

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

March 25, 2008

Attendance: Don Nelson, Chairman
Maribeth Becker
Richard Whitehead
Peter Viteretto

Absent: David Tracy

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

Norwalk Tree Alliance: Dick Aime

Neighborhood Tree Liaisons: Dianne Witkowsky, Spring Hill/Hospital
Gay McCloud, West Norwalk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 26, 2008

Mr. Aime said on Page 2, Item 4c, Line 1 to remove "when"

Mr. Aime said on Page 3, Item 6, Line 2, to remove "is" & "what"

Mr. Aime said on Page 4, Item 8a, Line 2, to change "Terry" with "Terri"

Mr. Aime said on Page 4, Item 8a, Line 2, to change "Rooney" to "Almond"

Mr. Aime said on Page 4, Item 8a, Line 3, to change "Double Tree" to "DoubleTree"

Mr. Aime said on Page 5, Item 9, Line 10, to change "and" to "to"

Mr. Aime said on Page 5, Item 10, Line 4, to add "to be"

Mr. Aime said on Page 5, Item 11, Line 12, to add "section"

Mr. Aime said on Page 6, Item 11, Line 7, to change "University's" to "Universities"

**** MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM WITH CORRECTIONS**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. REPORT- INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING

Mr. Sotnik said there was an illegal pruning at 731 West Avenue. He said that the property owners had their management company do some pruning work on two 8" Bradford Pear Trees. He said that he had spoken to the property owners and they are now in the process of going through the permitting process. Mr. Vierterro asked if fines would be given. Mr. Alvord said "no" but they are being required to go through the permitting

process and have stopped the work but will allow them to continue once they obtain the permit.

4. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

a. Spring Hill

Mr. Sotnik said that the water department said there would be no problem with planting in front of the area on Maple Street and that a site visit now needs to be scheduled. Ms. Witkowsky asked if a species to be planted has been chosen. Mr. Alvord said that determination would be made at the time of the site visit. He said that he would e-mail Ms. Witkowsky with some dates and times of availability. He said once the site visit has been done, the area staked, and the types of trees selected, a purchase order will be issued to Almstead Tree.

b. East Avenue

Mr. Alvord said that Mr. Overall had sent letters to eleven property owners on East Avenue and that he has only received one response. Mr. Alvord suggested that he send one more letter stating that there would be a purchase order issued for planting in the neighborhood and that this is their last chance to respond. He said that a tree should still be provided to the one interested property owner, and suggested that Mr. Overall make it clear that there would be no big media event for the one planting.

c. Tree Planting

Mr. Alvord said that the RFP is in the Purchasing Department and is ready to go, but the Purchasing Agent thinks a sample contract should be attached, and he has asked the Risk Manager to provide updated information on the insurance. He said the RFP should go out by Thursday, March 27, 2008.

d. Volunteer Guidebook

Mr. Alvord said the guidebook has been done in the format for the new list of trees and said there is only one copy at this time, and he has given it to the Assistant Principal of Rowayton School so the kids can use it to select a tree to plant for Arbor Day. He said that the guidebook includes thirty-seven trees and fifteen shrubs and he took the other species that can still be used in New England, but that are no longer going to be on the contract list, and put them at the back of the guidebook to be used as a reference section. Mr. Sotnik said he had received a call requesting purchasing a copy of the guidebook. Mr. Alvord said because of the copyrights and the authorization from Dr. Dirr to use products from his compact disc, the guidebook cannot be sold to make money, and can only be used on a non-profit basis for the tree management program for the City of Norwalk.

5. INFORMATION COPIES

a. March 12, 2008 Chris Donnelly letter

Mr. Alvord said he had received a letter from Mr. Donnelly basically stating that Norwalk will be a Tree City USA again even though we have not been officially notified. He said that the Director of Urban Forestry has signed off and has recommended to the National Arbor Foundation that Norwalk should be a Tree City USA again. Mr. Alvord said that he had invited Mr. Donnelly to attend the Arbor Day celebration as well as the Tree Festival.

b. Arbor Day Newsletter

Mr. Alvord distributed the latest version of the Arbor Day Newsletter.

c. Norwalk Hour Article

Mr. Alvord distributed an article from The Norwalk Hour Newspaper that resulted from Marven Moss's press release.

6. UPDATE- TREE REPLACEMENTS ON CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD

Mr. Alvord said that he had spoken with the President of the Charles Cove Condo Association and asked him to meet with his Board and provided him with some dates of availability to schedule a meeting. He said that the Association had a Board meeting last night and anticipates having some dates from him within the next day or two. He said once he receives the dates he would forward them and a date would need to be chosen that works for everyone. He said that he wants the meeting to focus on the tree program, Adopt-A-Spots, and hopefully have a discussion regarding the Black Pine trees. He also said with the funds that are currently available in the tree planting account that the Committee should be consider doing some of the plantings on Calf Pasture Beach Road. Mr. Whitehead said that he had done the survey on that area, but a species selection still needs to be determined. Ms. Becker asked if next year's capital budget for the tree planting account had been reduced by \$10,000. Mr. Alvord said up through the Board of Estimate and Taxation there had been no changes to what would be in the tree planting account.

7. DISCUSSION- TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr. Alvord said he and Mr. Sotnik had discussed part of the charter of the Tree Advisory Committee which is developing the City of Norwalk's Tree Management Plan and in the time since the Tree Advisory Committee was formed and chartered by the Common Council approximately six years ago that the Tree Management Plan should be more comprehensive and should include more than six categories and should provide how the City manages its urban forest. He said that he and Mr. Sotnik had created a structure for the City's Tree Management Plan and suggested various people take a section and draft that section and share it amongst each other and package it into the right format. He said this would also help when applying for The Home Depot award next year. Mr. Alvord

said if it is agreed that the approach is valid, the process should be outlined from here going forward. Mr. Viteretto asked if there were any models of Tree Management Plans that can be obtained. Mr. Sotnik said that he had spoken with Mr. Donnelly and he would be providing him with some information. Mr. Alvord said that he agrees that it may be helpful to see what other communities have done in the way of a Tree Management Plan, but said he thinks that Norwalk is way ahead of most communities in the way of our Tree Management program, and should not wait on models to proceed. Mr. Alvord asked members of the Committee what they think the next step should be. Chairman Nelson suggested asking for volunteers to look at the outline of the various sections. Mr. Alvord suggested asking people to look at the outline and give some thought to other categories or sections they may want to be included or restructuring the outline and within a week or two establish an outline, and then have various people volunteer to write a particular section. He said he would e-mail the outline to the Committee members, Tree liaisons and the Tree Alliance members with a reminder if there are any suggestions to get them back to him by April 11, 2008.

8. DISCUSSION- TREE LINE USA PROGRAM

Mr. Alvord said that Mr. Sotnik had found this and it is a program that other cities are implementing and it is a program to try to get utility companies' particularly the electric companies to get invested in tree programs. He said that the Tree Line USA goes beyond the utility trimmings and it is getting into trying to incentivize the utility companies to participate beyond trimming. Ms. Witkowsky asked if it can be incorporated that they be required to replace a tree that they have cut down. Mr. Alvord said this should not be linked with the permitting process because the State Law does not require them to do that and said it would achieve better success if there is something separate from permitting and try to establish an incentive package that encourages them to do things. Mr. Sotnik suggested once a year that the Tree Advisory Committee come up with something that recognizes them as a tree friendly utility company in Norwalk. Mr. Alvord said if this is something that the Committee is interested in perusing he suggests having someone take this on and do some research on what criteria has been established by other communities and see what we would want to adopt for Norwalk.

9. LOOK-AHEAD

a. Arbor Day 2008

Chairman Nelson said the next meeting would be held at Rowayton Elementary School on Thursday, March 27, 2008 at 12:30PM

b. Second Annual Tree Festival

Mr. Alvord said the proclamation for the Tree Festival has been written and that the Mayor has been booked from 11:00AM-3:00PM and it is up to the Committee to decide what time they would want the Mayor at the festival. Mr. Whitehead suggested establishing an agenda. Chairman Nelson said the next meeting for the Tree Festival is on Tuesday, April 1, 2008.

10. DISCUSSION- NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

Ms. Becker said the CNNA meeting was held and they were joined by representatives from Seligson Properties who had provided an update on the West Avenue project. She said that she had located a musician for the Tree Festival but that he is not available for that day and is still researching ideas for activities for the festival.

11. DISCUSSION- NTA ACTIVITES

Mr. Aime said there have been no recent meetings due to Mr. Tracy's absence. He said that the Tree Alliance attended the walk through at Shady Beach for the Tree Festival.

12. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Whitehead said he had spoken with the Superintendent of Oak Hills golf course regarding the replanting at the golf course which would take place this spring and that he wants to follow the City's Tree Management Program. He said that the Superintendent t is also interested in discussing a landscaping improvement program and is planning to add more plantings to the entrance of the golf course.

13. ADJOURNMENT

** CHAIRMAN NELSON MOVED TO ADJOURN

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Chairman Nelson moved to adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

