



TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

May 24, 2022

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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.

Attendance: Richard Whitehead, Vice Chair
Cindy Cossuto

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

Others: Jeff Scherr, President, Norwalk Tree Alliance

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Whitehead called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 were no public comments this evening.

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF APRIL 26, 2022.

The approval of the minutes was tabled due to a lack of a quorum.

4. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM- SPRING 2022 PLANTINGS.

a. TAC/DPW Capital Budget Planting

Mr. Sotnik presented the Spring plantings for 2022 and the respective funding sources and said the cost of the 29 trees that have been and will be planted using TAC/DPW funds from the Capital Budget total \$21,751 so there will be a remaining balance of \$12,254.25.

b. TMP Funded Budget Planting

Mr. Sotnik said 11 trees were planted on Wall Street and were paid for by TMP in the amount of \$10,022.50.

c. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Initiative - DECD Grant

Mr. Sotnik said the plantings for Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Madison Street will be paid for through the DECD Grant. He stated that there are 20 locations that are on this planting list that were moved from the Capital Budget list. The funds for those 20 trees can now be added back in the Capital Budget funds.

d. NFWF – Highstead Grant

Mr. Sotnik said that 18 trees were planted in the Woodward Avenue area and were paid for through the NFWF grant. The cost was \$9,978.90 of the available \$10,000.00 maximum grant amount.

Mr. Sotnik stated that as part of the MLK initiative grant, they had found 81 locations for tree plantings thanks to the efforts of Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Viteretto. He said for Spring 2022 plantings, there was a total of 162 trees that have been or are about to be planted for a total of \$120,686.90, and for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2022, there will be a total of 255 trees planted for a grand total of \$195,381.15 which is a record for the City.

5. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM CONTRAC RFP - AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING SPECIFIC

Mr. Sotnik said that he has been informed that said there are ARPA funds available for tree plantings of \$700,000 to be used by December 31, 2024 between the EDC and DPW Departments of the City, and the current contract with Almstead Tree has a not to exceed amount of \$130,000 per year, so a new RFP will need to be advertised and will be done soon.

6. TAC AWARDED TWO (2) GRANTS

Mr. Whitehead thanked Professor Kipp for applying for be being awarded two (2) grants for the Tree Advisory Committee and said that she will provide the details at the next meeting.

7. UPDATE - ALMSTEAD TREE WATERING/MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Mr. Sotnik presented and said that Almstead began watering on May 12, 2022 and reported on the watering locations. Mr. Whitehead asked if the staff at Almstead Tree report if there are trees that they feel are weak or struggling. He said "Yes" Mr. Norman has reported those to him several times. Mr. Whitehead requested that Mr. Sotnik reach out to Mr. Norman and have the trees with issues noted on the report so the trees can be monitored. Mr. Scherr suggested that when the watering is being done, they should also be checking the gator bags to be sure they are not clogged and are draining properly.

8. UPDATE - ARBOR DAY CLEAN UP EVENT - APRIL 28, 2022

Mr. Whitehead said on Thursday, April 28, 2022, the Arbor Day Clean-Up event was held on the southbound/west side of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive from Washington Street to Lowe Street and that multiple tree care companies volunteered and pruned approximately 35 large shade trees and all the young London Plane Trees that were planted three (3) or four (4) years ago. He said they also removed several dangerous trees that were threatening the roadway and cleaned up all the brush, and at the end of

the event the volunteers all met at Webster Lot and had lunch and Mayor Rilling and Mr. Carr both spoke. He also said the Professor from Norwalk Community College arts department had a student do graphics and made signs for the event and we will need to send a thank you note to the Professor. He said this was done in preparation of the plantings that Mr. Sotnik reported on earlier, which will make a huge impact in the area.

9. UPDATE - ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION - APRIL 29, 2022

Mr. Sotnik said the Arbor Day event was held at Naramake Elementary School that two (2) Red Maple trees and an Eastern Red Bud tree were planted. He said that Eversource donated three hundred (300) large seedlings, the City provided an additional two hundred (200) seedlings and Almstead also volunteered to bag all five hundred (500) of the seedlings for the students to take home. He said the poster contest was also held and that Double Tree Hotel gave each of the winners a free night stay at the hotel.

10. NORWALK RIVER TOUR

Mr. Scherr said it was a great event and was an educational walk/hike and there were three components that included the river, an educational talk on what lives in the river and why it is important to maintain healthy stormwater and discussed the characteristics of the river and what lives in each of the different ecosystems, and why it is such a key resource for the City of Norwalk and why we should keep it healthy. He said that Mr. Viteretto also gave a talk on how the river helps to drive the economy for the City of Norwalk and how it is important to bring the trail into areas of commerce and spoke on the history and how Norwalk has developed and how the river connects Wall Street and SONO. Mr. Scherr said he spoke on the importance of keeping invasive species out and the importance of native trees which is the key goal of the Norwalk Tree Alliance for promoting and maintaining a healthy native tree canopy for the City, so these are key areas along the trail to advocate for the planting of native trees.

11. REPORT - NTA ACTIVITIES

Mr. Scherr reported and said that the Pride in the Park event will be held on June 11, 2022, and the Norwalk Tree Alliance will have a booth.

Mr. Scherr said on June 21, 2022, there will be a fundraising event for the Queen's Tea and will be held at one of the Norwalk Tree Alliance board members home.

Mr. Scherr said that in July, there will be several grants coming in from the Taxing Districts and there will be a tree lottery for the Third Taxing District, in the Sixth Taxing district there will be several privately planted trees, and the grant for SNEW is new and

they would like to do something similar to the tree lottery. He said each of the grants are for approximately 8 - 10 trees.

Mr. Scherr said that a meeting was held with Norwalk Public Schools and there is a plan for nine (9) tree plantings at Ponus Ridge Middle School which was developed and will be planted in the Fall. He said there is also an area in the back of the school where there are currently some vegetable gardens that they are looking to expand to include and outdoor classroom. He also said the Board of Education seems to be in support of significant planting at all of the schools.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Whitehead said that Jefferson Elementary School has been under construction, and he was so impressed at the number of tree plantings that were done and Mr. Hughes was instrumental on the design of the landscaping. He said he has volunteered to draft a letter from the Tree Advisory Committee recognizing them for working on the green space.

13. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MS. COSSUTO SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd