



**CITY OF NORWALK
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
Norwalk City Hall
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**Minutes
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 22, 2019**

Attendance: Richard Whitehead, Chairman
Andrew Strauss
Peter Viteretto
Erica Kipp

Absent: Mary-Pat Cottrell

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

Liaisons: Laurie Mirra, Village Creek Board

Guests: Louise Washer, President of the Norwalk River Watershed Association

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Whitehead called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

2. ANNUAL UPDATE - OAK HILLS AUTHORITY

Mr. Whitehead said that he has been in contact with Mr. Schell and he could not attend the meeting, but he has submitted a written report. Mr. Sotnik read the report as follows:

2018 was an abysmal year, with rain, heat and humidity that not only made it more expensive to maintain a golf course, but also drove golfers away. Total rounds are down by 2,800, year to date. This is understandable, considering the normal average for days of measurable rain in just over 81 and in 2018 we received measurable rain on 144 days.

We are hoping for a normal season, we seem to have been in a state of suspended activity since 2016, with construction on and off which also turns away golfers, and with all the rain last season, our last good year was 2015 - 2016, with nearly 42,000 rounds.

Our pro shop was moved to the clubhouse last winter which has improved customer service and the flow of getting from the parking lot to the first tee tremendously. Also, last winter the restaurant was vacated by the old tenants and since May, has been licensed for use by a new group. By virtue of not having an updated lease from the City of Norwalk, allowing language for the building to have a sit-down bar, no tenant wanted the space and pay us rent so we were forced to only have a licensed tenant without a lease agreement. This is supposedly going to change this year allowing us to collect rent for the space, but we are no strangers to delays with the government.

The lack of revenue has sincerely affected our operating this year, forcing us to cut back on many things that cost money, including our annual tree replanting program. We hope to pick it back up again this fall and with a normal season we should be able to.

Mr. Whitehead said that Oak Hills had their budget cut so they will not be doing any project which unfortunately prevents them from doing any tree planting, but it also prevents them from doing any tree removals. He said if the weather is good this year they will be in recovery mode and will need to replenish their budgets so there may not be any activity there throughout the course of this year, but they will hopefully have some available funds in 2020 if they have a good year this year. Mr. Sotnik said that he has spoken with Mr. Torre and any tree work that is related to golf course maintenance will not be approved other than for safety pruning or removals until they begin planting. Ms. Washer said they have also reached out to her regarding getting involved in the Pollinator Pathway and raise money to plant trees and pollinator shrubs, and that is one of the areas they could work on. Ms. Washer said that there are corporate sponsors that want to plant trees and asked the Committee where they think trees are needed the most. Mr. Sotnik said as part of the approval process for removing trees for projects they were also supposed to replant trees and Mr. Torre said that he has not seen much of that yet. Mr. Whitehead said that although Oak Hills needs trees, the WestCog study footprint of where the trees are needed most is South Norwalk. Mr. Viteretto said there may also be areas that we can strategize such as the NCC Campus. Ms. Washer said that the Land Trust and two Garden Clubs and they are going to be redrawing the Pollinator Pathway according to where the interest is in neighborhoods. She said that GIS mapping is being done at Highstead where they are identifying the lands with the highest concentration value and that 15 - 20 towns are involved in doing this and the goal is to create a greenway to try and connect those areas.

Ms. Kipp joined the meeting at 6:05 P.M.

3. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF OCTOBER 3, 2018 SPECIAL MEETING

- ** MR. VITERETTO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**
- ** MR. STRAUSS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**4. APPROVE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF
NOVEMBER 27, 2018**

Change "Erika" to "Erica"
Change "tree scape" to "treescape"
Change "London Plane" to "Londonplane"

- ** MR. VITERETTO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**
- ** MR. STRAUSS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5. APPROVE THE NOMINATION OF ERICA KIPP AS THE VICE CHAIRPERSON OF
THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- ** MR. VITERETTO MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOMINATION OF ERICA KIPP AS
VICE CHAIRPERSON.**
- ** MR. STRAUSS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. REPORT- INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING

Mr. Sotnik had no new illegal cuttings to report.

7. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

1. East Avenue
Mr. Sotnik said that two trees have been planted. Mr. Strauss requested a target number of trees and he will find the locations. He said he had done an assessment last year, but because there was no ability to provide the trees he had only gone so far. Mr. Whitehead said that because we are in budget season it would be helpful to list all of the possible planting locations in each of the areas to present for funding.
2. Main Avenue
Mr. Viteretto suggested that the tree planting for Main Avenue go through Planning and Zoning.
3. West Avenue
Mr. Sotnik said that there is nothing new to report since last month.
4. Richards Avenue
Mr. Whitehead said that 14 trees will be planted in the spring and that the locations will be staked and the staff from the cemetery will prep the holes.

5. Wilton Avenue
Mr. Whitehead said that the potential tree planting count is 58 trees.
6. Park Street
Mr. Whitehead said that the potential tree planting count is 5 trees.
7. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Mr. Whitehead said that the potential tree planting count is for 9 trees.

Ms. Mirra said there are also potential planting locations on Woodward Avenue. Mr. Whitehead requested a potential tree count and asked Ms. Mirra if she would like him to do that. Mr. Sotnik also requested that she include a species list along with the tree count. Ms. Mirra said "yes." Mr. Sotnik asked if there would be any sponsors. Ms. Washer distributed a letter that they have drafted to send to solicit sponsorship and that they are a 501c3 for those who would like to donate the trees. Mr. Sotnik said that the plantings would have to be coordinated with the Tree Advisory Committee and or staff so they don't get planted too close to the road or driveways. Mr. Whitehead said that Parks and Recreation is scheduled to plant 12 trees in Woodward Park in the Spring 2019 as Phase II of the planting plan to complete the tree line. Mr. Viteretto asked Mr. Whitehead if he has come across a list of tree species that are more salt tolerant. Ms. Washer said that there is a marsh planting booklet that is put out by Sea Grant and she will forward it to the Committee members.

8. INFORMATION:

- a. Arbor Day, January /February 2019.
Mr. Sotnik distributed.
- b. Tree City USA Bulletin No. 15.
Mr. Sotnik distributed.
- c. Tree City USA Bulletin No. 25.
Mr. Sotnik distributed.

9. TREE CITY USA AND GROWTH AWARD

The committee thanked Mr. Sotnik for all of his time and effort for compiling all of the information for the recertification application. Mr. Sotnik reported and said that last year \$9.09 per capita was spent on tree programs and this year is \$9.18 was spent. He also stated that the current population that is being used for Norwalk is 89,005. He said that \$817,421.77 was spent on the tree programs last year.

Mr. Sotnik reported on the package he put together for the growth award and said that

the application has been submitted and that he received an acknowledgement from Chris Donnelly that he had received it.

Mr. Whitehead requested that whenever an event is done during the course of the year that photos are taken of the event and to send them along with the documentation to Mr. Sotnik so he has the information available when he is putting the recertification application together each year. Mr. Strauss suggested creating a form with a list of the required information that is needed for the recertification application. Ms. Kipp said that she will send Mr. Sotnik and the committee the template of the form from the TD Green Streets grant application. Mr. Sotnik said he will send the spreadsheet to the committee members with all the required information that he will need. Mr. Strauss said that he will send Mr. Sotnik all of the intended projects and events for the Tree Alliance.

10. PLANNING FOR 2019 ARBOR DAY- WOLFPIT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. Sotnik said that the first planning meeting will be held on February 1, 2019 at 10:00 A.M. at Wolfpit School. Mr. Strauss requested that Ms. Kipp give the key note speech at the Arbor Day Celebration. Ms. Kipp accepted the request and said that she will attend the planning meeting.

11. REPORT - UPDATE ON KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL GRANT

Ms. Kipp said that she will be holding the Earth Day/Arbor Day celebration on Wednesday, April 24, 2019, at NCC and that she already has a budget that she had put in for last year, so the entire event is funded. She said that the Arbor Day Foundation sells smaller trees for planting and she would like to do a raffle and requested that someone from the Committee could attend and guide the winners as to how to plant the trees. Mr. Whitehead said that he would attend the event.

Ms. Kipp said that she has spoken with Eric Rains and Mr. Westmeyer about the Keep America Beautiful Grant that they are working towards and gave them a few items to work on. She is also meeting with Mr. Shockley on Thursday and she will update the Committee once she gets what she needs from Mr. Rains and Mr. Westmeyer, following the meeting with Mr. Shockley. Mr. Viteretto asked if this is targeting our area. Ms. Kipp said this is targeting the corner of Washington Street and North Main Street. Mr. Viteretto said he thought the Redevelopment Agency was doing a project in that area. Ms. Kipp said that they are and she will be working on a grant for just the tree portion. Mr. Sotnik said that the project has been advertised for bids last week and requested that Ms. Kipp keep in contact with him regarding the details.

12. PLANNING FOR FUTURE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM EVENTS/LECTURES

There was discussion regarding future educational program events and Mr. Whitehead said that Ms. Washer has been instrumental in bringing groups in. He said that the

Committee is always open to suggestions for any future events and programs. Mr. Sotnik reminded the Committee that they will need two events to include in the growth award application package for next year. Ms. Washer said that the Tree Advisory Committee is also listed as a partner with the Pollinator Pathway and she will send the list of events that they have scheduled to partner with.

13. REPORT - NTA ACTIVITIES

1. Fodor Farm Tree School Funding Campaign.

Mr. Strauss reported and said there is a meeting to kick off the New Year scheduled for Thursday at 4:30 P.M. at Fodor Farm, and that their focus for the spring and throughout the year will be the Tree School at the Tree Farm at Fodor Farm with Columbus Magnet School. He said that he has been fundraising and has already received \$2,500 from Fairfield Count Bank, \$1,000 from one of their Board Members and is in the process of writing a grant application for the Westport Rotary Club.

Mr. Strauss said that he received an email from Tina Duncan asking if the Tree Advisory Committee would like to participate at the Annual Zero Waste Fair in Wilton and he will be presenting it to board for approval and if approved, he will create a brochure to address how trees foster zero waste.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Whitehead said that there is a meeting scheduled with Mr. Kleppin of the Planning & Zoning Department and he will be taking Ms. Lauricella's recommendation and request that they revise their application form and add boxes indicating the number of trees and species that will be planted for all new developments. Mr. Viteretto said the zoning regulations are vague for tree planting and they need to be more aware of the policy that the Tree Advisory Committee desires to have street trees planted and suggested providing Mr. Kleppin with a copy of the Tree Management Plan. He also said that one of the biggest problems is that the Tree Advisory Committee does not get the zoning applications to review. Mr. Sotnik said that their considerations are being incorporated into the draft POCD plan. Ms. Washer said that the deadline for comments for the POCD is February 1, 2019 and that she will submit a letter that states there should be more teeth put into the zoning regulations to protect trees.

Mr. Viteretto discussed solar panels and said he had looked up the Connecticut Energy Team at the DEEP and they have many guidelines for municipalities on how to regulate solar panel use, but they all have very little information on how it impacts tree growth or shade, and the one thing they discussed was that a shade easement is required to avoid shade on solar panels. He said that the State of Connecticut is pushing solar panels so we will be seeing more and more of this and suggested establishing a check list so that there is a quantitative basis to evaluate the applications. Mr. Whitehead said

that the legislation should specify that you can't tell the City and or your neighbors how to manage their own property.

Mr. Viteretto circulated meeting minutes from the February 15, 2006, Tree Advisory Meeting which included comments on the Plan of Development Planning Principles and asked the Committee to send him any comments they may have on the recommendations.

15. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. VITERETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. STRAUSS SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dilene Byrd