

Minutes

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING July 28, 2009

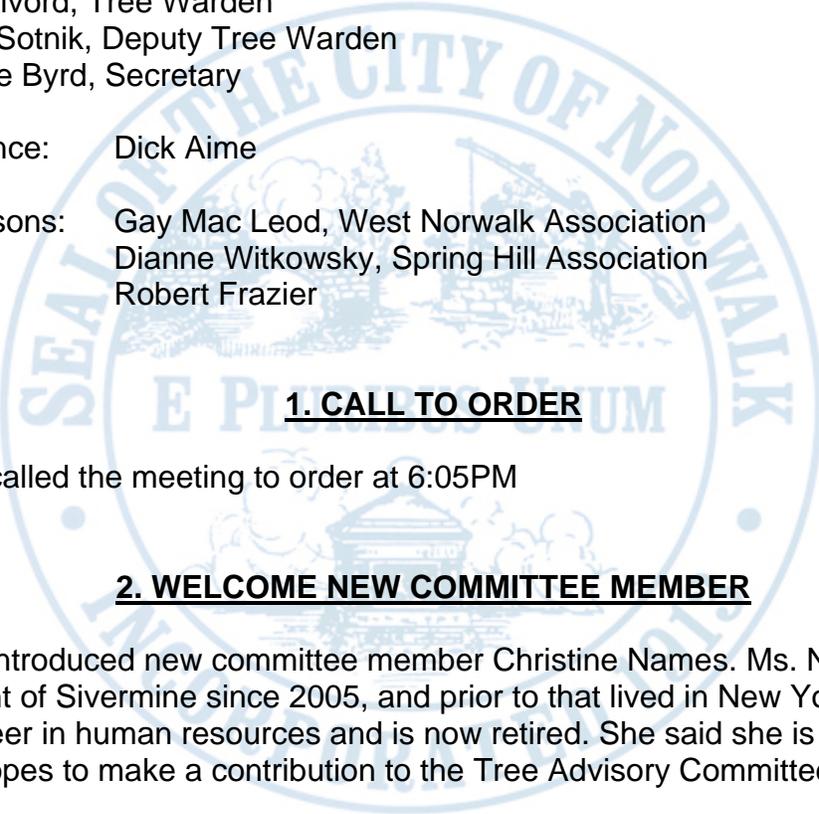
Attendance: Don Nelson, Chairman
Richard Whitehead
Christine Names

Absent: Peter Viteretto
Dave Tracy

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

Norwalk Tree Alliance: Dick Aime

Neighborhood Liaisons: Gay Mac Leod, West Norwalk Association
Dianne Witkowsky, Spring Hill Association
Robert Frazier



1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:05PM

2. WELCOME NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

Chairman Nelson introduced new committee member Christine Names. Ms. Names said she has been a resident of Sivermine since 2005, and prior to that lived in New York City. She said that she had a career in human resources and is now retired. She said she is on the Board for NASH, and now hopes to make a contribution to the Tree Advisory Committee.

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 26, 2009

**** MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. APPROVE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF JUNE 23, 2009

**** MS. NAMES MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. REPORT – INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING

Mr. Sotnik said there was one illegal cutting at 79 Comstock Hill Road. He said this tree had been part of a permit issued in 2006. The property owner had originally wanted to remove the City tree, but was told he could not based on the neighbors protest of the removal and their request that the tree be saved. He said he has removed the tree, and is now required to grind the stump and plant two trees in place of the one that he removed. Ms. Witkowsky asked if he had been fined. Mr. Alvord said “no” because when Chris Torre went out and spoke to the resident he was not aware of the 2006 permit and the associated survey map, and when Mr. Torre checked if the tree was on City or private property, the GIS mapping records indicated that it appeared to be a private tree.

6. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

- a. Van Buren and Stevens - Fall 2009
Mr. Sotnik said that the permit has not yet been received, and that he spoke to Mr. Barnes of the Department of Transportation who stated they are back logged with paperwork, and he will send it out as soon as he can. He said there will be no planting done until the permit is received. Mr. Alvord said this will be scheduled for a fall planting.
- b. East Norwalk - Spring 2009
Mr. Sotnik said that the trees have been ordered. Mr. Nelson asked how many trees will be planted at this location. Mr. Sotnik said “22.” Mr. Nelson asked when the cut off date is for spring planting. Mr. Alvord said it has already passed, but that Mr. Sotnik had placed an order with Almstead Tree on June 10, 2009, and that Mr. Bociek had purchased the trees and brought them to his yard, and does not want to wait until the fall to plant them. He said that Mr. Bociek is willing to warranty the trees if he plants them now.
- c. Calf Pasture Beach Road, Phase II - Fall 2009
Mr. Alvord said there are 15 trees left to plant. He said he will schedule the locations to be staked for the third week in September along with Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Viteretto.
- d. Scribner and Richards - Spring 2009
Mr. Sotnik said that this has been staked and will be planted along with the East Norwalk planting.

7. INFORMATION COPIES

- a. The Connecticut Arborist
Mr. Alvord distributed.
- b. Arboriculture 101, Fall 2009 Session
Mr. Alvord distributed.

8. UPDATE- CITY CODE CHAPTER 112, TREES

Mr. Alvord said that the proposed revisions were approved by the Common Council at their second meeting in June. Mr. Sotnik distributed the final approved versions.

9. ARBOR DAY 2010 CELEBRATION AT SILVERMINE ELEMENTARY

Mr. Nelson said he and Mr. Viteretto had met with the Principal of Silvermine Elementary school and a possible site was chosen for the tree planting.

10. FOLLOW-UP FAILING TREES

Mr. Sotnik said that Mr. Bociek will be planting at Cavary Road, Calf Pasture Beach Road and Broad Street within the next week. Mr. Whitehead said that the six Zelcova trees and the London Planetrees near the bridge on Broad Street also need to be added to the list of failing trees. Mr. Alvord asked if soil work should be done on Broad Street. Mr. Whitehead said that when he had met with Almstead prior to the plantings they said that they were going to do some soil work but they ended up just installing the trees in the existing soil.

11. DISCUSSION- TREE OFFER FROM PEPPERIDGE FARMS

Mr. Alvord said that Mr. Frazier has discussed this with the Land Trust and the Farm Creek Association and that they are interested in planting some trees on Sammis Street. He said that Mr. Frazier also said there are areas in Rowayton that he would be interested in working on. Mr. Nelson said that Mr. Mocciae should be contacted to see if they are interested in planting any of the trees in the schools. Ms. Witkowsky suggested planting some of the trees near the Riverside cemetery. Ms. Mac Leod suggested planting some of the trees at Fox Run School. Mr. Alvord said that would also help establish a tree scape in that area. Mr. Whitehead suggested developing a flyer and sending it to all the active tree liaisons to generate interest in the tree offer. Mr. Alvord said that the flyer could also be distributed at the CNNA meetings and at the Mayor's monthly neighborhood preservation task force meeting. Mr. Sotnik asked after he meets with Mr. Mocciae how soon will the trees be planted. Mr. Alvord said that he should follow up with Dave Tracy because he has been the point of contact. Mr. Sotnik asked if Almstead Tree will be doing the planting. Mr. Alvord said he did not think so, and that he thinks the trees will be delivered in a biodegradable pot and volunteers will need to be mobilized to do the plantings.

12. DISCUSSION- RECRUITMENT EFFORT FOR TREE LIAISONS

Mr. Whitehead suggested the flyers also be used to generate interest for tree liaisons. He also suggested distributing them at the high schools. Ms. Names suggested distributing them at Norwalk Community College. Mr. Alvord asked if there is anyone interested in working on the flyer that would combine both the Pepperidge planting and to try and generate interest

for tree liaisons. Ms. Names said that she will volunteer and asked that content be provided to her. Mr. Alvord said that he and Mr. Sotnik will e-mail her some of the content. Ms. Mac Leod said that she would assist Ms. Names with the flyer.

13. DISCUSSION- "MILE-A-MINUTE" VINE

Mr. Sotnik distributed the flyers and brochures regarding the Mile-A-Minute vine. He said that Mr. Logan Senack from UConn had been in touch with Dave Tracy. He said that he had contacted Mr. Senack and he had said there had been several sightings around the state and that there have been three confirmed sightings in Norwalk. He said the three locations are on East Rocks road at the C.L.&P. substation in the C.L.&P. Right-of-Way, on private property on Blue Mountain road, and on Sheffield Island. He said that if a small volume is found it should be pulled by hand and bagged, and that something such as plastic should be laid on the ground to catch the seeds. He said because it is an annual, if the seeds fall on the ground, it will come back again next year. He said that if a medium volume is found it has been suggested to use a chemical herbicide to get rid of it. He said if a large volume is found they have had some success in releasing an insect called an Asian weevils which eat the plant. He said that the vine grows at a rate of 6" a day and has small barbs. Ms. Mac Leod asked where the vine originated from. Mr. Sotnik said Japan or China. Mr. Alvord suggested that this may be something that the Tree Advisory Committee along with the Tree Alliance would like to try and make information available to the public throughout the City. Ms. Mac Leod said that she will post the information on the West Norwalk website, and will also include it in the newsletter. Mr. Nelson suggested contacting The Hour newspaper. Mr. Alvord suggested contacting Marvin Moss and having him contact The Hour and The Advocate. Mr. Frazier asked if there is a dedicated e-mail for invasives. Mr. Alvord said the most efficient way is to contact Customer Service and they will enter the information into City Works, and there will be a separate category for the Mile-A –Minute vine. Ms. Mac Leod suggested providing the information to the library and the summer camps. Mr. Alvord asked Mr. Sotnik to contact UConn to see if they have a Jpeg file of the vine available that they would be willing to e-mail.

14. DISCUSSION- NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

Ms. Witkowsky said that the one topic of discussion at last night's CNNA meeting was that a neighborhood brought to the CNNA for consideration to support a blight ordinance. She said it was discussed which towns currently have the ordinance and it was mentioned that Danbury had it. She asked Mr. Alvord for his opinion of the blight ordinance both as a professional and as someone who lives in a town that currently has one. Mr. Alvord said he is not aware that Danbury had one, but would look into it. He also said if an ordinance is going to be written the first thought should be why and what the need for the ordinance is, and what problem will be solved by having the ordinance. Ms. Witkowsky said that the CNNA mostly opposed it because it could be both political and subjective. Ms. Witkowsky asked Mr. Alvord if she could paraphrase him as saying an ordinance like this would require an awful lot of careful research and thought. Mr. Alvord said absolutely.

15. DISCUSSION- NTA ACTIVITIES

Mr. Aime said that they have not been very active and that there is a meeting scheduled for this coming Thursday providing Mr. Tracy is back from his trip. Mr. Alvord requested that if the meeting is canceled that someone contact himself or Mr. Sotnik.

16. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Nelson said that he had received a call from a resident at 191 Perry Avenue. Mr. Alvord said that this is regarding a dispute between four neighbors and advised Mr. Nelson not to get involved.

Mr. Alvord said that each year the DEP, Division of Forestry offers Urban Forestry grants. He said they are \$8,000 grants and are a 50/50 match grant. He said that Norwalk has applied and gotten at least one a year until last year. He said that when he called Mr. Donnelly and asked why Norwalk did not receive the grant, he stated that Norwalk has a strong healthy tree program, and he wants to encourage other communities to try to accomplish what Norwalk has. Mr. Alvord said that he is not suggesting that Norwalk should not submit a worthy project, but said that the tree program has only gotten stronger since last year. Mr. Whitehead asked if a grant was received for the arboretum. Mr. Alvord said "yes". Mr. Whitehead suggested re-applying this year for Phase II of the Calf Pasture Beach Road plantings because it shows an ongoing commitment to establish and finish a tree canopy, and the storm drainage work that was just completed could also be included. Mr. Whitehead requested a copy of the completed application from last year along with the new grant form for this year. Mr. Whitehead asked what the deadline for submission is. Mr. Sotnik said September 30, 2009, and the completion deadline for the grant is December 15, 2010.

17. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM