

**CITY OF NORWALK
OAK HILLS PARK NATURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (OHPNAC)
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 10, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Elsa Obuchowski, Chair; Audrey Cozzarin, Nancy Crowley,
Anthony Carrano, Lisa Meserole, Steve Wallerstein, Bill Wrenn

ABSENT: Peggy Holton, Joe Tamburri

OTHERS: Ernie DesRoches, Oak Hills Authority; Jim Schell, Golf Course
Superintendent; Jerry Crowley, Oak Hills Authority Board.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Ms. Obuchowski.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES

The following corrections were made to the minutes of February 10, 2015

- Page 3: In the paragraph starting “A general discussion followed...” and the word “member” and correct “advise” to “advice” in this sentence: Another Committee “**member**” pointed out that including that statement in the official goals might imply that the Committee was giving **advice** to the Park as a whole, most of which is comprised of the golf course.
- Page 4: Change “recommending” to “recommend” in this sentence: Mr. Carrano said that he would like to have a statement that would allow the Committee to observe and “**recommending**” the practices.
- Page 4: Paragraph 6 – Replace ‘Mr. Carrano said that he had heard about a particular online company that stock signs for common varieties of trees.’ With ‘Ms. Holton said that she had heard about a particular online company that stock signs for common varieties of trees.’
- Page 5: Line 4 – the students are fourth graders, not first graders.
- Page 5: Line 6 – the exposure, while including lots of water and wetland, is not “water based” and should be replaced with “wetland oriented”.
- Page 5: Second paragraph, last sentence. “the students who had fears –“ should read “a few students had fears about elements of being outdoors in a nature area, such as being attacked by a squirrel, or piranha in the water.”

**** MS. COZZARIN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF
FEBRUARY 10, 2015 AS AMENDED.**

**** MS. CROWLEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS

MEETING WITH CONSERVATION OFFICER ALEXIS CHERICHETTI

A meeting between Conservation Officer Alexis Cherichetti took place and the notes from the meeting have been assembled. A review of the notes and meeting followed.

LETTER OF INTENT TO MAYOR AND COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEE CHAIR

Ms. Cozzarin and Ms. Obuchowski had worked together on forming a draft for the letter of intent for the Mayor. The letter was read to the committee for review. The conversation then moved to the history of the park, the various previous land owners, and related details.

WALKING "TOUR" OF THE THREE AREAS WITH SUPERINTENDENT JIM SCHELL

Mr. Schell was present for this item. Plans for the proposed tour were brought up to discuss for him. Mr. Schell stated that he hoped the walk could take place by April 4th, 2015. It was stated that there was a section of the park that could be walked but could not be accessed from inside the golf course. A review of the 'tour' spots followed. It was pointed out that there was a paved path that traveled into one of the areas. It was also noted that there was a desire for these walks with an experienced Nature Advisor for better understanding of the impact on the area, especially in relation to invasive species.

ALLTRAILERS.COM INCLUSION OF OAK HILLS WALKING TRAIL

INVITATION FOR NORWALK GARDEN CLUB TO PARTICIPATE

DESIGN IDEAS FOR GREAT LAWN AND GARDEN/FOUNTAIN AREAS

Discussion of the architecture and design of the park was the next topic considered among the advisory committee as well as Mr. Schell. The funding for such plans was also brought up for discussion in addition to other items on the agenda.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

A grant has been fully executed by the City. Several firms are interested in bidding, especially as groups, though further review is needed. Further discussion on these issues followed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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STRUCTURE, MEMBERSHIP, AND OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE

It was mentioned that, in the prior meeting, the election of the vice-chair had been tabled.

**** MS. COZZARIN MOTIONED TO NOMINATE MR. WRENN AS VICE CHAIR.**

**** MR. CARRANO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX IN FAVOR (OBUCHOWSKI, COZZARIN, CROWLEY, CARRANO, MESEROLE, WALLERSTEIN) AND ONE ABSTAINING (WRENN).**

GOALS OF THE COMMITTEE

The goals of the committee, especially in regards to maintenance of the land and trails, was brought up as well as the current state of the trails. Ensuring that the trails and tours are age-appropriate to protect the park was also mentioned. The possibility of limiting certain areas for 'human interaction' and leaving the rest of the park in its 'wild' state was considered, also.

It was reported that there was another person interested in serving who held an interest in nature and was a neighbor.

MORE PRECISELY DEFINE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE "NO-BUILD" AREAS TO BE PRESERVED

A quick review of the prior steps taken to define the boundaries was taken.

MORE SECURELY PROTECTING THOSE AREAS AS PERMANENT OPEN SPACE

Progress had been made towards better security for protecting the areas as well.

PLAQUES TO IDENTIFY TREES, WILDLIFE

The discussion moved to whether the Advisory would like to have guidance on identifying the various trees within the park. The possibility of a field-guide was brought up.

FIELD TRIPS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A quick review of the potential field trips and educational opportunities for young people in relation to the above items was the next topic considered. .

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGNATED "GREAT LAWNS" AREA.

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ROSE GARDEN, ETC.

Contact with the proper parties for the discussion of the areas had been made. The suggestion of waiting until further information had been acquired and feedback received was discussed. The idea of uploading information to the park website for easier spread of information and collaboration was brought up as well.

A lively discussion followed.

ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PRACTICES IN OAK HILLS PARK

DISCUSSION OF HOW TO ATTAIN THEM

MARKETING

BUDGET

Due to issues with meeting times with the architects, the budget will be discussed at the next meeting.

TIME FRAME

A quick recap of the timeframe was made and it was noted that there had been progress on the various projects.

NEW BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING DATE: TUESDAY APRIL 14, 2015

The remaining items that were not discussed will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. CROWLEY MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. WALLERSTEIN SECONDED THE MOTION**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services.

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