

KENT CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
Kent Town Hall  
41 Kent Green Boulevard  
Kent, Connecticut 06757

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
November 18, 2020

Present: Commissioners Connie Manes (chair), Liddy Baker, Melissa Cherniske, Carol Franken, and Wendy Murphy; advisor Jos Spelbos (joined at 6.40 after item 4), first selectwoman Jean Speck (joined at 7.00 at item 6A). Guest: Lindsay Larson, HVA (for item 7D). Absent: Donna Sommers.

Prior to the meeting the following items were distributed via email:

- A. Draft Agenda by Carol
- B. Draft Minutes of Meeting of October 21, 2020 by Jos
- C. Approved Minutes of the September 16 meeting
- D. Links to Sherman telecommunications reports by Connie
- E. Town of Kent legal brief on cell tower proposal
- F. Links on organic waste management by Connie
- G. Link to CEQ report on Bottle Redemption Law by Jos
- H. Report by Wendy on solar initiative, November 4
- I. Treasurer's report November

1. Call to order

The meeting was held via Zoom video conference. Connie called the meeting to order at 6.36 pm.

2. Accept/amend agenda

The agenda was amended to add item 7D, and to discuss it between items 5 and 6. The amended agenda was accepted upon a motion by Melissa, seconded by Wendy.

3. Review, amend, approve meeting Minutes

The draft October Minutes were approved after a motion by Wendy and a second by Liddy.

4. Treasurer's report

The report by Liddy showed no changes since last month

5. Public comment

None

7D. HVA culvert replacement initiative

Lindsay Larson, conservation projects manager at HVA, updated the commission on HVA's inventory of culverts in town that form physical barriers to fish and other aquatic wildlife connectivity. Roughly half of public road culverts in their present state have created barriers. Two culverts on Fuller Mountain Road in Pond Mountain Brook are highest priority in Kent, and among the highest in the region, both in regards to conservation value and flooding danger. HVA is using grants to design new open-bottom structures. They have scheduled a site visit with DEEP and town officials on December 2 for permitting and design review. Additional funding is needed for construction.

6. Old Business

6A. Green Bank MAP solar initiative

Wendy reported that of the listed public buildings only Kent Center School qualifies for the municipal solar photovoltaic program, because it is the only one that uses more than 50 kW (it requires a 155kW system). The Green Bank will come back with a system design and pricing proposal, after which the town can approve and sign a 20 year contract. The KVFD is planning to pursue other means of solarizing the Firehouse (usage of 40 kW). Wendy will check with the town of Sharon Energy and Environment Commission on their MAP plans.

6B. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

6B1. Organics composting

Jean noted that the first priority is to get the funding figured out.

6B2. Transfer station

Jean reported that she has hired some new staff but is still looking for a manager. The transfer station doesn't pay for itself, but is a public service.

6B3. CCSMM – CT Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management

Connie and Jean attended CCSMM Zoom meetings and reported on them. Connie emphasized the need for community buy-in, and for education on waste reduction.

6B4. Regional Recycling Task Force

Jean reported that the RRTF is working on an annual report and preparing for the recycling poster contest. The KCC sponsors the local poster contest at KCS in April.

6B5. CT Bottle deposit bill

The CT Council on Environmental Quality recently published a report calling for improvements to the Bottle Redemption Law, including increasing the deposit fee.

6C. Proposed cell tower

Connie has circulated the studies done by Sherman and the town attorney's post-hearing letter to the Siting Council. The Siting Council will next publish a draft finding of facts. Connie asked Jean to set aside some money in the upcoming town budget for a study into the need for and preferred locations of cell towers and emergency communication facilities in town.

6D. Update on WCCAA

Wendy reported that the air monitoring equipment is back in service after maintenance. The maintenance costs are borne by the respective towns. The consultant is being paid from a state grant.

6E. Update on Sustainable CT

Jean proposed that the town signs the resolution to join the municipal certification process, and that the Conservation Commission acts as the principal contact for the Sustainable CT program. Commissioners however felt strongly that this should be a town wide effort, preferable spearheaded by the first selectman, involving many entities and persons, and that more people and organizations have to be made aware, such as through the first selectman's newsletter, and drawn in, before the town can sign up, since a lot of information has to be gathered in the first 3 months.

6F. Update on Kent trails guide

Liddy noted that map changes have been made.

7. New Business

7A. 2021 meeting calendar

Connie will finalize the calendar. Meetings will remain on the third Wednesday of the month, except August and September, starting at 6.30pm from November through March, and at 7pm from April through October.

7B. Election results influence on our planning?

Since our local incumbents were reelected not much will likely change. Carol wants to explore if we can work productively with senator Craig Miner as we do with representative Maria Horn.

7C. Coronavirus effects on our planning

We will have to find a safe way to do the roadside cleanup in April, and think about what other regular programs/ events we can do this coming year, and how.

8. Correspondence

Jean noted that the Emily Hopson memorial pin oak at Town Hall came down in a storm. Melissa suggested giving the attached memorial plaque to the Historical Society, and have the Kuga Fund pay for a new pin oak at the Historical Society property on Studio Hill Road.

9. Adjourn.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8.28 pm by Connie.

Respectfully submitted

by Jos Spelbos (items 1-4 by Carol)

December 12, 2020