

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2008**

**ATTENDANCE: Don Nelson, Chairman
Peter Viteretto
Maribeth Becker
Richard Whitehead**

ABSENT: David Tracy

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

Norwalk Tree Alliance: Jeanne McAndrew
Dick Aime
Dan Landau
Marvin Moss

NEIGHBORHOOD TREE LIAISONS: Dianne Witkowsky, Spring Hill/Hospital
Mike Mushak, Golden Hill
Gay MacLeod, West Norwalk
Nick Overall, East Norwalk

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

**2. APPROVE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF
NOVEMBER 27, 2007**

Mr. Aime said on Page 5, Item 9, Line 5, to add "other"

Mr. Aime said on Page 6, Item 13, Line 17, to replace "and" with "which"

****MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM WITH CORRECTIONS
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**3. APPROVE MINUTES OF TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF
DECEMBER 18, 2007**

Mr. Aime said on Page 2, Item 5, Line 3, to replace "Board" with "Committee"

Mr. Aime said on Page 3, Item 10, Line 1, to add "great"

Mr. Aime said on Page 3, Item 11, Line 8, to add "that it"

****MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM WITH CORRECTIONS
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. REPORT- INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL CUTTING

Mr. Sotnik had no illegal cuttings to report. Chairman Nelson asked about the status of Bonnie Doone Lane. Mr. Alvord said that the State owns the right of way out to Silvermine Avenue and that they still need to measure from the edge of the sidewalk back. He suggested that where the private property begins to discuss whether or not it makes sense to use the tree planting funds after it is confirmed where the property line actually is located, to replace the trees. Mr. Whitehead asked if they had any intentions on planting on their own. Mr. Alvord said that he has not yet spoken with the Director of Mental Health and Retardation regarding the cutting of the trees and would be speaking with him after it is determined where the property line is located.

5. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

a. Spring Hill

Mr. Alvord said the first thing that needs to be done is to meet with Ms. Witkowsky to review the locations because some of the stakes are missing and there are some concerns regarding a couple of the spots. He said once that has been done he would schedule a site visit. Ms. Witkowsky asked which stakes are missing. Mr. Alvord said he would meet with her after the meeting to discuss.

b. Sheridan Street

Chairman Nelson said that Mr. Tracy had received an e-mail from a resident on Sheridan Street stating some of the trees had been cut and that he had forwarded the e-mail to Mr. Sotnik and asked the status. Mr. Sotnik said he had spoken to Chris Torre and he had said there were some problems with the trees on Sheridan Street and that there was a limb that fell onto a car and while they had been taking care of that tree they had found some other trees that were in poor condition and they needed to be removed. He said that Mr. Torre had posted the trees for removal and the trees have been removed. Chairman Nelson asked if the Committee should be considering replacing them. Mr. Sotnik said he has not actually been at that location but could take a look at it at some point. Mr. Alvord said the fact that some trees were removed does not necessarily mean it makes sense to replant in the same location and suggested visiting the site prior to scheduling a meeting with the resident. Mr. Sotnik said he would contact Chairman Nelson with some dates of availability.

c. Mathews Park Plantings

Mr. Sotnik said he had been in contact with Chris Donnelly and Katherine Pytleski and the paperwork is completed for the grant and that Mr. Donnelly told him to begin to get pricing for a spring planting. He said that he has given the information to Bob Bociek and that twenty-six trees and eighty-seven shrubs would be planted. Chairman Nelson asked if that would tie into the master plan. Mr. Alvord said that it was taken from the master plan and that they would be spending approximately \$19,000 even though the grant was only for \$6,000 but to reestablish the planting in the area the additional funds would be necessary. Mr. Sotnik said that Mr. Bociek would be providing him with some prices on

some of the trees and shrubs that were not on the planting list. Mr. Whitehead asked who would be staking the trees. Mr. Alvord said that Mike Yeosok would be and that he has coordinated with David Westmoreland regarding the historical plantings at Mathews Park. Mr. Sotnik said as soon as Mr. Bociek gets back to him and the pricing is worked out, Mr. Bociek would be ordering the trees and shrubs and we are looking at an April or May planting date. Chairman Nelson asked Mr. Moss to work with Mr. Alvord on a press release and see if there was any way to present the tree program in a positive manner to the public now that the grant has been obtained.

d. Guidebook for Volunteers

Mr. Alvord distributed and said that he would welcome any comments on the instruction section of the guidebook.

Mr. Whitehead said that the fence on Broad Street was installed a month ago and that it looks beautiful and has made a significant improvement.

6. INFORMATION COPIES

Mr. Alvord distributed Arbor Day January/February 2008.

7. UPDATE- TREE REPLACEMENTS ON CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD

Mr. Alvord said that he has spoken with the President of the Charles Cove Condominium Association and that they would like to meet in February and said whatever date that they request he would agree to and would be e-mailing the proper parties when confirmed. He said that the two goals from the Charles Cove Condominium Association standpoint is to try and encourage them to adopt some spot outside the complex, to discuss what they are planning to do once the black pines die that are inside the complex, and what they would like to replace them with based on our recommendation.

8. REPORT- TREE AND SHRUB LISTS FOR UPCOMING TREE PLANTING RFP

Mr. Alvord distributed the list of trees on the City tree planting list and said that the areas that are highlighted in yellow are those that have been requested and planted since the current contract has been in place, and the areas that are highlighted in blue are those that he suggests removing from the list. This would take the list of trees down from fifty to twenty-five and the shrubs down from twenty-three to fifteen. He said the reason for trimming the list down is that there is a possibility of receiving better pricing. He said that extending the current Almstead Tree contract is not an option and that a request for proposals has to go out and a new contract needs to be in place by July 1, 2008, or there will be no contract for tree planting. He said that he intends to put the request for proposal out in early February and that the list is open to discussion as to what trees should go and which should stay and, that it is his goal to have a list that everyone is comfortable with. Mr. Viteretto suggested developing a second list that is in the guidebook as an appendix different from the bid list that may facilitate the ability to

reduce the list. Mr. Alvord said that for today, he is looking for input that will be used in the request for proposal and that there is still time to deal with recommended lists in the future. He said that part of his rationale about going through the list was that there are multiple's of the same trees and by eliminating some of those, there is the possibility that it would help with the pricing that is received, and we will still be able to provide the range of species and types of trees that people would want to have planted on their streets. He said there does not need to be a decision made tonight but asked that if there were any comments, to please e-mail him within the next week.

Mr. Mushak said that on the shrub list that items 1, 2, and 6 are considered to be invasive and they should be removed from the list. Mr. Overall said he had thought that the tree-planting program was to be used to re-establish a canopy on the streets and said he thinks having the Evergreens and Colorado Spruce seem to be out of place on this list. Mr. Alvord said those are generally used in the parks and it used to be that Department of Public Works had its own contract and that Parks and Recreation had their own contract, and when the tree planting program was implemented it was decided that the two would pool their resources and both departments would function off the same contract so that common prices would be paid and the reason for some of the tree species and all of the shrubs on the list is because of the Parks facilities.

Mr. Mushak said that three years ago at 38 Elmwood Avenue the tree at that location split into two and fell onto the sidewalk and a month ago in front of 42 Elmwood Avenue the same thing happened and had fallen into a driveway and he had said that he is concerned about the Bradford Pears around Norwalk because they have not been pruned, and is especially concerned with the ones on Washington Street. He said there is a lot of weight on the tips and said although he does not like "dead heading" trees, but when it comes to pear trees they have to be tipped back to take the weight off the branches and he strongly suggests that someone prune the trees on Washington Street, even if it ends up being controversial in order to save the trees. He stated that it is only a matter of time before we lose those trees, and it would take decades for new trees to reach the beauty and the canopy those now have. He said the pruning that would be required would be shocking, but pear trees recover quickly from drastic pruning and it would be a way to save those trees. Mr. Alvord said he would look into those trees and if trimming needs to be done that it would be done by the contractor as opposed to doing it in house, and he would also have to work with the Redevelopment Agency as well as educate the merchants in that area well in advance. Mr. Whitehead said on these trees it needs to be specific as to how a pear tree can be pruned. Mr. Alvord said this would be a circumstance where Mr. Bociiek of Almstead Tree would be required to perform a site visit.

9. LOOK-AHEAD

a. Arbor Day 2008

Chairman Nelson said that Arbor Day and the Tree Festival are coming up and he wants to start early in establishing committees to look at various kinds of activities that can be involved. He said that Arbor Day is scheduled to be at Rowayton School and that he has spoken with the staff at the school and they have designated the Assistant Principal to get

involved and he asked for a volunteer to be on that committee. Mr. Aime asked what the date of the Arbor Day Festival is. Chairman Nelson said April 25, 2008. Mr. Alvord said there is not a lot of work involved in this because the school is anxious to participate and that they will essentially develop the program and that the volunteers would just need to make sure they include Mayor Moccia's and Chris Donnelly's remarks, and to be sure there is a proclamation. Ms. McAndrew said she had been approached by the Assistant Principal and she had said she thought that a tree that is in the parking lot could be a notable tree and thought as part of the program that Mr. Landau and herself could show how to measure a notable tree.

b. Second Annual Tree Festival

Chairman Nelson said that the tree festival would be held on May 3, 2008, and would be held at Shady Beach. He said they have already gotten some tree signs that will identify major trees in the area and have received permission from Mike Moccia to put the signs up. Chairman Nelson asked for volunteers. Mr. Moss said he had spoken with a representative from the Connecticut Forestry Department and they have agreed to participate by providing small seedlings. He said he has also been in contact with a representative from the Stamford Museum and Nature Center and they would be working on a program to give the kids at the festival maple syrup. He said he had also spoken with the Yale Forestry Department and they would also be participating in the festival in some capacity. He asked if the hours of the festival should remain 11:00AM- 3:00 PM. Mr. Alvord said those hours were chosen because that was the range of times that would be most available to try and encourage the people with kids to attend, and said if those hours worked out in the past he suggested leaving them the same. Mr. Moss said the Exchange Club would be back this year to give out hotdogs and hamburgers. Mr. Alvord said one of the things to think about is to add activities to the festival that they did not have last year. Chairman Nelson said at the next Tree Alliance meeting they would be discussing the festival and would be getting a list of those that had tents at the last festival and give them formal invitations to this year's festival. Chairman Nelson said if anyone is interested in attending the Tree Alliance meeting they are welcome and said if anyone had any thoughts or ideas on how to enhance the festival to either call or e-mail him. Mr. Whitehead asked if the festival should be expanded to include more landscaping companies. Mr. Alvord said as long as they will be bringing something to the festival that fits with the theme of trees, and not use it strictly for commercial benefit.

10. DISCUSSION- NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

Ms. Becker said that there will be a CNNA meeting on January 28, 2008, and that Mike Greene from Planning and Zoning would be attending to update them on what projects will be going on throughout the City of Norwalk as well as discussing the master plan. She said this would be her last CNNA meeting as coordinator and beginning February 2008 there will be a new coordinator.

11. DISCUSSION- NTA ACTIVITIES

Mr. Aime said he had no activities to report but said there is a house on Rowayton Avenue just north of Devils Garden Road where the homeowner has removed approximately ten trees.

12. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Viteretto said he had e-mailed someone today regarding the estimates for the tree wells and is waiting on a response. He said these would be used to try and stop people from putting garbage on top of tree roots. Mr. Alvord said the principal idea of them is to keep people from walking on the tree roots. Mr. Viteretto said there are other options such as steel bars that could also be looked into. Ms. Becker said she has been focusing her efforts on establishing a neighborhood association for the Wall Street area and this may be a great project for volunteers.

Mr. Alvord said if he has not received any input regarding the tree planting list by the end of January, that the species that are highlighted in white and blue would be the list that would go out as part of the request for proposal.

Mr. Alvord said he had spoken with the Home Depot Foundation regarding the award for excellence and after speaking with them he had decided not to do the on line application process because although the efforts would have been appreciated, we would probably not win the award again this year. He said next year he suspects would be different given the additional tree programs with one exception, and that is that trees need to be planted and said he does not want the Tree Advisory Committee to get so focused on events that trees don't end up getting planted. He said he would like to get something going to re-interest the neighborhood associations in the tree-planting program. He said that spending the money in the tree planting account has never been a problem but potentially if we got more active with the tree planting program those funds would be depleted and that there are other sources that would be happy to donate or provide a tree if we are willing to plant it.

Ms. Witkowsky asked about the status of the wires in the trees on Armstrong Court. Mr. Sotnik said he went out to that location and distributed the pictures that he had taken, and said he has a call into the utility companies and is waiting for a call back. Ms. Witkowsky asked if there was a time limit they had to remove the wires from the trees. Mr. Alvord said he would be requesting that they be removed by the end of the week.

13. ADJOURNMENT

** MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM