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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Dilene Byrd at dbyrd@norwalkct.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING June 29, 2020

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

Cindy Cossuto

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Kipp called the meeting to order at 6:10 P.M.

2. PUBLIC INPUT - GUESTS AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS MAY SPEAK TO ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA. (COMMENTS SHALL BE LIMITED TO NO MORE THAN THREE (3) MINUTES PER SPEAKER.)

There was no input from the public this evening.

3. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 26, 2020

**** MR. STRAUSS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. REPORT - INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING

Mr. Sotnik said that Mr. Torre has put together a draft letter for the property owners of 9 Belair Road and has sent it to the Law Department for their review. He said once the letter has been approved by them, the property owners will be invited to a meeting to discuss the illegal tree cuttings, as well as the illegal fill and excavation work that has been done on the property. Ms. Kipp asked what will happen if they choose not to show up for the meeting. Mr. Sotnik said they will be subject to harsher fines. Per the City Ordinance, they can be fined \$250 per tree and be made to plant replacement trees or pay \$750 per tree instead of planting replacements. Mr. Sotnik explained that if they choose not to respond to the letter and do not show up to for a meeting, they would technically be in violation of a Cease-And-Desist Order which carries a potential fine of \$500 per day.

5. UPDATE - TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

a. Planting Locations - Spring/Fall 2020

i. 151 Woodward Avenue – 5 - 10 trees

Mr. Whitehead said that a meeting will be scheduled with the property owner

to discuss a larger planting than was initially planned and the planting will be scheduled for a Fall 2020 planting. He said that Eversource has also marked some trees and will be removing a small group of trees that currently exist at 151 Woodward Avenue. He said he would like to meet with the property owner along with Ms. Mirra to see if we can partner with them to do a one for one planting, and that the entire frontage which will be over 20 trees. Mr. Viteretto noted that those property frontages are part of the Woodward Village design work that was done in the 1960's and the parcels are non-buildable, so the investment for the tree planting along Woodward Avenue is worth doing. Mr. Strauss suggested that once the planting has been completed that some publicity is done which may stimulate similar public/private partnerships in other parts of the City.

Mr. Sotnik said he has not received the maintenance ownership agreements from Ms. Mirra and he would like to have them prior to the plantings being done on the property. Mr. Whitehead said that is one of the things he would like to discuss at the meeting.

- ii. Calf Pasture Beach Road- 4 trees
Mr. Sotnik said four (4) trees had been ordered. He said that Mr. Norman has informed him that the trees have been procured and will be planted before the end of the week.
- iii. Belden Avenue and West Avenue -10 trees
Mr. Sotnik said the removal of the existing trees has been completed and the new trees will be planted and once those have been planted, the Operations Division will make any repairs to the concrete and bricks pavers around the tree pits that are needed.
- iv. Monroe Street - 2 trees
Mr. Sotnik said he has spoken with Deputy Chief Zecca, and DPW will remove the trees that are currently there. Once that has been completed, the new trees will be planted.

Mr. Viteretto asked if there is any risk that the trees will get planted too deep on Belden Avenue because they don't always plant in the tree pits for us. Mr. Sotnik said it is the same Almstead staff that has been doing the plantings for the past 10 years, but he will mention to Mr. Norman that they need to be planted at the correct elevation, but the planting details in the contract also shows that information.

b. Replacements

Mr. Sotnik said the replacement tree for 97 Washington Street has been ordered and brings the total to 17 trees for a Spring 2020 planting for a total of \$18,204.27.

Mr. Sotnik said Mr. Norman had sent him an update related to the replacement trees. In the update, Mr. Norman indicated that the trees that were planted on Alden Avenue have been accounted for and are in good shape. He stated that the Maple trees have fared better than the Sycamore trees. He said that the Sycamore trees on Broad Street may need to be replaced and that he will be keeping a close eye on them. He said that he saw missing mulch and gator bags in several places that need to be replaced, and that would be happening tomorrow. He said he is still working on locating the replacement tree for Fodor Farm for a planting next Spring and had fertilized the existing trees and reported that it is looking better than it had originally looked, but he will keep an eye on it. He said the trees at St. Johns Cemetery are healthy, but he had replaced one Sugar Maple tree last Fall.

6. UPDATE - TREE MAINTENANCE BY SECTION OF CITY

a. Broad Street

Mr. Sotnik said that he has received an up to date watering list from Mr. Norman.

7. UPDATE - CAPITAL TREE PLANTING BUDGET BALANCES

Mr. Sotnik provided an update and said prior to July 1, 2020, we had a balance of \$26,979.03 and planted the 17 trees for a total of \$18,204.27 which will leave an available balance of \$8,774.76. He said for fiscal year 2020-21 we received \$65,000 which will bring a total budget balance of \$73,774.76 after July 1, 2020. He said if the plantings are split between the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 plantings there would be adequate funds to plant approximately 55 trees in the Fall 2020 and 30 trees in the Spring 2021 for a total of 85 trees, depending upon the species selected.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF FALL 2020 - SPRING 2021 TREE PLANTING LOCATION LIST

Mr. Whitehead requested that the members of the Committee submit a list of possible planting locations of approximately 10 - 20 trees each. Mr. Sotnik suggested incorporating some of the tree plantings with the curb/sidewalk installation and paving projects locations and that he will provide the members of the Committee with a list of the curb/sidewalk and paving project locations by street. Mr. Whitehead asked if trees will be removed as part of any of the curb/sidewalk installation projects. Mr. Sotnik said "Yes, in some select locations."

Mr. Strauss asked if plantings can be done on Westport Avenue. Mr. Viteretto said he does not think that we have enough control on what the State D.O.T. is doing, but he will take a look at the area. Mr. Sotnik stated that we will need permits to do the plantings for any locations in the State Right-of-Way from CT D.O.T. District 3.

Ms. Kipp asked when the planting list should be submitted by. Mr. Whitehead said he would like to have the list ready by August so the order can be placed with Almstead Tree by September. Mr. Sotnik suggested to have a preliminary list ready for discussion at the July 28, 2020 meeting so there is time to refine it for August.

9. REPORT - NTA ACTIVITIES

a. Update:

- i. **Tree Planting Efforts for Taxing Districts.**
Mr. Strauss said the donations from the Third and Sixth Taxing Districts will arrive the first week in July 2020.
- ii. **Memorial Tree Planting at St. Paul's on the Green**
Mr. Strauss said he discussed a Memorial Tree Planting program at the last NTA Board meeting and there was some interest although they did not seem to latch on to the idea of doing a major program, but the idea of at least planting one tree was exciting to them. Mr. Sotnik said there was a ceremony held at St. Paul's Church and a Memorial Tree was planted and the Pastor had said some nice words and Mayor Rilling and his wife had also attended the ceremony.

Mr. Strauss said he will be reaching out to some of his contacts to discuss the Memorial Tree Program and see if the City agencies would like to get involved.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Whitehead said that Ms. Mirra has requested supplemental watering for the trees that were planted at Woodward Park that are not covered under the contract with Almstead Tree. Mr. Sotnik that other than using Almstead Tree through a change order to their contract, the City would need to have another contract in place for that work that and it may, or may not have a contract for anything else that would involve watering. He stated that he will contact Mr. Torre to see if he is aware of any other contracts in place for that type of work. Mr. Viteretto also suggested contacting the Redevelopment Agency to see if it has a contract in place.

Mr. Viteretto said he had sent a chart for soil requirements to the Committee members last week. He said that the Waypoint had a very good planting detail and the trees are doing well. Mr. Sotnik said that we have just issued the last extension for the tree planting contract for Almstead Tree and next year the City will have to have an RFP developed for a new Tree Planting contract and can incorporate any changes that the Committee would like to make into that RFP and eventual contract.

Ms. Kipp said that she has been researching some tree grants and some we may want to make a decision on prior to the next meeting so she will send the Committee members the links and the information within the next couple of weeks.

11. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. KIPP MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned 6:47 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dilene Byrd