



**CITY OF NORWALK  
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Norwalk City Hall  
125 East Avenue, PO Box 5125  
Room 225  
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P: 203-854-7791 / F: 203-857-0143

**Minutes  
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
May 22, 2018**

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Attendance: Rich Whitehead, Chairman  
Andrew Strauss  
Peter Viteretto  
Mary-Pat Cottrell

Absent: Gay Mac Leod, Vice Chairperson

Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden  
Dilene Byrd, Secretary

Liaisons: Laurie Mirra

Guest: Elizabeth Esposito, WestCOG  
Erica Kipp  
Dusty McCullough  
Rebecca Schuetz  
Maria Genovese  
John DiScala  
Isaac Taylor

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Whitehead called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

**2. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF  
APRIL 24, 2018.**

**\*\* MR. STRAUSS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

**\*\* MS. COTTRELL SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* MR. STRAUSS MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN ITEM TO THE  
AGENDA.**

**\*\* MR. VITERETTO SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Whitehead asked the Committee members for their thoughts on regarding changing the start time of the meeting and if so, what the preferred time would be. It was the consensus of the Committee members to change the starting time of future meetings to 6:00 P.M.

**\*\*MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO APPROVE CHANGING THE START TIME OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS FROM 7:00PM. TO 6:00PM BEGINNING ON JUNE 26, 2018.**

**\*\* MR. STRAUSS SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Whitehead said that Ms. Mac Leod will be stepping down from the Tree Advisory Committee. He stated that she has done so much for the Committee during her tenure and suggested planning an evening get together in July to thank her for her many years of service. He will send an email to the Committee members with more information. Mr. Strauss also suggesting planting a tree.

### **3. REPORT - INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING**

Mr. Sotnik had no new reports. He said that there was no ownership agreement executed and on file for the resident on Sphar Road and that he has contacted the property owner and informed them that if the tree dies, they will need to replace it at their cost.

### **4. REPORT - TREE PLANTING PROGRAM**

- a. East Avenue  
Mr. Strauss said that he will work on finding potential locations this summer for a Fall 2018 planting.
- b. Main Avenue  
There was no new discussion.
- c. Village Creek  
Ms. Mirra said that the Lilac trees that were planted look great and thanked the Committee. Mr. Whitehead said that some of the trees are missing gator bags and requested that Mr. Sotnik contact Almstead Tree. Ms. Mirra said that they are especially needed in the park. Mr. Sotnik said that the cost of the planting the two (2) trees was \$1,647.50. Mr. Whitehead said that twelve (12) trees will be planted as part of phase I at Woodward Park as part of the Recreation and Parks

planting program and that they will work on phase II in the Spring of 2019. Mr. Viteretto suggested that a maintenance plan be developed.

d. West Avenue

Mr. Sotnik said that he will check with property owners to see if there is an increased interest for a Fall 2018 planting.

e. Richards Avenue

Mr. Sotnik said that fifteen (15) trees were planted at a cost of \$10,898.46 and that a dedication ceremony was held with Bishop Caggiano on May 15, 2018. He stated that there was a nice article in The Hour and that the Diocese also printed an article in Fairfield County Catholic, their publication. Mr. Viteretto said that twelve (12) additional trees will be planted next year. Mr. Whitehead thanked Ms. Cottrell for her help with organizing the ceremony.

f. Wilton Avenue

Ms. Kipp said the National Parks Grants are targeting areas where there can be some recreation, trails, water views etc. and that she thought the area at the corner of Cross Street and Wilton Avenue would be a good fit. She said that the dollar amount is not specified, but that she has looked back to the last couple of years and they range from \$50,000- \$200,000 and the grant is due on June 30, 2018. She said that they strongly recommend reaching out to their representative for the northeast for a better chance of getting funding and they are willing to give guidance prior to the application being submitted. Mr. Sotnik said that he will provide Ms. Kipp with an aerial photo of the location. It was decided that a planning session will be scheduled to discuss the grant application for May 31, 2018 at 6:00 P.M.

**\*\* MR. STRAUSS MOVED TO APPROVE MOVING FORWARD WITH THE GRANT APPLICATION.**

**\*\* MR. VITERETTO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

g. Highland Avenue

Mr. Sotnik said that two (2) Red Maple Trees have been planted and that one was at number 73 and that the other one was at number 77 at a cost of \$1,967.50. Mr. Whitehead said that he received a comment from the resident at number 77 thanking us very much for following up and replacing the tree.

h. Seaside Place

Mr. Sotnik said that he will review the planting plan with the property owner for one (1) Honeylocust tree at 14 Seaside Place at a cost of \$889.75.

Mr. Whitehead said that the Capital Tree Planting budget for next fiscal year has been reduced from \$50,000 to \$10,000, and moving forward he requested a larger planting list be developed, rather than splitting the plantings to show the

funding is really needed to allocate funding into spring and fall planting cycles to better show that funding is really needed.

Mr. Sotnik said that \$20,000 remains from the Fiscal Year 2017 – 2018 Capital budget and that we will receive \$10,000 on July 1, 2018, which will give a total tree planting budget of approximately \$30,000 for Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 plantings.

## **5. UPDATE - TREE MAINTENANCE BY SECTION OF CITY**

Mr. Sotnik said that no supplemental watering has been required due to the amount of rain that has been received, but that Mr. Norman will begin providing updates again next month.

## **6. INFORMATION**

- a. Arbor Day, May/June 2018  
Mr. Sotnik distributed.

## **7. REPORT- 2018 ARBOR DAY - TRACEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Mr. Sotnik said that the ceremony and celebration was held on April 27, 2018 and that it was a very successful event.

## **8. UPDATE - PROPOSED PLANTING PLANS FOR 295 AND 390 WESTPORT AVENUE**

Ms. Genovese, Mr. Taylor and Mr. DiScala presented plans to remove trees along the frontage of 295 Westport Avenue and plant eight Pin Oaks as replacements. Ms. Genovese said that there are approximately 17 trees along the street front and that her office conducted an informal survey analysis of all the properties between Lilian August and Bed Bath and Beyond and only two of the similar sized shopping plazas had eight street trees, and one had six, but the rest had five or less and the trees at 295 are the only ones in the snow shelf, and all the others have a buffer between the trees and the street which contributes greatly to the loss and the maintenance of the trees. She said that they are meeting with Planning and Zoning, but there needs to be a resolution with the Tree Advisory Committee meeting first. Mr. Taylor said that most of the trees are in a state of decline, mostly from environmental stress. Mr. Viteretto said that eight Pin Oak trees are intended to mature to their natural size and height.

Ms. Genovese also presented plans to remove six trees in front of 390 Westport Avenue and replace them with shrubs and several trees in the parking lot because it is very difficult to see the store signage from the street as a result of the trees, even in the winter. Mr. Viteretto discussed options of providing canopy cover inside the parking lot

to make it more pleasant and reduce heat gain. Ms. Genovese said the issue is that if the parking configuration is touched, they will become in violation with Planning & Zoning regulations for prior approvals. Ms. Cottrell said that the trees look to be in good shape and suggested that they be relocated. Mr. Taylor said that he will contact Mr. Hughes to see if he can use them in one of the parks.

There was discussion that ensued and the Committee requested six (6) trees in the parking lot and that the plan to be revised and presented again at the June 26, 2018 Tree Advisory Committee meeting.

## **9. DISCUSSION - 2019 ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION LOCATION**

The Committee decided to extend an invitation to Wolfpit Elementary School for the 2019 Arbor Day Celebration. Mr. Sotnik said that he will contact the Principal.

## **10. PLANNING FOR FUTURE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS/LECTURES**

There was no new discussion.

## **11. REPORT - STRATEGIC TREE CANOPY ENHANCEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

There was no new discussion.

- a. Update - Solar Panel Policy  
There was no new discussion
- b. Update - WestCog Canopy Analysis Project

Ms. Esposito provided an update on the overall Project and the statistics and said they are in the process of completing the strategic canopy improvement plan for Norwalk and are hoping to get some final suggestions from the Tree Advisory Committee within the next month. She said that she is hoping to have a closed draft ready by the end of June. Therefore, she would like to receive any feedback from the Committee by June 15, 2018. She said they are hoping that this pilot plan for Norwalk will encourage other cities and towns to be interested in this kind of work. Currently tree canopy in Norwalk is at 44.2% and there is a potential to go up to 70.4%, in speaking with Mr. Sotnik a reasonable target would be 61.2% because that is the regional average. She said that they have decided to focus on strategic areas within the center of Norwalk and if we hit the goal of 61.2% it would be an estimated 86,000 trees to approximately 350,000 and suggested picking a number of trees between the two and also choosing a deadline that it spur budgeting to accommodate this. Mr. Sotnik said when the budget was fully funded that they were planting an average 30-35 of trees per cycle (2 cycles per year, Spring and Fall) and suggested aiming for 100-125 per year. Mr. Whitehead also suggested having other planting programs to subsidize what the Tree Advisory Committee and

Recreation and Parks is doing. She also asked if there is any potential projects the Committee would like to include in the plan. Mr. Sotnik suggested tying tree plantings with zoning approvals. Ms. Mirra also suggested the social economic and disparities, particularly in South Norwalk.

Ms. Esposito provided an update on the project timeline and said the closed draft will be released to the Tree Advisory Committee and several other stake holder groups in early July 2018, and they would like to receive any comments back within a month so that they can be incorporated into the draft plan. She said it will be released in August for a full public comment period, and then in September, there will be a finalized plan to be adopted and approved if the Committee so wishes. She thanked the Committee for their help with the plan and that it has been a pleasure to work with the group.

## **12. UPDATE - TD GREEN STREET ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION GRANT NCC/NORWALK HOUSING AUTHORITY/MAYORS OFFICE.**

Ms. Kipp updated the Committee on the status of the grant and the next step of selecting the species of trees. She said that the trees will be planted at both locations in September and Mr. Whitehead will do a site visit to choose the locations.

## **13. REPORT - NTA ACTIVITIES**

- a. Tree Farm at Fodor Farm  
Mr. Whitehead said that Mr. Brittel is working on the educational program with Columbus School students and will be installing tree bags for display purposes.
- b. NTA Open House  
Mr. Strauss said that the Open House will held on June 28, 2018, from 5:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.
- c. NTA Office at Fodor Farm  
Mr. Strauss said that the NTA is moving their office to Fodor Farm from 215 East Avenue.

## **14. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no discussion.

## 15. ADJOURNMENT

**\*\* MR. VITERETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MR. STRAUSS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.