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By Darlene Brady at 10:40 am, Nov 15, 2021

KENT CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Using Zoom Video Conferencing Technology
October 20, 2021 – 7:00 pm
DRAFT MINUTES

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85182129222?pwd=L211RkNrbzVnMTFOM2kwMk11V1hhUT09>

Meeting ID: 851 8212 9222 Passcode: 190993

Attending were Connie Manes, Mike Benjamin, Wendy Murphy, Liddy Baker, Carol Franken, and Jos Spelbos. Jim Norton was present as a guest.

Chair Connie Manes called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm

1. The agenda was accepted on a motion by Wendy, seconded by Liddy, and approved by unanimous vote.
2. The late Boone Moore, a one-time chair of the P&Z and later of the KCC, was honored. Several commissioners including Connie M, Jos S, Wendy M, and Liddy B remembered Boone's many years of remarkable service to the town. Jos mentioned in particular Boone's call for a biological assessment of Skiff Mountain which was subsequently carried out.
3. Three draft minutes from previous meetings awaited commissioners' approval. On the June 16, 2021 draft minutes the following amendments were made. Amendment #1 to section 2A. Jos asked that the repetition of the sentence "Connie sees a role..." be deleted as redundant. Amendment #2 to section 3, Treasurer's Report, Jos questioned the meaning of "this is our pay-in to the Kuga fund" sentence. After Liddy's clarification Connie suggested we delete that sentence in the Treasurer's report. Also deleted is the final sentence regarding "Melissa thinks...."

Moving down to 5A Connie asks that the spelling error referring to Jos as a "she" be changed to "he" in the sentence beginning "She also comments....". Connie also asked that the sentence regarding "the motivation of the developer..." as well as the sentence regarding "in no sense does anyone think any aspects..." both be deleted as inappropriate.

On 5B, there's an error in the final line regarding the one-page letter which Connie volunteered to send; it went to the P&Z and not to Donna Hayes...

In 5E Connie asks that we delete the first sentence and say simply that the Library is no longer selling copies of the Trail Book.

Under 5F, the two sentences at the end regarding Melissa's relation to politics should be deleted as not relevant.

The remainder of the discussion on the Minutes are to be tabled. Carol moved that we vote on the above amendments to the June 16 Minutes. Connie asked for a vote and there being no opposition the amendments carried.

Due to time constraints it was decided to postpone discussion of the other two draft minutes until the next meeting.

4. Liddy then presented the Treasurer's Report which after monthly expenses being paid leaves us with a balance to spend of \$2,330. The Kuga Fund currently has \$9,669. And \$462 in our arboretum fund.

5. Connie then asked of comments from the public. Guest James Norton was acknowledged but made no comment at this time.

6. Old Business

6A. Update on the Application to P&Z for a Conservation Development-Subdivision in the Northern Gateway and the final public hearing held by zoom on Oct. 14 Jos summarized the discussion. 80 people attended remotely, including the P&Z commissioners. The majority of those speaking as members of the public indicated opposition to the application for a variety of reasons. Several recent changes in the developers' application were explained by chair Matt Winter including the move to a CID or common interest development classification. At the conclusion of the three hour call-in meeting the P&Z Chair closed the meeting and said a decision on the application would be made within the next 65 days, possibly as soon as the P&Z's next regular meeting on November 18.

Connie M. left the KCC meeting at this point to attend another meeting. She also recused herself from any subsequent discussion of the P&Z application or decision-making because her husband is on the commission. Mike Benjamin then took over the meeting at Connie's request.

The question was raised by Liddy as to whether KCC should follow up at all on this application. Wendy said the only way open now was procedural: She said that the P&Z's website gave no information to the public as to how or when interested parties could legally express support or opposition, and that such lack of information was detrimental to public discourse. She finds that many of our other commissions also fail to set forth a mechanism or timelines for public comment. It was suggested that the KCC investigate various practices in other towns and send the Selectmen a recommendation that could be applied to all commissions in the future. While not apparently required by state statute as part of Freedom of Information (FOI) rules, the sense of our meeting is that such a statement would make public participation easier. Jean Speck who joined the KCC Zoom meeting as this discussion was going on said she was not averse to the KCC submitting such a recommendation. Wendy volunteered to develop a template or sample wording by which Kent commissions could inform citizens of the proper way to offer comments on pending issues. Mike Benjamin agreed that "there needs to be "

more clarity" in how the public can participate in the working of various commissions. Carol asked that Wendy come back with suggestions for wording.

6B. First Selectman Jean Speck next spoke about Sustainable Materials Management in Kent, the contents of which are contained in detail in an email that she sent out to the public on October 8. The CT DEEP has made a lot of new money available for special programs, including one on composting... Jennifer Heaton-Jones of HRRRA has offered to help us with a grant application to DEEP. It may involve joining in a regional program with several towns south of us that are under HRRRA (Weston, Wilton, and Roxbury) or it may be for Kent only depending on further research. Also discussed was whether composting service would be offered to anyone in the community or just transfer station ticket holders. A letter of intent is due soon. Jean also said that HRRRA will increase the Tip Fee for waste because of rising costs of transportation. AND MIRRA, the last remaining incinerator plant in CT, is due to close next year on account of its old technology. Jos asked whether the new glass recycling program is working successfully and Jean confirmed that it was, though overall the Transfer Station is not yet paying for itself. She also mentioned continued interest in opening the TS for another weekday. Murphy asked about where composting would be managed, being that existing space at the Transfer Station is nearly full now. Jean Speck mentioned that the compost material might be handled in a commercial depot such as one that exists now in New Milford. As everything that goes for recycling is weighed and recorded it will be possible to have an equal amount of mulch returned based on each year's contributions. This topic concluded with Carol inviting the Selectmen to do a survey of other citizen requests for Transfer Station improvements. Glass recycling at the Transfer Station in the first six months or so has already amounted to 15 tons.

6C. Sustainable CT in Kent. Jean reports that the group she appointed has become smaller and is now down to three people. They are consequently trying to reduce the number of items they are working on. One priority is affordable housing; another is composting; a third is for recent start-ups which will provide credits. Youth art programs and local destinations that children at Kent Center School could walk to for enrichment. Watershed education is the fourth "bucket" that the group is working on. The Sustainability group is going to go to a regular meeting schedule on the 2nd Friday of each month at 2 pm, hoping that with greater predictability more people will volunteer. Jean concluded by urging commissioners with particular interests in any of these sustainability areas to volunteer.

6D. The *Kent Trails* hiking book is selling well. We have an inventory of 30 remaining copies. We will need to consider going back for more copies if we start to run short during the holidays. Another new trail is being cut on the Tobin Family trails atop Dugan Road. Wendy wondered when we will consider the job done and stop making printed revisions. The group decided to wait until January and see what our situation is. And whether a real revision will be necessary or desirable.

6E. WCCAA CT Update. Nothing new to report. Mike said we are awaiting the completion of Wagstrom's U of CT analysis. later this fall.

6F. POCD Update. There are a lot of conflicting priorities in the POCD. Until some pruning is done to the POCD and to the P&Z regulations it is not a particularly helpful document.. Several commissioners spoke about its internal contradictions and said that the group would do well to study its tenets more closely and point them out before producing the planned update.

7. New Business

We will submit a question for First Selectman's Candidate Debate

Library Zoom 7:00 Oct 27 (deadline for questions Oct 25 5:00). Mike has agreed to write it based on our discussion and send it to Connie with a request for her to submit it on our behalf. Carol also formally thanked Mike for becoming a commissioner.

8. Correspondence

CACIWC annual meeting is on Nov 6, 2021

9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Murphy, Secretary
November 14, 2021