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By Darlene Brady at 8:33 am, May 17, 2021

KENT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Kent Town Hall
41 Kent Green Boulevard
Kent, Connecticut 06757

DRAFT MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

March 17, 2021

Present: Commissioners Connie Manes (chair), Liddy Baker, Melissa Cherniske, Carol Franken, and Wendy Murphy; advisor Jos Spelbos, visitor Mike Benjamin.

1. Call to order
The meeting was held via Zoom video conference. Connie called the meeting to order at 6.35 pm.
2. Accept/amend agenda
Jos asked to add under New Business an item concerning the addition of two zoning amendments. Melissa called to accept the agenda as amended and Liddy seconded. The motion carried.
3. Review, amend, approve the February Draft Minutes
The February draft required a change. Item #3 was amended to read January instead of December and that the January Minutes were approved as amended. Melissa moved to approve the February minutes and Wendy seconded. They were approved.
4. Review, amend, approve minutes of Special Meeting on the POCD Feb 24, 2021. Melissa moved to accept the Minutes as written and Connie seconded. Approved unanimously.
5. Treasurer's Report. Liddy reported no change since February status. She also said that our commission has submitted to the BOS a request for the same annual budget as the previous year and informed them that we would be returning some of this year's unused funds owing to several of last year's programs having been cancelled owing to Covid. We will be asking for \$2,495. Liddy said Barbara Herbst reported \$8,700 in Kuga bank account. .
6. Public comment
Mike was invited by Connie to make any public comment he wanted to.
7. Old Business

KCC Programming in April reported by Liddy. Earth Day is Thursday April 22 and Arbor Day Celebrations at Kent Center School will be April 30. On roadside clean up, a week-long affair in April which to be done, Liddy will build on her past list of volunteers and send them solicitations to come again. Wendy suggested we distribute bags, gloves etc. to aid in community awareness and recruit more volunteers by setting up a table in front of the IGA a week before. Liddy will get IGA's their permission. The Cof C has budgeted half their usual amount or \$200 this year. She will ask for more. Liddy purchased green recycling bags on line and intends to get heavy duty black bags as well. Liddy will ask for more. She also reported that this year's recycling poster is done. Melissa will put the winners on our Facebook page. Liddy also said that she has found on line a heavy duty disposable glove made by Power Guard. They will be sending us 200 pairs gratis, which is a big donation. This is in response to SKS saying they found the old ones of poor quality. Liddy will contact Melissa re providing a thank you and PR to the donor. Liddy is waiting to hear from Lynn as to the date they will do their clean-up. She hopes it will not be the week of April 12-17 when she will be out of town. Boy scouts will probably do April 23rd.

For Arbor Day no outside tree will be planted this year. Instead we will be giving out Musclewood tree (American Hornbeam) native saplings offered to KCC at no cost by Bartlett Tree Co. to each student or family at the end of the school day, Friday April 30. Each sapling will come in a reusable bag with instructions for timely planting and maintenance and tree identification information. Melissa says we got a lot of positive feedback on the program last year. Connie will create a small note to insert KCC's involvement.

The traditional Library Program that is usually run in April is being postponed to sometime in mid-June, yet to be determined. The theme of Bats will be resurrected from last year's cancelled program with Laurie Doss and Marvelwood School. Plans are in the works for Aiden Cherniske to make a presentation including his power point and for a wildlife rehabilitator to show a live bat, a perfect use of Zoom technology. Carol in consultation with Debbie, the children's librarian, will be purchasing theme-related books for KCC to donate to the library..

7B Sustainable Waste Management (formerly Reduce Reuse Recycle). Special new program has started for separating glass. The new glass separation container is in place but in what Wendy and others said seemed to be a poor location behind the plastic and cardboard/paper container and half out of sight. Glass bottles and jars must be thrown one at a time through small portholes. Better signage needed for sure. Bottle caps must be removed first. Melissa thinks that once the new manager is chosen he/she will get this better organized and provides better signage. Carol thinks there's an education component which we need to consider to make things move more slowly.

No movement as yet on composting initiative according to Connie. She said she attended a webinar of the Coalition for Sustainable Materials (CCSMM) and found it discouraging. . Connie says found it depressing. Producers and aggregators were there but so much of waste is turning out to be non-recyclable. She said the producers need to make the first movements. KCS is not participating in the TREX program this year. Mike said that any approach to recycling that doesn't start with the producers is a waste of time. Kent's garbage is not going to a landfill but is being burned and waste is added to our air. Connie added that there are a couple of bills in the state legislature to make improvements. She also says modeling good behavior and speaking up are two ways we can contribute individually...

Connie said that Jean told a recent Board of Finance she had recruited five people for the Sustainable CT program. KCC is eager to support that effort.

7C Hiker's Guide: 42 copies of the revised Guide are left. House of Books may ask for more. The Chamber has given out all their copies to newcomers by now. Next time around we will need to update the Hikers Guide.

7D. Legislative Activity. Connie recommends we check with the League of Conservation Voters to see what conservation issues are seriously being put forth to know where we should put our efforts. Melissa said that bills with bi-partisan support have the best chance of reaching the voting stage. Carol provided a short list of bills that are coming up. Even in the instance of the so-called "Bottle Bill" it will probably have to be broken down into narrower bills to reach a positive consensus. Legislative action is more about politics than about conservation. Jos suggested we take our lead from the League of Conservation Voters in so far as what we choose to put on our agenda and discuss in our meetings. . A bill on Single Use Straws and Balloons went to hearing on March 3 and got through committee. Another that got through committee was on the use of a certain chemical used in fire fighting foam. Melissa said that most of the items proposed this year are not likely to go very far. Jos also mentioned important hearings on planning and zoning issues, such as affordable housing and housing density. Connie asked Jos to keep us informed on legislation in this area.

7E. POCD. Planning and Zoning Commission said they have decided to hire a professional consultant. The RFP was published this week and bids from consultants are due in on March 25. Not many consultants who are qualified in this area so the number of bids are likely to be few. How they plan to engage the public in this planning process is one of the answers that bidders must provide the P&Z. We will hang on to our notes re how to improve the next POCD in case the consultant selected wants to talk to us or in case we see glaring omissions in the draft produced. Melissa said we all need to think about how we will use the POCD update in the course of our work. It must not simply exist on the shelf. Connie said one of our roles as a Conservation Commission is to advise others so we can continue to press the P&Z and others to follow the new POCD. .

7F WCCAA. Wendy said the only notable development is the issuance of the CT DEEP's second quarter report on what they see in our data. Right now it is much too soon to make any conclusions on where air quality is going. Mike agreed with this assessment.

7G KCS Solar Initiative. Nothing new has come up since the last meeting except that discussions between KCS and the Green Bank on a contract and the associated engineering plans continue to be developed.

7H. Sitting Council Proposal on Cell Tower. Connie says decisions are likely to take a long time. Opponents are mounting an appeal.

8. New Business.

8A. Urban Forests. Concern about the tremendous loss of town ash trees led to a brief discussion of what needs to be done to counter this problem. The KCC has been strongly associated with the maintenance of town street trees but Melissa said that we can do nothing further about trees on Main Street until the sidewalks on Main Street are finished. We presume that still more major damage will be done to existing tree roots. Wendy suggested that we ask the town to include street tree planting in its capital budget. Connie thinks "the ship has sailed" and that the time to have something to say about the sidewalk project has passed. Melissa suggests we take inventory of trees now and be ready to propose tree additions for the future. Jos says that ash trees are basically doomed. Presumably new varieties will eventually be developed but not in the foreseeable future.

8B Proposed Zoning Amendments Jos wants us to be aware of two proposed zoning amendments that must be taken to a town vote. One has to do with the reduction of open space in housing developments. The other has to do with a specific development being planned at the north end of the village district in the large space off Route. Jos expressed regret that a "Northern Gateway" on Route 7 cannot be saved by KLT or by the town. The property is opposite Cobble Lane. Connie thought KCC should at least advise on this. On the west side of Rt. 7 is the river and a critical view-shed. Jos says that P&Z subdivision regulations are out-of-date right now in so far as conforming to the existing zoning regulations. Connie suggested that we put further discussion on the agenda for our April meeting. Also up for discussion is permits for private cemeteries.

9. Correspondence

10. Adjourn at 8:18

There being no other issues before the Commission, Liddy proposed we adjourn and Melissa seconded. The meeting ended at 8:18

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Murphy
KCC Secretary
March 25, 2021

DRAFT