

Minutes

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING May 26, 2009

Attendance: Don Nelson, Chairman
Dave Tracy
Maribeth Becker

Absent: Peter Viteretto
Rich Whitehead

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

Norwalk Tree Alliance: Dick Aime (Absent)

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF APRIL 28, 2009

**** MR. TRACY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Alvord introduced Chris Torre and said that he is a Road Supervisor for the Department of Public Works. He said that the department has been restructured on how work orders are assigned from a geographic basis to a function basis and that Mr. Torre will now be handling all tree issues. Ms. Becker asked who will be in charge of snow removal. Mr. Alvord said that will still be done the way it always has been done, which is by the 25 established snow routes.

3. REPORT - INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING

Mr. Sotnik had no illegal cuttings to report. Mr. Alvord said there were some calls received regarding trees being cut that were thought to be city trees, but when the property lines checks were done, they were all found to be private trees.

4. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

- a. Van Buren and Stevens- Spring 2009
Mr. Sotnik said that he has spoken to Jim Barnes for the State Department of Transportation, and he has received the package and he is in the process of sending some additional paperwork that they want completed. Mr. Alvord said that they want a City/State maintenance agreement filed that they originally said would not be needed. Mr. Alvord said that he and Mr. Sotnik will look at the paperwork and if it will entail too much, he may cancel the planting. Ms. Witkowsky asked if anyone had spoken to Chris Donnelly regarding this. Mr. Alvord said that he had mentioned it to Mr. Donnelly at the Arbor Day celebration, and asked Mr. Sotnik to follow up with him to see if that requirement can be removed. Ms. Witkowsky asked if the State had its own tree planting program. Mr. Alvord said “no” and that they only have an Adopt-A-Spot program.
- b. East Norwalk-Spring 2009
Mr. Sotnik said that all the locations have been staked and that he and Mr. Alvord will be scheduling a time to check the locations, and if satisfied will, be placing the order with Almstead Tree. Mr. Alvord said that there were 6 locations staked on Beacon Street on the far end of the baseball field, and that there is a plan to enhance parking at City Hall, which will involve taking part of the baseball field. He said that he has spoken with Parks and Recreation and they can get a high school regulation baseball field and add approximately 65 parking spaces to the City Hall parking. Ms. Becker asked if the track will be lost. Mr. Alvord said “no” and that it will be moved. Mr. Alvord said he does not want trees planted at that location because there can potentially be a new maintenance entrance for Parks and Recreation, and there is no sense is planting trees that may eventually have to be removed.
- c. Calf Pasture Beach Road, Phase II-Fall 2009
Mr. Alvord said that the contractor had wanted to get the paving done before Memorial Day, but unfortunately that could not be done and part of the issue was that O&G Industries had closed the plant last week without informing anyone. He said the only thing left to be done is some sidewalk work and the paving. He said that the last 15 trees will be planted in the fall.

5. INFORMATION COPIES:

- a. Arbor Day May/June 2009
Mr. Alvord distributed

6. REPORT - TREE FESTIVAL 2009

Mr. Nelson said that the Tree Festival was a terrific success. Mr. Tracy said that the Boy Scouts were a tremendous help by allowing the tents to be installed the day before the festival. Mr. Alvord said that the combination of Norwalk and Wilton working together was great, and there were a lot of new ideas and approaches. He said that for next years festival the parking will need to be addressed, and that there were some comments received regarding where the food was located. Ms. Becker said that the location of the festival was perfect on a number of levels, and that there was plenty of space. Ms. Mac leod said that she had heard from the parents that they liked the way that the exhibits were spaced out. Mr. Nelson asked if the cost has been figured out. Mr. Tracy said not yet. Mr. Alvord said there will be a meeting held on June 2, 2009, at 9:30 A.M. at the Public Works Center to discuss the Tree Festival.

7. UPDATE - PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CITY CODE CHAPTER 112, TREES

Mr. Alvord said that the Public Works Committee has approved the revisions and has sent them to the Ordinance Committee and they had discussed them at their last meeting, and have scheduled a public hearing at their June 16, 2009 meeting at 7:30 P.M. He said that assuming there are no objections at the public hearing, it will go to the Common Council for approval. Mr. Nelson asked where the public hearing will be held. Mr. Alvord said in room 231, at City Hall.

8. ARBOR DAY 2010 CELEBRATION AT SILVERMINE ELEMENTARY

Mr. Nelson said that Arbor Day 2010, will be held at Silvermine School and said that he will contact Mr. Viteretto this week to see if he had contacted anyone at the school. Mr. Alvord said that a contact at the school should be made as soon as possible so that there is a commitment made.

9. UPDATE - NASH ADOPT-A-SPOT ON COMSTOCK HILL AVENUE

Mr. Alvord said that there is a new tree liaison for Nash and her name is Christine Names. He said that he had met with her and explained all the tree programs and she is very anxious to get involved. He said that she expects to attend the Tree Advisory Committee meeting next month. He said that there is a piece of

City property that is located on Comstock Hill Avenue where Yankee gas has an easement. He said that the city is never going to do anything with that piece of property and it is approximately 1.8 acres. He said that Nash has an idea under the Adopt-A-Spot program to turn it into a nature walking place for residents. He said that Mr. Nelson had checked with the agent that handles Clean and Green insurance, because the city provides liability for most of the Adopt-A-Spots through Clean and Green, and they were concerned that this exceeded the perimeters of the typical Adopt-A-Spot program. He said that Nash would have to get their own insurance, and they have done that, and that the City's Law Department is fine with the coverage that they obtained. He said that the next step is to schedule a site walk visit. Mr. Nelson asked if shrubs can be provided to them through the tree planting program. Mr. Alvord said "yes" but one of the reasons for the Adopt-A-Spot programs is to have someone other than the city pick up the cost of beautifying and maintaining various areas, and that Nash is willing to do that.

10. DISCUSSION - NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

Ms. Witkowsky said that the main topics of conversation that were discussed were the garden at Ryan Park and citywide crime issues. She said that the butterfly garden went in last Saturday. Ms. Becker asked if anyone in the neighborhood had helped with the garden. Ms. Witkowsky said "no," but that there was a concern that the plants needed to be planted before the temperatures got so warm that there would be little chance of success. She said that Ms. Duleep had an agenda about getting it done quickly, but said that she probably needed to work more with the neighbors and get commitments from them.

11. DISCUSSION - NTA ACTIVITIES

Mr. Tracy said that all the time has been spent on the Tree Festival and that there was a contest at the Tree Festival for identifying 17 trees from the tree planting list, and there will be 7 checks going out to the winners for \$10.00 each. He said that there has been 3 sessions held so far for cleaning up from the festival, and he wants to get things prepared ahead of time for next year's festival.

Mr. Tracy said that he has asked for an extension for the second time on the NUFAC grant, which is for a device that is installed on the roof of a car and when driving down the street can locate trees semi-automatically to speed up the inventory process.

12. NEW BUSINESS

No discussion.

13. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. TRACY MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

