

Town of Kent Newsletter

Good News Spotlight!

As I sit here in the First Selectman's office, I think about the first time I came to Kent. It was January 19th, 1985 and I was about to get married to Kathleen having never set foot in Kent or met her parents, Tom and Maureen Brady, until my wedding day. Despite the cold and snowy weather and knowing no one besides my bride-to-be and few of my family members who made it to Kent, I was greeted by the most warm and welcoming people you could ever imagine. After a quick ceremony at Sacred Heart Church and a short (but intense!) wedding reception at the Fife and Drum, we set off on our life's adventure together. It was that day that Kathleen and I promised each other that Kent was where we wanted to be after our careers in the Navy, and just about 25 years later, we came back home. What prompts me to relate this story is that this is the exact experience I have related to me by newcomers (and returnee's!) alike, almost everyday. This time, I want to dedicate this newsletter to all those people who were here forever, and all those that came after and made Kent their home. The information in this newsletter is because of all those people, their dedication and commitment to Kent, and their desire to "Keep Kent, Forever!" Take care and stay healthy!

News From Town Hall

Department, Board and Commission Updates

Below is contact information, status updates, and news on projects and policies as well as general information about the various components of Kent's Town Government. As always refer to the Town of Kent website (www.townofkentct.org) for detailed information.

Board of Selectmen

Marty Lindenmayer, firstselectman@townofkentct.org

Glenn Sanchez, glennsanchez@townofkentct.org

Lynn Worthington, lynnworthington@townofkentct.org

Selectman's Office phone: 860.927.4628
First Selectman's Cell Phone: 860.488.6074

The BOS has been extremely busy as we jumped right into budget season by tackling the Five-Year Capital Plan. The BOS met and presented the Capital Plan recommendation to the Board of Finance (BOF) on 17 January and there was a lively discussion to a packed house the next night, 18 January, when the BOS held our Annual Town Meeting to present the Plan to the citizens. We continue to build priorities into our longterm planning process in Kent and look forward to hearing from the BOF and other residences on how we can provide for the future of our programs by providing a programmed approach to spending so we can maintain and build into the future. The link to the Capital Plan is here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I5wyOTAi9mmqXFaijFogEMMIlnlI0pWB>

So, how do you as residents of Kent find out what an Annual Meeting is, when it is, and where to go to find the background materials that are the basis for understanding the issues on the agenda. Not only Annual Meetings, but how about finding out when the Conservation Commission is meeting, or what the Board of Education is discussing, and what programs Park & Rec are looking at for adults for the coming year? We have the answer to that and other questions available through our Town of Kent website (www.townofkentct.org). If you want to subscribe to any specific Board or Commission, you can do so by filling out a form on the Town website using the “**Subscribe**” button located on the bottom of the **Home** page. You’ve seen these websites before and they are meant to be easy to use, however if you have any problem, please call the Selectman’s Office at 860.927.4628 or stop by and we’ll show you.

Winter Weather and the Town Crew: It’s been a “stormy start” to 2024, and I want to thank our Town Crew for their resilience and attention to the needs of the community as they battled, ice, snow, and heavy rains over the past few weeks. And as a show of thanks and support for the Crew, there is a “**Coffee for the Crew**” fund available at the Mobile Gas Station for anyone wishing to donate to so that the crew can refuel on those long days and nights. Totally voluntary, this fund has been around in different forms over the years and is very much appreciated. Kent is filled with thoughtful and generous people and on behalf of Rick and the Crew, thanks!

I know there have been some issues with the flooding that occurs on our roads, the inevitable icing that follows when the temperatures drop at night, and just how much salt is enough! We are doubling our efforts to find solutions that will provide short term relief and long-term solutions and will let you all know what we come up with.

Emergency Management is Full: We finally have a fully staffed Emergency Management team in place. The position of Emergency Management Director (EMD) has been filled by Brian Hunt, a former EMD and member of the KVFD, who moved back into the area from Georgia. Brian has an impressive background in EM will be overseeing the training of our EM team as well as improving our relationship between our Kent Fire, Police, and Public Works department as well as our state EM organizations and public utilities. The role of our second Emergency Management Deputy Director has also been filled. We welcome Mike Donaghey, a retired police officer from Stanford, CT who also spent time working with the Federal Air Marshall Service as well as several private security companies and has experience working with the security Department at Kent School. Eric Epstein has agreed to stay on for a while as our other EM Deputy and you all know what a fantastic job he’s done managing our EM department single handedly for the past couple of years. Just a reminder, these positions are all volunteer, no compensation is offered at all except our thanks and gratitude for the job they do to keep us safe and aware.

Board of Selectman Subcommittee’s:

Swift House Task Force (SHTF): The SHTF has been attending many of the BOS meetings relaying important thoughts and ideas for consideration as to the use and function of the Swift House. The BOS and the SHTF will be holding a combined special meeting on Friday, 02 February inside the Swift House to see the current condition of the building and to discuss those potential uses. We have contracted with the architecture firm Silver-Petrocelli to conduct an analysis for a first phase look at making an entrance and bathroom that are

ADA compliant. The BOS and SHTF will continue to work with the architect to determine feasibility of the proposed uses and functions and to scope out prospective cost data for each. The ultimate goal is to make a studied analysis of the potential uses for the Swift House, including funding levels based on those uses, and then to bring the entire proposal to a Town Meeting for the residents to decide the final way ahead. Stay tuned, a lot more to come!

Kent Broadband Committee: We've resurrected this committee which was originally established in September 2021 but had never actually met. The charter for this committee is to "explore options, capabilities, and costs to bring broadband to all residents in Town, and to make recommendations to the BOS." This is an extremely important effort to achieve digital equity within the rural and underserved areas of Kent, so if you have any time or talent in this area, we'd appreciate if you would join our group and help bring this capability to our town. If interested, submit a cover letter to include a short resume of pertinent experience, including any special qualifications to Administrative Assistant Joyce Kearns, in one of the following ways:

1. via email adminassist@townofkentct.org
2. in-person drop-off in the white drop box at the front entrance to Town Hall
3. in regular mail to Kent Town Hall ATTN: Joyce Kerns, PO Box 678, Kent, CT 06757

Kent Cemetery Ordinance: As you may have heard, the Kent Cemetery Association requested and had approved from the BOS the transfer of responsibility and oversight for the six Kent community cemeteries (Bulls Bridge Cemetery, Flanders Cemetery, Congregational Cemetery, Good Hill Cemetery, Skiff Mountain Cemetery, and St. Andrew's Cemetery) in the Town of Kent. As such, the BOS has been working with our Town Attorney and members of the KCA to draft an ordinance that would reflect the establishment of a Kent Cemetery Committee and the duties and responsibilities of a Sexton and Assistant that would handle the day-to-day affairs of the cemeteries. We have a hard deadline to finalize the ordinance, have it approved at a Town Meeting, establish the Committee, and do a search in order to hire the Sexton all before the cemeteries open up from Winter on 01 April 2024. Stand by for more news as this is a fairly fast-moving project for the town.

Kent Center School (KCS)

It's Kindergarten Registration time once again and we've received this letter from Michelle Mott, KCS Principal:

Kent Center School 24-25 Kindergarten Registration

Lots of other happening at KCS, so check out their website:

<https://www.kentcenterschool.org>

Treasurer/Board of Finance

Barbara Herbst | 860.927.0109 | treasurer@townofkentct.org |

BOF Chair| Nancy O'Dea-Wyrick

Barbara has been busy pulling together the 2024-2025 Town Operating Budget and just recently released the requested (but not complete) budget numbers to the BOS and the public. (DRAFT budget

here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZgFfOKxoYqVRzTaUkyE3zkzBWINj7ISQ/view?ths=true&pli=1>

You will note that the draft budget does not have submissions from every department, organization, and association in Kent and the surrounding area therefore be sure to remember these numbers are submissions only, and BOS has not had the chance to review and make recommendations. The BOS will hold a Special Meeting on Friday, 02 February to organize a series of budget review hearings in order to hear from organizations that the Board feels is important to address their request. More to come on this front ...

Town Clerk

Darlene Brady | 860.927.3433 | townclerk@townofkentct.org

Did you know that Darlene Brady is the source of many of the notices and news items of interest that come out of Town Hall? Darlene, besides all the duties of Town Clerk, has taken on the important role of working with our Constant Contact media program to ensure that the entire staff in Town Hall is trained and advised on how to develop and communicate the many notes and news items that are released from Town Hall each week (she certainly has her hands full with the First Selectman's office!) This is no small task and very often

involves last minute, after working hours, communication of facts and information that in a lot of cases, she writes herself. Thank you!

The Town Clerk also wants everyone to be aware of the Absentee Voting changes in Connecticut. This is from the CT Secretary of State:

“Connecticut law allows you to receive an absentee ballot if, in your judgment, an absence from your town on Election Day prevents you from appearing at your polling place, or you are prevented from appearing at your assigned polling place on Election Day because of sickness or physical disability (not necessarily your sickness or disability), active service in the Military, religious tenets forbid secular activity on the day of the election, duties as an election official at a polling place other than your own during all of the hours of voting. **To receive your absentee ballot please complete and sign an application and return it to your Town Clerk.**”

Other information regarding the CT Early Voting period for Primaries and the General Election will come out soon and can also be found in this newsletter under the “Registrar of Voters”

Registrars Of Voters

Therese Duncan (D) & Sal Lillienthal (R) | 860.927.1953 | registrar@townofkentct.org

Early Voting is Here!

Our office is gearing up for Connecticut’s first Early Voting experience. The Presidential Preference Primary has been moved up to April 2, 2024. Early Voting will be held March 26, March 27, March 28, and March 30 from 10am until 6pm in the office of the Kent Registrars, second floor of the Kent Town Hall. If you have any question, please phone the Registrar of Voters Office at 860 927 1953.

The Secretary of the State of CT has announced the candidates for the Primary. The following Democratic candidates were selected to appear on the ballot (listed in alphabetical order):

Joe Biden
Dean Phillips
Cenk Uygur
Marianne Williamson

The following Republican candidates were selected to appear on the ballot (listed in alphabetical order):

Ryan Binkley
Ron DeSantis
Nikki Haley
Donald Trump

Park and Recreation

Mathew Busse | 860.927.1003 | parkandrec@townofkentct.org | 3rd Monday @ 7:00p

Welcome to our new director:

The Kent Park and Recreation Commission is thrilled to announce that Matthew Busse of New Fairfield is the new Park and Recreation Director and he’ll start Feb. 12.

Mr. Busse has extensive experience in managing recreation facilities and developing programming for all ages. He currently serves as the Director of Aquatic Operations and Safety at the New Canaan Community YMCA in New Canaan, CT. He also previously directed the Y’s day camp that involved 170 campers and a team of approximately 60 counselors, program specialists, lifeguards, and assistant directors. Mr. Busse also has experience in parks maintenance and operation, working for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) at Squantz Pond State Park, as well as serving as the Beach Director of Connecticut State Beaches.

“I am incredibly excited and honored to step into the role of Park and Recreation Director for the Town of Kent. The field of Parks and Recreation is not just about spaces and programs, but about weaving the fabric of our community closer together. It offers a vibrant platform for residents to interact, connect, and create lasting memories. I am eagerly anticipating the

chance to contribute to enhancing the quality of life in the community through innovative, engaging, and inclusive initiatives. This role is not just a position to me; it's a chance to make a real, positive difference in the lives of the people of Kent!" said Mr. Busse. He is currently pursuing his Master's of Science degree in Recreation Administration at Southern Connecticut State University and he received his Bachelor's of Arts in Environmental Policy with a minor in Justice and Law Administration, Legal Studies from Western Connecticut State University.

Rufus P. de Rham, who is chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission, said he found Mr. Busse to be extremely thorough and personable, as well as someone who put forth plans that were well thought out.

"I believe Matt is the right person to lead Kent Park and Rec. He has a community-based spirit and vision to grow our programs and plan our parks development," Mr. de Rham said.

Well done to Park and Rec Commission!

Upcoming Programs

Park and Rec have a number of programs planned for February.

Open Swim begins Feb. 14

Park and Rec is pleased to announce a new aquatics program of Open Swim in the Kent School pool on Wednesday mornings, 7:00a-8:15am. This eight-week program begins Feb. 14 and continues through April 3. Cost is \$80. Registration is limited to 20 to prevent overcrowding in the lanes.

Register online <https://kentct.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>

Aqua Aerobics for Seniors and Adults

The Aqua Aerobics program returns for an expanded 8-week session for seniors and adults beginning Feb. 14 on Wednesday mornings from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the Kent School Pool, 13 Skiff Mountain Road. Join aqua aerobics instructor Mo Van Moffaert for this fun and exciting approach to fitness! This is a great way to enjoy some time in the pool while also taking part in low impact water exercise which is easy on your joints but still very healthy for your bones and muscles! Open to adults and seniors. Cost is \$45.

Register online <https://kentct.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>

New Learn-to-Swim session

A new session of Learn-to-Swim group swimming lessons are being offered by Kent Park and Recreation in partnership with Kent School in its indoor pool.

The six-week program with instructor Mo Van Moffaert begins Feb. 10 on Saturday mornings between 9-11:30 am. The cost is \$120 per participant.

Children will be split into age-appropriate groups based on registration numbers.

Registration is limited and will be taken first come, first served.

Register online <https://kentct.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>

Join the Park and Rec Email List

Park and Recreation has its own email list. If you'd like to receive Kent Park & Rec e-mails to stay up to date on all of our cool programs, activities and events, [**CLICK HERE!**](#)

Tax Collector

Debbie Devaux | 860.927.3269 | taxcollector@townofkentct.org

REMINDER...REMINDER...REMINDER...REMINDER

The second installment of the Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicle Supplemental tax for the Grand List of 2022 will become delinquent on Friday, February 2, 2024. AND.... the Tax Collector Office will be open on Thursday, 01 February for any last-minute business.

Any questions or if you want to access your tax files online, go to:

<https://www.townofkentct.org/tax-collector>

Assessor

Jen Dubray | 860.927.3160 | assessor@townofkentct.org

INFORMATION ON ELDERLY, TOTALLY DISABLED HOMEOWNERS & ADDITIONAL VETERANS FOR TAX CREDITS

Every year the State of Connecticut offers a program for Elderly Homeowners and Totally Disabled Persons. The filing period starts February 1st and runs until May 15th. Qualifying Income limits cannot exceed \$43,800 for unmarried individuals or \$53,400 for married couples. If interested please contact the assessor's office for an application.

To qualify proof of all income needs to accompany an application. Income includes a copy of your 2023 Income Tax Return; (if you file one); Social Security, wages, bonuses, taxable portion of annuities and pensions, interest dividends, net rent or proceeds from a sale of property, etc.

Veterans who are receiving an exemption under section 12-81 of the CT General Statutes may also be eligible for an additional exemption providing the same income requirements are met as outlined above.

From the files of "I knew that...": I'm pretty sure this won't come as a big shock to any of us that live in Kent, still, it's important to put this in context of the country overall...

"Federal Index Finds Increase in Connecticut Home Prices Among the Highest in the Nation"

Home prices in Connecticut climbed by nearly 10% between the third quarter of 2022 and the third quarter of 2023, according to the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) House Price Index, which found the state reporting the fourth highest increase in the nation. Read it here from Hugh McQuaid

The Assessor's Office is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm. If you have any questions, you can contact the Assessor's Office at (860) 927-3160.

Land Use/Building Official/Fire Marshall/Health Department

Land Use Administrator Tai Kern | 860.927.4625 | landuseadmin@townofkentct.org

Assistant Land Use Administrator Donna Hayes | 860.927.4873

Building Official Joe Manley | 860.927.4872 | buildingdepartment@townofkentct.org

Fire Marshall Stan MacMillan | 860.927.4557 | sharonlanduse@gmail.com

Sanitarian Cathy Weber | 860.927.4626 | cweber@tahd.org

You can also contact us here: (<https://www.townofkentct.org/departments>)

Regular Meetings:

- **Architectural Review Board meets 2nd Monday at 5:30pm**
- **Zoning Board of Appeals meets 2nd Tuesdays at 7pm**
- **Planning and Zoning Commission meets 2nd Thursday at 7pm**
- **Inland Wetlands Commission meets 4th Monday at 7pm**

P&Z Commission: After a public hearing on January 23, 2024, the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted several revisions to the regulations. The comprehensive update of the Subdivision Regulations will be effective January 31, 2024. Subdivision Regulations had not been updated since 1995 and a six-month moratorium had been in place during this revision process. These new regulations are in compliance with current standards and statutory requirements. Additionally, revisions to Zoning Regulations sections regarding conservation development, family and group child care home, and dwellings in incomplete subdivisions were adopted with an effective date of February 10, 2024. Those interested in reviewing these regulations can find them on the Town of Kent's website at this link: <https://www.townofkentct.org/planning-zoning-commission/pages/regulations>

Congratulations and Well Done: We often forget just how hard working and dedicated are the folks who volunteer to be on our Boards and Commissions. For the P&Z Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) this requires extensive training and certification so that the members are fully qualified and prepared to take on the responsibilities of these two organizations. For the P&Z and ZBA, they were required by state statute to complete several hours of training by December 31st, 2023 and as reported by Tai Kern, Land Use Coordinator, that training was fully accomplished. In her words, "Kent is very lucky to have such a dedicated group of volunteer commission and board members." We couldn't agree more and here are the P&Z and ZBA members that completed this training:

Anthony Palumbo	P&Z Alternate
Darrell Cherniske	P&Z Member
Wes Wyrick	P&Z MEMBER
Sarah Chase	P&Z Member
Alice B. Hicks	P&Z Member
Lawrence Dumoff	P&Z Member
Shelby Green	P&Z Member
Anne Mcandrew	P&Z Alternate
Chris Harrington	P&Z Alternate
Karen Casey	P&Z Member
Anne Bisenius	ZBA Member
John Johnson	ZBA Member
Dan Schiesel	ZBA Member
Elizabeth Aviles	ZBA Alternate
Daniel Murray	ZBA Member
Steve Pener	ZBA Member
Justin Potter	ZBA Alternate
Nick Downes	ZBA Alternate

Social Services

Samantha Hasenflue | 860.927.1586 | socialservices@townofkentct.org

Kent Social Services has numerous programs to help our friends and neighbors and if you have any specific questions, please don't hesitate to ask. One of the most used services is the Kent Food Bank, which is supporting more and more people each week. We appreciate the many wonderful donations that come from the Kent business and religious communities as well as from the pantries and shopping carts of the people of Kent. We are experiencing an increase in need for items used by our "more experienced and seasoned" citizens, so if you are wondering what to donate, think about items need by these folks.

Most of all this time of year, we are so grateful and blessed to have those folks who volunteer, whether it's on a regular basis at the Food Bank, or those who provide situational help at Senior Center events that come from our schools, businesses, non-profits organizations and others. We can't thank you enough for all you do!

Resident State Trooper

Vicky Donahoe | 860.626.7900 | residenttrooper@townofkentct.org

We said our good-byes to Trooper Andrew Fisher after 11 years as our resident Trooper, however we've not skipped a beat with support from Troop "L" as we have Trooper Vicky Donahoe as our temporary duty officer until our new Resident Trooper is selected. Vicky has been active in and around Kent for many years, as a resident of Sherman she spends a lot of time in Kent and as I've heard from a lot of Kent residents, she's been helpful in a lot of situations. In her duties, she recently visited the Senior Center and led a discussion on Security for Seniors which went from a 20 minute talk into one that lasted an hour. Thank you, Trooper Donahoe, and welcome to Kent.

As for the permanent Resident Trooper ...I've met with Sgt Jay St. John from Troop L and he informs me that there is quite an interest in serving here in Kent (and why wouldn't there be?) The application period closes on Friday, 02 February and then there is a several week processing time with the Human Resources Department to vet the applicants. When a number of candidates are identified, Sgt St. John will be in contact with me in order to discuss the applicants. I will ensure that Kent's requirements are considered and I expect that we will get a new Resident Trooper that will work well with our community.

Road Foreman/Public Works

Rick Osborne | 860.927.3491 | publicworks@townofkentct.org

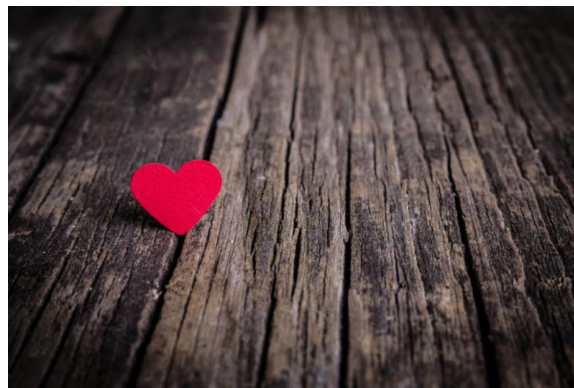
Notes from Rick about Roads....

Street Scape II: Rick Osborne, Barbara Herbst, and Marty Lindenmayer met with CTDOT and with SLR, the project management group working on our Street Scape II project. We discussed primary issues that needed to be accomplished in order to build out our sidewalks on Lane Street, down Easy side of Rt7 from the Monument to South Commons Road and from the West side down to the Kent Greenhouse, and finally up Rt 341 on the

South side to the firehouse and the North side up from the Monument through Maple Street Extension towards Stuart Farms affordable housing. In order to prepare for this construction, easements will have to be obtained from the property owners having the sidewalks installed on their property. This is not a land grab, but an action that will require the Town of Kent to negotiate a fair deal for the property. More to come on that as we begin the process with our real estate attorney's.

Traffic Control Signal and Pedestrian Control Feature Upgrades: Some of you saw the note from our state representative Maria Horne about this CTDOT project and are wondering if this is something to be worried about. Actually, we've had this done before when the corner aprons were done by the State a few years ago (CTDOT adjusted the crosswalk timing and the button height on the poles.) We are also looking at a possible requirement to visit this again as part of integrating the new Street Scape II sidewalks into the corner of Rts 7 and 341. We have more questions for CTDOT and will let you know what we find out.

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Despite some of the unfriendly weather, the sloppy roads, and the scarcity of sunshine...there's a lot to love about living here in Kent. I hope that as we go through February and into March, we take the time to appreciate the people who work so hard to keep Kent the great town that everyone seems to want to come visit.

**Warm Regards,
Marty**

Martin J. Lindenmayer
First Selectman, Town of Kent
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