

Minutes
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
October 28, 2008

Attendance: Don Nelson, Chairman
Rich Whitehead
Dave Tracy
Maribeth Becker

Absent: Peter Viteretto

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

Norwalk Tree Alliance: Dick Aime (Absent)

Neighborhood Liaisons: Gay Mac Leod, West Norwalk Association

Others: Tom Vorio, Superintendent, Oak Hills Golf Course
Larry Andronaco, Chairman, Oak Hills Park Authority

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. UPDATE-OAK HILLS TREE MANAGEMENT (TOM VORIO, OAK HILLS SUPERINTENDENT)

Mr. Vorio gave a review of what has been accomplished at the Oak Hills Golf Course over the past year and submitted a report. He said that a planting was done by the entrance way because there were a couple of Dogwood trees that were removed because they were growing too close to the power lines, and were decaying. He said that they were replaced with a nice planting that is away from the power lines. He said the second planting was done on the 5th and 6th holes, and that 3 River Birches were planted near the irrigation pond. He said the third planting was a large planting around the restaurant and some of the Crab Apple trees that the Contractor had originally installed were moved around and 4 large shade trees were planted to try and return the tree scape back to its original form. He also said there was a Pear tree near the 1st hole that was starting to get too big and it was moved to the entrance way while it is still young.

Mr. Vorio said the winter tree management plan will consist of unfortunately removing another tree by the restaurant that is dropping limbs and has become a liability to the golf course and the restaurant. He said there will also be a tree replacement done at the 18th green, and there are currently 4 White Pines that are not doing well at that site and will be replaced with 4 River Birch trees. He also said there are 3 trees on the golf course that pose a potential liability to the people who play and will also have to be removed. Mr. Alvord asked if the tree by the restaurant was a mature tree that was there prior to the restaurant being done. Mr. Vorio said “yes” and the roots had gotten damaged due to gas line construction.

3. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 23, 2008

Mr. Alvord said that the State Legislature passed a law that requires the minutes to be posted to the City website within 7 days of the meetings. He said that the IT Department has purchased a software package and is currently training someone in each department to post the minutes to the City website. He said until the software is implemented the quick report will be posted. Mr. Tracy asked if the IT Department will maintain a paper trail of when the minutes were posted. Mr. Alvord said the software will track that.

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

4. REPORT- INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING

Mr. Sotnik said there was 1 illegal cutting this month and it will be discussed under Agenda item 8.

5. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

a. East Avenue

Mr. Sotnik said that the order has been placed with Almstead Tree and that Mr. Bociek was picking up the order today. Mr. Alvord said that 1 planting was held back on Staples Court because when Mr. Overall was out staking the area, there was a resident that had come out and complained. He said that Mr. Overall will now canvas every resident on Staples Court and come back with the results and at that time a decision will be made whether to do the plantings. Ms. Becker said that a lot of trees have been lost on her street and asked if she should canvas her neighborhood. Mr. Alvord suggested

that she have Mr. Overall do the canvas since he is the tree liaison in that area.

b. Van Buren and Stevens

Mr. Sotnik said that he had been in contact with Delois Barnes, from the Department of Transportation in the last week and she said that this is still being sent up the chain of command and will probably take a month or so to come back with a decision. He said that she thinks this will probably be authorized but she needs the authorization before she will approve it. He said that at this point in time, it will now probably be a spring planting.

c. Maple Street

Mr. Alvord said that he met with Mr. Hiscock of SNEW last week and he has approved planting the trees inside their property on Maple Street. He said that Mr. Sotnik has staked the locations. Mr. Sotnik said the trees will be planted by Thursday or Friday of this week.

d. Calf Pasture Beach Road

Mr. Alvord said that he, Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Viteretto, and Mr. Sotnik had staked the 26 trees and that a number of residents had come out and no one had any negative comments. He said that all 26 trees have now been planted for Phase I, and that Mr. Bociek was able to obtain a warranty from his supplier for the Red Oaks that were taken out of the ground and that Mr. Bociek has provided him with that warranty. Mr. Nelson asked how many trees will be planted in Phase II. Mr. Alvord said 15. Mr. Nelson said that there were a number of people interested in Adopt -A-Spots in that area and asked if he has been contacted by anyone. Mr. Alvord said "yes" and that the caller believes that she has a sponsor for each of the 5 strips in the median on Calf Pasture Beach Road. He said that he had sent her the copies of the authorization documents and explained to her how the sketches need to be done. He said he also had made some suggestions as to what they may want to think about when they are developing their landscaping plan because there is no water source near by.

e. Broad Street

Mr. Sotnik said that Mr. Bociek went out to look at the trees and he has agreed that the trees are in distress. He said that Mr. Bociek would like to give the trees until the spring and he had sent an e-mail stating that this will serve as recognition of warranty extensions through 2009, of the Zelkovas and Sycamore trees that were installed in front of the cemetery and along the road near the bridge on Broad Street and that he will return in 2009 after the trees have leafed out to determine which trees will need to be replaced. Mr. Alvord said that he does not think that any of the trees planted on Broad Street were Sycamore trees and that Mr. Bociek should be contacted to clarify. Mr. Sotnik said that he would send Mr. Bociek an e-mail tomorrow.

6. INFORMATION COPIES

- a. Arbor Day September/October 2008
Mr. Alvord distributed
- b. Tree City USA Bulletin-2008 Annual Report
Mr. Alvord distributed
- c. Tree Campus USA
Mr. Alvord distributed and said he is only distributing this to make the Committee members aware that this program exists and he is not suggesting it be done. Mr. Nelson asked if the information can be forwarded to Norwalk Community College. Mr. Alvord said "yes". After further discussion it was agreed that Ms. Becker and Ms. MacLeod would work together on contacting Norwalk Community College.

7. PROJECT UPDATE- WICKET FENCE FOR WALL STREET TREE PITS

Mr. Alvord said that he had spoken with Munro Johnson of the Redevelopment Agency, and he had never received the cut sheets or the cost estimates for Mr. Viteretto. He said that Mr. Sotnik had made the PDF's of those and has e-mailed them to Mr. Johnson. He said that Mr. Johnson likes the idea and will be discussing it with Mr. Sheehan and that the Redevelopment Agency will be doing their best to fund this because it is something they would like to see in the Wall Street area. Ms. Becker asked what the cost of the wicket fences will be. Mr. Alvord said \$20,000, but no one has yet measured the tree pits and there has been no attempt to negotiate with the vendor. He said there are 2 opportunities to get a reasonable price for the product. Ms. Becker said that as West Avenue is developed this should be kept in mind so that there is the same look and feel.

8. REPLACEMENT TREES ON WALL STREET AT "MEIGAS"

Mr. Alvord said that he had received an e-mail from Mr. Viteretto stating that he saw someone replanting trees in front of Meigas restaurant and he asked if there should have been a permit. Mr. Alvord said that his response was that "yes" there should have been a permit, but the trees were dead and were in the process of looking at the trees being removed and replaced anyway, and that the owner of the restaurant replaced them thinking they were his trees. He said that they should have obtained a permit and it should have been coordinated with the City however, what they are doing is also a benefit to the City and he would be willing to waive the permit fee if in fact the trees are healthy, and have been planted properly. Mr. Alvord had asked Mr. Viteretto to verify that, but had received no response back from him. Mr. Sotnik said that he had gone out to the

restaurant and they had removed 3 dead Crimson King Maples and had planted 3 new Zelkova trees that appear to be healthy. He said that the Zelkovas are currently on the tree planting list and that they may not be the 3" to 3 1/2" caliper that is on the list, but they are approximately 2" caliper trees. Ms. Becker asked when taking out a permit if it would typically cost money. Mr. Sotnik said "yes" it would cost \$150 for the tree removal permit and \$150 for the encroachment permit. Mr. Alvord said that on a number of occasions he has waived those fees if it is something that will benefit the City.

9. TREE ISSUE AT 122 MURRAY STREET

Mr. Alvord said that 2 years ago there was a City tree posted for removal at 10 Cavray Road because it was leaning dangerously towards the house, and the residents had objected to the removal. He said it was offered to them to sign an Assumption of Liability Contract and they had refused to sign it. He said there is now a similar situation going on at 122 Murray Street. He said they have 2 stately trees at their driveway and 1 of them needs pruning and the other is unhealthy, unsafe, and needs to be removed. He said the tree was posted for removal and they have objected. He said they have been sent the Assumption of Liability Contract and after meeting with their attorney have not signed it.

10. DISCUSSION- TREE FESTIVAL 2009

Mr. Alvord said that he, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Tracy and Mr. Aime had visited Cranbury Park and it was determined there will be plenty of room to hold the 2009 Tree Festival there. He said the next step is to schedule a meeting with the Wilton Garden Club. Mr. Tracy asked if a date has been chosen for the 2009 Tree Festival. Mr. Alvord said that he suggests May 16, 2009, but he needs to check the City schedule before he can confirm the date. Ms. MacLeod said that additional advertisement should be done. Mr. Whitehead asked if the Wilton Garden Club will be doing their annual plant sale at the festival. Mr. Alvord said that is one of the items to be discussed at the meeting. Ms. Becker asked if the Norwalk Garden Club could be partnered with. Mr. Tracy said that the Norwalk Garden Club does not have much interest in trees. Mr. Tracy said that he would schedule the meeting with the Wilton Garden Club.

11. DISCUSSION – GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES FOR CONTROL OF INVASIVE PLANTS

Mr. Whitehead said that one of the disclaimers states there has to be a new occurrence within the last 3 years. He said that he thought that Taylor Farm or the bike trail may qualify. He said there are areas in the City that may benefit from this, but there is a very short period of time until the deadline to get the

grant application prepared. Mr. Tracy asked if it is a matched grant. Mr. Whitehead said they provide 75% and the Municipality would need to provide 25% of the funding. Ms. Becker suggested that the Land Trust be involved because trees are their next focus now that they have obtained new properties. Ms. Becker asked what the deadline is to submit the application. Mr. Alvord said December 8, 2008.

12. TREE LINE USA PROGRAM

Mr. Alvord recommended this item now be removed from the agenda. All members of the Committee agreed.

13. DISCUSSION – DEVELOPING AND USING URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS- FINAL WEBINAR

Mr. Tracy said that he saw the final webinar and they will be obtaining an actual tree management plan from Burlington, Vermont that will be posted on their webinar site.

14. REMINDER-TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr. Alvord said that he had e-mailed the changes that he and Mr. Nelson had committed to and that he would be happy to receive any one else's input. He said he would like to have the final plan completed by December and present it to the Public Works Committee for approval in January, 2009. He asked if there would be anyone interested in volunteering for section 7, which is the Public outreach and education section which Mr. Viteretto had initially volunteered for. Ms. Becker said that she would contact Mr. Viteretto. Mr. Alvord suggested that the Committee members not spend a lot of time on the sections they volunteered for because the final plan will be a group effort.

15. APPLICATION FOR RE-CERTIFICATION- TREE CITY USA AND GROWTH AWARD

Mr. Alvord said that he has received the package from the National Arbor Day Foundation for applying for the re-certification for both Tree City USA, and the Growth award. Mr. Nelson asked what the key elements for the growth award are. Mr. Alvord said it needs to be determined that more money was spent this year than the last in tree management programs. He said that, more importantly, there are groups of categories and activities that the foundation is looking for the municipalities that either grew in the ones that they are already developing or to add additional ones. Ms. Becker asked if this is based on calendar year. Mr.

Alvord said “yes”. Mr. Alvord said that last year Mr. Aime had volunteered to put the package together and had done a good job and suggested asking him if he is interested in doing it again this year.

16. DISCUSSION-NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

Ms. Becker said that the CNNA had met last night and Mr. Hamilton had given a financial presentation for the Waypointe project. She said the other thing that was discussed at the meeting was the Matthews Park and Stepping Stones Museum expansion issue.

17. DISCUSSION- NTA ACTIVITES

Mr. Tracy said that he had attended the Connecticut Urban Forestry meeting and there was a lot of discussion regarding the Asian Longhorned Beetle outbreak in Worcester, Massachusetts and how it keeps growing.

18. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Becker said that the fifth and sixth graders at the Connecticut Friends School, which is located on the White Barn property, are currently working on a tree inventory project where they go out each Monday and identify trees on the property and asked if this Committee would like to get involved. Mr. Nelson asked who was heading the project. Ms. Becker said the middle school teacher at Connecticut Friends School. Mr. Tracy said he would be willing to give her any support or help that she needs.

19. ADJOURNMENT

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

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.