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By Darlene Brady at 9:11 am, Apr 11, 2024

TOWN OF KENT
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 10, 2024 @ 7:00pm

In attendance:

Liddy Baker
Mike Benjamin
Melissa Cherniske
Carol Franken
Connie Manes
Wendy Murphy
Jos Spelbos

Call to order

1. A quorum being present, Commission Chair Connie Manes called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.
2. Accept/Amend Agenda. *Upon a motion by Melissa Cherniske seconded by Wendy Murphy, the commissioners voted unanimously to accept the agenda.*
3. Accept/Amend Minutes Regular Meeting March 13, 2024. *Upon a motion by Melissa seconded by Carol Franken, the minutes of the March 13, 2024, Regular Meeting were unanimously approved.*
4. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Liddy Baker emailed her written report to all commissioners prior to the meeting for their review. Sportsmen's purchased 24 more Trails Books, leaving our inventory at 1. Liddy ordered 50 more. The Commissioners discussed the 2023-2024 budget line item for the Arbor Day tree.
5. Public Comment. No members of the public were present at the meeting.
6. Old Business
Discussion Items
 - A. Spring Events
 - i. Town Clean Up. Connie thanked the Commissioners for their participation in planning and administering the Clean Up, which is going very well. New volunteers are enlisted alongside those who have joined the effort for many years. We are hopeful of having 100% coverage.
 - ii. KCS Arbor Day Program Fri April 26. Jos Spelbos reported that the KVFD approved having a tree planted on the firehouse property. The KCS students have not yet decided which tree species to plant; Jos hopes to know by the end of this week. Bruce Bennett estimates that a tree plus associated delivery costs and supplies may be upwards of \$400. *Upon a motion by Melissa seconded by Liddy, the Commission approved the expenditure of up to \$500 for the Arbor Day tree and associated delivery and supply expenses.*
 - iii. Children's Library Program "Let's Compost" Thurs April 18 10:00am. The program is set for next week.

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B. Materials Management in Kent – SAYT. In the Board of Selectmen meeting of March 27, 2024, Jennifer Heaton Jones of HRRRA presented the results of the organics collection pilot at the Transfer Station and reviewed several options for continuation of the program. There will be further information, discussion, and a potential decision at an upcoming meeting of the selectmen this month. Jen Heaton Jones mentioned to Connie that HRRRA welcomes the Commission's help in communicating the town's decision, once made, to Transfer Station customers. Carol reported updated numbers of organics collected at the Transfer Station: 36,877 pounds since last July.

C. Street Trees.

- i. The commissioners discussed the purpose and potential parameters of the Tree Planting Program they hope to launch this year. The primary purpose of the program is to ensure that Kent's streets are lined with trees, for aesthetic purposes as well as other benefits to the community and public including shading and ecological services. Several items of consensus include:
 - a. The program should offer property owners the opportunity to purchase a tree to be planted on the roadside.
 - b. The Conservation Commission will provide funding for 50% of the cost of the tree and planting up to \$250.
 - c. At their option, property owners may purchase a more expensive tree and pay all additional costs above their match share of \$250
 - d. Property owners will sign an agreement to care for their tree.
 - e. Any tree planted shall be a native species, including native cultivars.
 - f. The Conservation Commission will seek to plant up to 5 trees per year, with the funds (up to \$1,250 total) coming out of the Kuga Fund.
 - g. Bruce Bennett and Jos can provide assessment of the sites and proposed species to improve the chances that the trees will flourish.

At its next meeting, the commissioners will discuss whether the program should be confined to the Village Center District or extend to the Historic District. Connie will provide the Town's zoning maps. Jos said that Bruce Bennett has identified 55 places in the Village Center where trees are needed.

The commission discussed preparing a program brochure with testimonials from tree recipients as well as information about the many benefits of trees.

- ii. "Trees of Kent" May 4 program by Bruce Bennett at Kent Memorial Library 11:00am. It would be helpful for commissioners to attend this program.

Updates (as needed)

D. Green Energy Task Force. The Task Force continues to investigate EV charger funding programs. Wendy forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce the announcement of a series of presentations "1st Thursdays" centered around green energy solutions for business owners. Wendy will forward the announcement to the commissioners.

E. Housatonic Herbicide Working Group. Connie reported that raised bill HB5219 addressing Railroad Spraying was referred by the House to the Committee on Transportation.

F. POCD. No update.

7. New Business.

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- A. State Legislative Session. The commissioners reviewed a list of bills (noted within the agenda) raised by the Environment Committee and their status. The commission will continue to follow proposed legislation as the session continues.
- 8. Correspondence. None.
- 9. Adjourn. *There being no further business before the Commission the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.*

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday May 8th @ 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted by: Connie Manes, Chair

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