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## TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING July 28, 2020

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

Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden  
Chris Torre, Superintendent of Operations/ Tree Warden  
Dilene Byrd, Secretary

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Whitehead called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

### **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 public comment this evening.

### **3. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF JUNE 29, 2020.**

**\*\* MR. STRAUSS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **4. REPORT - INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTINGS**

Mr. Sotnik said there were no new illegal cuttings to report. He provided an update on the illegal cuttings at 9 Belair Road and said the property owners were not aware of what was going on and explained that their Contractor was asked to get permits, but they did not. He said that he and Mr. Torre have been in contact with the Law Department and they will be scheduling a meeting with the property owners along with the Contractor and attempt to fine the Contractor and not the property owner.

Mr. Viteretto asked for an update on the illegal cuttings on Belden Avenue. Mr. Sotnik said he has no update to report at this time.

### **5. UPDATE - TREE PLANTING PROGRAM**

#### **a. Planting Locations - Spring/Fall 2020.**

##### **i. 151 Woodward Avenue- 5-10 trees (TBD) - fall 2020.**

Mr. Whitehead said he has met with Ms. Mirra, the property manager on site and the property owner via telephone and the trees that were identified by Eversource have not been removed but they were working in the neighborhood. He said he had explained that we would plant the same setback as inside the park and spacing, but there are several property owners who will all have to be in agreement and he requested after the initial planting is done, to continue to plant the entire frontage of the property and would like to share the program with the property owners on a one for one basis. He said he will now need to stake the locations for their approval and

identify where the utilities are. He said the 5 - 10 trees will be planted to start the program and can be an additional 30 - 40 trees down the road. Mr. Viteretto asked if a planting plan will be needed. Mr. Whitehead said he would like to have a plan similar to the plan that he did for the plantings in Woodward Park. Mr. Sotnik said that he will provide Mr. Viteretto with an aerial photo and asked if the property owners are willing to sign the ownership agreements. Mr. Whitehead said after they approve the locations, it will be done as a spring 2021 planting.

Mr. Torre joined the meeting at 7:05 P.M.

- ii. Calf Pasture Beach Road - 4 Trees- Spring 2020  
Mr. Sotnik said the four (4) trees have been planted.
- iii. Belden Avenue and West Avenue - 10 Trees- Spring 2020  
Mr. Viteretto said some of the Pin Oak Trees still need to be planted on Belden Avenue. Mr. Sotnik said the trees that needed to be removed have been removed and Almstead Tree has begun to plant the replacement trees, but are waiting for the right time to finish the planting due to the heat. He said six (6) trees have been planted to date and there are four (4) remaining.  
  
Mr. Viteretto said he has been requesting that the property owner across from the Post Office on Belden Avenue plant four(4) to five (5) trees along the frontage of that property.
- iv. Monroe Street - 2 Trees  
Mr. Sotnik said the trees have not yet been removed because the Deputy Chief has requested they be removed and planted simultaneously and it will be done as a Fall 2020 planting depending upon the species of trees to be planted.

## **6. DEVELOPMENT OF FALL 2020 - SPRING 2021 TREE PLANTING LOCATION LIST**

### **a. Committee Member Street List Assignments**

Mr. Sotnik presented the 2019 and 2020 Street Paving and Sidewalk installation list and said the idea is that once the sidewalks have been installed and the street is paved, to plant trees where they are needed as the final touch to the street improvement project. Mr. Whitehead asked Mr. Strauss if he would like to take the locations in the Third Taxing District. Mr. Strauss said "yes" and he has already started and has spoken to two homeowners that are interested in having trees planted. Mr. Whitehead asked Ms. Kipp and Ms. Cassuto to select possible planting locations from the 2019 and 2020 Street Paving list and send them to Mr. Sotnik. Mr. Viteretto suggested possible locations east and west of Main Street and suggested not planting on streets where there are no curbs because the trees will get run over and suggested the Committee look at the plantings on West Main Street. He suggested using that as a template to do plantings on the other side of Main Street. Mr. Whitehead asked the Committee members to use the 2019 and 2020 lists as a guideline to canvas possible planting locations. Mr. Strauss said it would be helpful to have the phone numbers of the addresses of the possible planting locations to speak to the homeowner about social distancing and safety and how the Tree Committee is dedicated to that. Mr. Sotnik agreed and said that they will need to adhere to the Governors and Mayors guidelines for Covid-19. Mr. Whitehead requested that

each Committee member submit at least 10 possible planting locations. Mr. Strauss said by planting trees on the streets that are on the paving list make it look like a development zone by the City and by planting trees it completed the program and adds trees to the hardscape.

Mr. Viteretto asked if there are any directives in the POCD which would help to target street trees. Mr. Sotnik said he believes there were areas that they wanted trees planted to try and provide more green areas in the City, but not specific parcel locations. Mr. Sotnik requested that the planting locations be submitted to him by the end of next month so that he can place the order in September. Ms. Kipp requested that the planting locations be e-mailed to Mr. Sotnik by Friday.

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

Mr. Sotnik presented the list of locations that he received from Mr. Norman and they seem to be keeping up with the watering. He said the tree at 97 Washington Street has not yet been replaced, but the tree has been ordered. Mr. Strauss said there are two Little Leaf Linden Trees on Gregory Boulevard that seem to be struggling.

Mr. Sotnik presented the soil test results from around the trees that were planted at Fodor Farm and said Mr. Norman said a key note was the readings from the test were off from the normal readings of other samples in and around the root balls, so for the long term health of the trees growing in the soil in that area, the soil should be amended yearly until it is ideal for growing the trees. He said that Mr. Norman can prepare an exact recommendation if requested. Mr. Strauss said both of the Oak Trees at Fodor Farm don't look good and suggested that the soil should be amended and that the cost be incurred through Recreation and Parks since Fodor Farm is a City park. Mr. Sotnik said he would have to speak with Mr. Roberts and he will obtain a price quote from Almstead Tree based on the fact that one and potentially both trees have to be replaced.

## **8. REPORT - NTA ACTIVITIES**

### **a. Update:**

#### **i. Tree Planting Efforts for Taxing Districts**

Mr. Strauss said that the Norwalk Tree Alliance has received two grants from the Third Taxing District totaling \$5,000. He said the trees will be planted in the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 based on a lottery type system.

Mr. Strauss said that that Mr. Broadbent is also working with the Sixth Taxing District in Rowayton and he will be targeting specific areas and will contact the homeowners in those areas, and he is currently working with Mr. Frazier on that Project. He said that they have received a \$3,000 grant and the tree plantings will be done in the Spring 2021.

#### **ii. Focus on Native Trees**

Mr. Strauss said the Norwalk Tree Alliance would like to focus on planting native trees for the tree planting efforts with for the Third Taxing District and the Sixth

Taxing District, and are working on putting together a list of species of native trees for homeowners to select from.

iii. Board Member Recruitment

Mr. Strauss thanked Ms. Kipp for her response to his request and said they are trying to get a broader representative participation on the Tree Alliance Board and that the elections are at the end of October.

Mr. Strauss said that memorial tree was planted at St. Paul's Church on the Green for the members of our community who we have lost due to the pandemic.

## **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Whitehead said that his term on the Tree Advisory Committee as Chairman is up in July and he has decided not to continue as Chairman. He said the Committee has come a long way and he is super proud of the work that they have done. He said he would like to nominate Ms. Kipp as Chairperson and he has spoken with her and if she is appointed by the Committee, she has agreed to take the position with the caveat that he stays on the Committee as a member to provide assistance with the technical issues.

Mr. Sotnik thanked Mr. Whitehead for all of his years of service and said it has been great having him on the Committee.

Mr. Sotnik said that there are three terms that came due on July 1, 2020 which are for Mr. Whitehead, Ms. Kipp and Ms. Cossuto and he said he will be sending the information regarding the reappointments to the Mayor's office so they can be added to the next Common Council agenda for approval.

Ms. Kipp said she is thrilled and that she has learned a tremendous amount from the members of the Tree Advisory Committee including and especially Mr. Whitehead. She said she is very happy that Mr. Whitehead will be staying on the Committee as a member in an advisory capacity and agrees that finding an arborist to be on the Committee is important.

Mr. Sotnik said that he received an email last week from Mr. Donnelly stating that he will be retiring. Ms. Kipp said that Mr. Donnelly was instrumental in helping to make Norwalk Community College a Tree Campus USA. Mr. Strauss said that he will draft a letter for Mr. Donnelly on behalf of the Tree Advisory Committee.

Mr. Viteretto said that Dunbar Field is as a good candidate for street trees and they can easily plant 14 trees but there is a recreational plan for resurfacing the field. Mr. Sotnik said the project will be going on through next year so we need to be careful what gets planted there because they may get damaged. Mr. Viteretto said that section of Silvermine Avenue can really use trees even if it's a year out and if it's not part of the resurfacing project for the field. Mr. Whitehead suggested waiting for the project to be complete and follow up with the trees when the work has been completed. Mr. Viteretto asked why the trees are not part of the project and suggested working in tandem with Parks and Recreation. Mr. Sotnik said it is a funding issue and they were not able to plant the trees as part of the project but as Mr. Whitehead had suggested they can follow up with the trees once the project has been completed. Mr. Viteretto said he will do an aerial plan to present to Mr. Roberts and Mr. Hughes.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. STRUASS MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd