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## TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING July 27, 2021

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

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

Others: Danica Doroski, CT DEEP

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

Professor Kipp called the meeting to order at 6:01 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.)**

Ms. Lauricella said she is a member of the Mayor's Water Quality Committee and she did not comment on the article that was published in the Norwalk Hour that stated Norwalk has the worst tree cover in Fairfield County and clarified that was stated by someone else on the Committee and she has been very impressed by this Committee and it has done amazing work to increase the tree cover.

Ms. Lauricella said that she will be sending some thoughts and ideas to the Tree Advisory Committee as well as Ms. Shanahan regarding the illegal removal of public trees and urged the Committee that when there are illegal tree removals of public trees especially in our parks that there are fines levied, or require a replacement for the trees that were removed based upon the trees ecosystems service abilities.

### **3. NEIGHBORHOOD TREE LIAISON PROGRAM**

Professor Kipp said the Tree Advisory Committee has always had a Neighborhood Tree Liaison program and are now in the process updating some of the information. She provided an overview of the tree liaison program and said there are currently 20 tree liaisons in the program and they will be undergoing a training session which is tentatively scheduled for August 22, 2021. She said we are in the process of updating the materials for the tree liaisons as well as the information that they will be handing out and there is a list of trees that are part of the new RFP and the Liaisons will be able to show this to their neighbors. She said that Ms. Cossuto has spent a lot of time importing images of each item so that people can get a better sense of the trees so they can make informed decisions when choosing them.

Ms. Vermont said that she received a free tree through the free tree planting program and she loves the program and will do whatever she can do to help it.

Ms. Pearson said that she is looking forward to learning a lot more and asked if there is a focus on planting native trees. Professor Kipp said absolutely and a lot of what we plant is native, but have to take into consideration the location so sometimes a non-native tree would be a better choice be able to thrive and survive better based upon the location.

Mr. Estrella said he would like to learn more about the Tree Advisory Committee and he is very involved in the City and would like to help.

**4. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON JUNE 22, 2021.**

- \*\* PROFESSOR KIPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
- \*\* MR. WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5. CAPITAL TREE PLANTING PROGRAM - FALL 2021 PLANTING LOCATION LIST**

**NEW PLANTINGS:**

**A. Aiken Street**

Mr. Whitehead said that he has met with Mr. Hughes earlier in the year when they were doing the soccer field construction at West Rocks School and there was a potential to plant a maximum of 26 trees along the field and in the upper parking lot west of the tennis courts. He said the construction is almost complete and he will be meeting with Mr. Hughes this week on site to stake planting locations and the plantings can be split into a two phase planting for this Fall and next Spring. Mr. Sotnik said in addition to those trees, the plans currently call for 10-15 Green Giant Arborvitae trees to be planted as part of the project though the Parks & Recreation Capital budget.

Mr. Viteretto said often we are dealing with Capital projects that don't include a budget for landscaping and tree replacements and far too often trees are not included when we include hard scape improvements in the City and we need to be cognizant of getting funds to install trees back as part of treescapes and utility enhancements. Mr. Sotnik agreed and said when plan reviews come through DPW, one of things we ask about is that the tree planting and restoration be part of that Capital Project, rather than having that planting work come out of the Tree Planting budget and there is more of a focus being put on that then in the past.

**B. 15 Madison Street**

Mr. Whitehead said that he and Professor Kipp met with Ms. Oliver and walked the site and came up with planting locations on Madison Street and Monroe Street and said that three trees will have to be removed on Madison Street, but said that they will be replaced, as well as possibly planting a fourth tree by the playground for shade as part of the Fall planting program. He also said that they would benefit greatly with some additional buffer trees. He said that Ms. Oliver and her group have already planted a tremendous number of trees with their own budget. He said this site can be part of an ongoing planting plan and he is proposing to start this fall. Professor Kipp echoed Mr. Whitehead's comments

and said that when we were on site had targeted six locations for canopy trees as well as 10 Arborvitaes Trees and just like Aiken Street do the additional plantings in phases.

C. 133 Murray Street

Mr. Sotnik said he received a request for one Sugar Maple tree to be planted at 133 Murray Street.

D. Elmwood Avenue

Mr. Sotnik said the Elwood area is another area where construction will be done on the sidewalks/curbs and are working with Mr. Mushak on a list of plantings to enhance the area once the sidewalk project has been completed. Professor Kipp asked how many trees will be planted. Mr. Sotnik said it could potentially be 11 trees. Mr. Viteretto said the views to the harbor need to be considered because Elmwood Avenue overlooks the harbor and the trees have great potential economic value and will make a big impact on the properties in the area.

REPLACEMENTS:

A. 21 First Street

Mr. Sotnik said that three shrubs were installed in front of 21 First Street this Spring. He stated that the smaller trees were planted because of the store front signage and due to the lack of space, we ended up having to plant in the snow shelf. Unfortunately he received a report that someone dug up one of three shrubs and the owner of the property is requesting to have it replaced.

**6. UPDATE - ALMSTEAD TREE WATERING/MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

Mr. Sotnik reported and said that there was a lot of rain in July, but Almstead Tree did go out and watered a lot of locations following our last meeting. He said that they have been sending him the watering schedule on a monthly basis as they did again this month. He said this maintenance schedule will also be a requirement as part of the new RFP between the months of April and November each year.

**7. UPDATE - 2021 TREE PLANTING CONTRACT**

Mr. Sotnik said that the Purchasing Department has prepared an RFP based on the tree planting list and that it will be advertised tomorrow and there will be three people on the selection committee that will interview the various firms that respond to the RFP.

**8. DISCUSSION - OAK HILLS PLANTING PLAN - COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Sotnik said that Eversource removed the trees from within the high tension wire clear zone area at Oak Hills Park and have offered to do replanting and have submitted a proposed planting plan, and that he had met with Ms. Cozzarin yesterday and she had some comments as the Chair of the Oak Hills Nature Advisory Committee. He said he will respond to Eversource with her comments along with any comments that the Tree Advisory Committee may have.

Ms. Cozzarin said she had reviewed the plan with Mr. Sotnik and that it looks like a hedge and that there is enough space to plant three native Dogwood trees which would not reach the height of the high tension wires, as well as three shrubs which would provide habitat for wildlife and would flower at various times of the year. She said it would also provide a screen between the street and the golf course and would look more natural and native. The Committee members agreed.

#### **9. NORWALK RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION - GRANT FROM THE NATURE CONSERVANCY**

Professor Kipp said that Ms. Washer has applied for a grant with the Nature Conservancy, but unfortunately was unable to attend tonight's meeting so it will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **10. UPDATE - CHAPTER 112 - TREE ORDINANCE REVISIONS**

Professor Kipp said that at the last Ordinance Committee meeting there were discussions regarding enforcement and replanting and urged the Committee members to view the meeting on YouTube or to read the Ordinance Committee meeting minutes.

#### **11. UPDATE - GRANT APPLICATIONS**

##### **A. NEEF Grant Summary**

Professor Kipp said that she is actively exploring grants that would impact the Spring planting and that the NEEF grant has been successfully completed and that four trees have been planted in Ludlow Park and two maintenance free benches will also be installed tomorrow.

#### **12. UPDATE - GIS MAPPING OF NEWLY PLANTED TREES**

Mr. Sotnik provided an overview of the trees that are being entered into the GIS mapping system. Professor Kipp said this type of information shows where the concentrated planting efforts have been made and will allow you to see where trees were lost due to a storm and use that information to create future planting plans. It will allow you to see where canopy is needed in the City and will also give us data to publish and to help us to secure future grants.

### **13. CT DEEP URBAN FORESTRY COORDINATOR - DANICA DOROSKI**

Ms. Doroski said that common names are being used in the inventory and recommended using the Latin or scientific names because common names vary so much and could get very confusing. She also suggested including an author as more data is collected and asked if the Neighborhood Tree Liaisons will be used to map the data on their block or in their neighborhoods. Professor Kipp said that is absolutely an option for the Liaisons if they are interested, depending on their ability for commitment of time, to become part of this mapping solution.

Ms. Doroski introduced herself and said that she is new in her role with the CT DEEP and she is the Urban Forestry Coordinator and runs the program is to assist and provide resources to non-profits and municipalities and residents to help them grow, maintain and improve their urban and community forest. The main focus for her group as well as CT DEEP as a whole, are issues of environmental justice and equity and climate change. She stated that they are running two new grant programs that will hopefully be announced soon and will be to fund urban forestry projects. She also said that having a tree inventory is so valuable in terms of seeing what the diversity of the current canopy is and what species have been over planted, what species will age out soon and what species need to be planted in the future. She said they are running another grant program that is specifically designed to just fund planting projects. Professor Kipp asked when the grant applications will be available. Ms. Doroski said they are still waiting on the approval from the Attorney General's Office and she is hoping that they are finalized over the next few weeks and will be advertised on the CT DEEP website.

### **14. REPORT - NTA ACTIVITIES**

Mr. Broadbent reported and said the NTA has had a lot of activities all throughout the Spring that included planting many trees and holding a bonsai tree class in June. He said they have now been discussing ways to restart the outdoor educational program with the Tree School, but may decide to postpone it one more year, but will be putting focus and effort into developing a specific tree project relative to the Queens jubilee and will be doing a planting and are looking for locations to plant a Queens Grove of native trees and will have a tea party celebration. He also said the Norwalk Land Trust is looking for volunteers to transplant the natural native saplings that are growing on a property that they had recently acquired in the Silvermine area, and one idea that was discussed was to potentially have a native tree sale and have the sale at Fodor Farm in the Spring. Professor Kipp requested that he keep her updated when this becomes more of a reality and she will offer her students extra credit to assist.

### **15. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business discussed this evening.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* PROFESSOR KIPP MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* MR. VITERETTO SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd