Melissa Cherniske seconded the motion. The vote transpired as follows: Cherniske, Yes, Franken, Yes, Levy, Yes, Manes, Yes, Murphy, Yes.

3. Review, amend, approve minutes of Regular Meeting November 12, 2014.

Franken made a motion to approve the minutes. Rick Levy seconded the motion. The vote transpired as follows: Cherniske, Yes, Franken, Yes, Levy, Yes, Manes, Yes, Murphy, Yes.

4. Appointment of Officers.

Levy nominated the following Commissioners to serve in the offices identified next to their names for a term of three years:

Connie Manes	- Chairperson
Carol Franken	- Vice-Chairperson
Liddy Baker	- Treasurer
Wendy Murphy	- Secretary

Wendy Murphy seconded the nominations. The vote transpired as follows: Cherniske, Yes, Franken, Yes, Levy, Yes, Manes, Yes, Murphy, Yes.

Manes reported that she met with Donna Sommers, a town resident with experience working for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in its State Parks & Forests Division, and with a keen interest in conservation. Manes initially got to know Sommers when she volunteered to help restore trails in the Kent Land Trust’s East Kent Hamlet Nature Preserve. Sommers is interested in joining the Commission and helping out in many of its activities. In particular, she expressed support for the recycling campaign. The Commissioners agreed that it would be very helpful to have Sommers’ experience, and connections within the DEEP. Manes will speak with the Selectmen’s office to begin the process of appointing Sommers as an alternate to the Commission.

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5. Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer Baker provided a written report on expenditures, which Manes presented. There were \$251.05 in expenses over the past month, including \$110 in dues and \$141.05 in supplies connected with the recycling event at the Transfer Station and our macroinvertebrate study. The Commissioners began to discuss the budget for FY2015-2016, in anticipation that the Town Treasurer will request our next year's annual budget in the next few weeks. Possible new expenses include new programming in connection with the Skiff Mountain South Preserve, where it may make sense to focus on Cerulean Warblers and Wood Thrush if "Important Bird Area" status is awarded to this area. We may also wish to increase our budget for supplies and other expenses connected to our recycling campaign.

Manes will email Baker to ask that she prepare a draft budget based on last year's. We should also look at whether we are on schedule to spend down our current budget by end-June. Manes will also complete a draft calendar of activities for 2015-2016 and distribute for comments and discussion. A special meeting was proposed for Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> to get a head-start on budget planning, limited to one hour.

7. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Campaign.

A. Street containers – tabled.

B. Transfer Station interventions – Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> is America Recycles Day! This event was very well received by the customers at the Transfer Station, by town workers, and by the Commissioners. The town would like for us to repeat the event. If we do, a Sunday would be preferred in order to interface with some people who we may not have reached on a Saturday. Commissioners discussed that it would be helpful to have additional easels available for displays. We should consider displaying posters that children from Kent Center School create for the HRRRA recycling contest.

The Commissioners discussed the article Cherniske shared regarding a proposed state ban on plastic bags. While it is unlikely any such bill would get far, the article does mention that the Town of Westport has a plastic bag ban on its books.

C. Recycling center visit. Levy reported that Bruce Adams was very pleased with the trip. The center is quite efficient. Levy would like to schedule another trip for the Commissioners in April, possibly during the school break (but not Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup> as that is likely to be the date of our Kent Memorial Library Children's Program).

D. Other. Levy discussed his ideas for the Commission's campaign to increase recycling in Town, and for Kent to be a leader in the Northwest Corner on recycling efforts. He asked for the Commission's buy-in and also that we stay mindful of our capacity in connection with this effort. Levy spoke with the Kent Garden Club, which has accepted his idea to place signs about "Kent Recycles" at the four corners of Town. Kent's Department of Transportation also supports this idea. Levy has spoken with Connecticut Representative Roberta Willis about the recycling campaign and she in turn referred him to Rick Lynn, Planning Director, Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials; both are supportive. Levy said that as the Planning & Zoning Commission finishes up its work on the Zoning Regulations update, he will have more time to lead this effort. The Commission is in favor of a Kent-centered recycling push in the Northwest Corner, coordinated with the Northwest Conservation District.

Cherniske reported that the Davis IGA has small 2015 calendars to give away to its customers. She suggests that we partner with the store next year to create giveaway grocery list notepads reminding customers to bring their reusable bags into the store with them.

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8. Macro Madness II.

A. DEEP Results. Meghan (Ruta) Lally of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is still working to analyze our stream samples and verify our results. Despite the difficulties posed by low water levels, Kent's streams nevertheless show indicators of high quality. Of the two "mystery" streams tested, one shows some anomalous results and may be worthwhile to test again in the spring. Laurie Doss will provide feedback to the landowner about the results and what to do next. No other streams showed indications of concern.

With regard to next year's project, it is not necessary to go back to streams for which we already have baseline data. We may wish to a) concentrate on streams for which we have no baseline data, b) host a training and demo event on Macedonia Brook in September/October, and c) visit streams where DEEP needs additional information, if any.

B. Work still needed: Leaf Packs. Some Leaf Pack data still needs to be entered, and a few Leaf Packs still need to be pulled.

C. Other. Doss reported that the "Meet Your Neighbors" style photos taken by Marvelwood students during this fall's project will be used for DEEP's Field Identification Guides next year.

9. Planning & Zoning Commission Regulations Review.

Work continues on the Regulations update. Most recently the Commission has been looking at revisions to Kent's soil-based zoning system, leaning towards a hybrid system based both on soil and unit density. The next meeting will be held on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

10. Open Space Plan.

The Commissioners discussed recent progress on the Open Space Plan draft, including substantial additions to the draft by Spelbos. All thanked Spelbos for his considerable work.

11. Right To Farm Ordinance.

Manes will distribute a draft ordinance based on what the Towns of New Milford and Torrington have adopted, for discussion at the February meeting.

12. Old Business.

A. Hatch Pond/South Kent Watershed Plan. Franken and Spelbos attended a meeting at the South Kent School wherein Hatch Pond consultants Fuss & O'Neill presented their report on Hatch Pond. The report is published online at the South Kent School website. The report concludes that conditions have improved considerably since farming stopped at the north end of the Pond. Inflow rates of phosphorus have dropped by quite a lot, levels coming up from the bottom are very low. The heaviest load comes from the School and Bulls Bridge Golf Course. Vegetation in the water is a problem for recreational users but is good for fish and wildlife habitat. Algae levels are improving. Thus, there really is no immediate need to undertake any management activities. Franken and Spelbos thought the presentation was excellent and wished more people from the Town had been able to see it. They suggested that the presentation could be hosted at Town Hall on a more convenient date. The next meeting of the Hatch Pond group will be in December.

B. Trail Brochure/Guide. Murphy reported that John Baker continues to work on the Guide.

13. New Business.

A. CEQ Legislative Agenda. The Commission reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality's legislative agenda, submitted to the Connecticut Legislature on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

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B. Suggestion: Join Rivers Alliance? After attending the Connecticut Watershed Conservation Network conference in Ridgefield in November, Murphy suggested that the Commission join Rivers Alliance of CT as a member. The Commission supported this idea and asked Manes to email Baker about joining and paying membership dues.

C. Roxbury Conservation Commission Well Testing Program. The Commission discussed this initiative by the Roxbury Conservation Commission. It is unclear what is included in the test. Murphy volunteered to contact the Roxbury Commission to find out more and report back at the February meeting.

D. CLCC Conference Sneak Peek . Manes directed Commissioners to information on the CLCC Annual Conference, March 21, 2015 at Wesleyan University. A “Sneak Peek” of the workshops and seminars is posted on the CLCC website.

E. CLEAR Land Use Law Conference. <http://clear.uconn.edu/events/2015land-use.pdf>. Manes directed Commissioners to information on the CLEAR Land Use Law Conference, which also will be held at Wesleyan University on March 21, 2015.

F. Town of Kent Annual Meeting. The Town of Kent Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 15, 2015.

14. Correspondence

A. Norfolk Land Trust OSI event Jan 24<sup>th</sup> – Climate Change and Protecting Species Diversity

B. Darwin Day Dinner February 7<sup>th</sup>

C. 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy of Environmental & Social Justice Day at Yale-Peabody Museum Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> 12-4 and Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup> 10-4. Free.

15. Adjourn. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Manes  
February 4, 2015

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