

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 20, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Lisa Shanahan, Chair; David Heuvelman, Dominique Johnson, Tom Keegan, Tom Livingston, Kadeem Roberts.

OTHERS: Atty. Brian Candela; Paul Sotnik, DPW Senior Engineer, Norwalk Tree Alliance board member and Tree Advisory Committee staff;; Steve Kleppin, Planning and Zoning Department; Danica Doroski, State of Connecticut Urban Forestry Coordinator; Council Member George Tsiranidis; Chris Torre, DPW Superintendent of Operations and Tree Warden of the City of Norwalk; Jessica Vonachek, Chief of Community and Economic Development

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Shanahan called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC HEARING
(Possible Action on)**

Ms. Shanahan said that they would not be voting on Chapter 30 and Chapter 79 because many residents were out of town during July. Atty. Candela said that a number of comments had been submitted regarding Chapters 30 and 79.

• Discuss and Vote on Chapter 37, Article II, Section 37-10 – Definition of Polystyrene Food Service Product.

Ms. Shanahan opened the Public Hearing on Chapter 37, Article II, Section 37-10 – Definition of Polystyrene Food Service Product.

Ms. Diane Lauricella stated that this was a reasonable addition to the chapter and suggested that there be a plan to create some public education and outreach in the future. She said that this was very good and much needed.

There was no one else from the public who wished be heard on this matter. Ms. Shanahan closed the public hearing on Chapter 37, Article II, Section 37-10 – Definition of Polystyrene Food Service Product.

• Discuss and Vote on Chapter 38, Article II (Fireworks and Firecrackers) Sections 38-7 through 38-13.

Ms. Shanahan opened the Public Hearing on Chapter 38, Article II (Fireworks and Firecrackers) Sections.

Atty. Candela said that he had received a message from a Professor Kipp who stated she was a scientist and could answer questions about Polystyrene.

Ms. Shanahan said that Professor Kipp was a member of the Tree Advisory Committee and that the Ordinance Committee would be contacting her about other issues.

Ms. Shanahan said that there was no one from the public who indicated that they wished to speak regarding the fireworks ordinance.

• Discuss and Vote on Chapter 30, (Capital Project Program) – Possible merger of Planning and Zoning Commissions.

• Discuss and Vote on Chapter 79 (Planning and Zoning Commissions) – Possible merger of Planning and Zoning Commissions.

Atty. Candela said that he had received three emails earlier in the day concerning the possible merger of the Planning and Zoning Commissions.

The first email was from Isabel Hargrove, 4 Red Oak Ln., Norwalk.

Dear esteemed Norwalk Ordinance Committee Members,

Our Planning and Zoning Commission are essential to properly managing land use which controls development and zoning and impacts our property taxes, quality of life and shapes the future growth of our City. Norwalk has gone through explosive growth with unintended consequences on traffic, the environment, our school system and infrastructure. Now is not the time to merge our two commissions, which will reduce the staffing by more than half and create an unreasonable workload on our Commissioners. The Planning and Zoning Commissions have very distinctive scopes which would fall on the same seven commissioners. We need more focus on planning and zoning, not less. Finally, combining the commissions consolidates power on fewer Commissioners which will decrease scrutiny on larger developments that are also in need of more, not less. I respectfully encourage the ordinance committee to reject this proposal.

The second email was from Richard Bonenfant and Atty. Candela said that most of the Committee members had received this email.

Dear Ordinance Committee Members,

I urge the committee to reject the merger of the Planning and Zoning commissions primarily because the workload would soon become overwhelming for the few Commissioners. There would likely not be enough time to thoroughly study all the applications or fully examine the required budget requests and decisions. Many people in Norwalk are fed up with rapidly increasing density that has brought us traffic congestion,

parking issues, pressures on the school systems and enterprise zone schemes where the homeowners are paying their own taxes and the developers obligations too. If this is an attempt to streamline the application processes, it will just end up speeding approvals before the public has a chance to understand the ramifications to their neighborhoods. There is no urgent need to combine these Commissions and you should not even consider something of this magnitude when you have a little contact with your constituents. During Zoom meetings, you don't even see the public speakers and we, the public, have no idea how long the sign up sheet is so we get frustrated not knowing when it's our turn. This results in many people simply leaving the meeting. Please don't take advantage of the situation and show consideration for the opinions of the people that you represent. Thank you.

Atty. Candela announced that the last email was from Andrew Conroy.

Greetings Mr. Chairman and members of the ordinance committee. I understand that tonight's ordinance committee meeting will include a discussion and vote on the proposal to amend chapter 79 of the Norwalk Ordinances. The intent is to merge/replace the now separate Planning and Zoning Commissions with a combined commission. I've read the proposed language and the current state CGS that apply as Connecticut General Statutes that apply to these Commissions. Having served on the zoning commission and liaison with the planning Commission in the capital budget, I developed an appreciation of the vast workload of both Commissions. It made me wonder why we did not separate the Commissions long ago. There were times when the workload was so great that our meetings lasted until midnight and sometimes beyond. Even the addition of meetings did not fully handle the load. I experienced the Planning Commission dealing with Capital budget hearings and not infrequently re-hearings. Much of the hearing requirements are dictated by the CGS which is the Connecticut General Statutes. Again, a heavy workload for the Planning Commissioners. Our current eight member Planning Commission and seven member zoning commission at times can barely keep up. As I now understand it the combined Commission proposal, the combined planning and zoning I have seven commission members that is having the labor available to the Commission's work. That is a huge issue, especially with the cutting pressure in October resulting from the rewrite of the CGS, the Connecticut General Statutes planning and zoning statutes. The minority party representation statute appears to me to limit the majority party to five members, not six, when the commission has seven or eight members. Even if the proposed ordinance is amended to increase the commission membership, the upper limit in CGS Connecticut General Statutes 8-4a, it's ten voting members. That would still be a large reduction in the available labor of the combined commission.

Further complicating matters is the apparent legal stricture that requires the combined commission to separate the planning hearings from the zoning hearings. The board must sit as a planning commission when dealing with planning items and separately as a zoning commission when dealing with zoning items. This stricture negates many of the assumed efficiencies of the combination. At minimum, further consideration of the combination should wait until sometime after the October 2021 implementation of the

revised CGS Connecticut General Statutes. The revision is so sweeping that it will take months to so they comply with/absorb the changes. Warm regards, Andy Conroy

Ms. Shanahan said that they would discuss Chapter 30, Capital Projects first.

Ms. Lauricella said over the years, she had attended and spoken at several Planning Commission and Zoning Commission meetings through several mayors and administrations. She said she viewed the proposal through that lens. She said she appreciated thinking outside the box, but the proposal in its current form without additional discussion and questions, this particular merger is unwise and premature. She asked the Committee consider postponing making the changes until after the new zoning regulations are adopted. She applauded the Mayor for helping modernize the zoning regulations but pointed out that it was a lengthy process. It's important to finish that process before merging the two commissions. She agreed with the previous emails that were not in favor of the merger, but for different reasons. She said that there has been a large increase in housing development, which is a planning issue, not just a zoning issue. She said she had never seen anyone from the Ordinance Committee sitting in on the Planning Commission when they are working on the Capital budget Requests.

She added that in Chapter 79, Section 3 deals with the composition and appointment of the members. She felt this would be an unfortunate merger because while nine members would be fine, only having three per district should be at least one member per five voting districts or no more than two per voting district. She had seen cases where there were neighborhoods that were not represented.

On Section 6, the search committee should have some citizens or Council Members on it rather than the Chair and Vice Chair of the new Planning and Zoning. Ms. Lauricella said that she thought it was a conflict of interest. Her main concern was that the Zoning Commission has been given too much responsibility. Many of the Ordinance Committee may not know it, but they also have the responsibility of Zoning enforcement. She spoke about the Aquifer Agency for the City of Norwalk could be placed under a different home or different entity and Ms. Lauricella had requested it be placed under the Conservation Commission or the Planning Commission a long time ago.

Ms. Lauricella said that the Planning Commission also was responsible for the Coastal Zone Management Act. Adding another responsibility of a full Planning Commission is unwise at this time.

Ms. Shanahan said that Ms. Lauricella could send the Ordinance Committee an email and it would be included in the record.

Ms. Lauricella said that the current structure places too much power in one entity and had witnessed the current administration's good Zoning appointments. She added that she had lived through zoning appointments where the members never met a big box store they didn't like during the Moccia and Esposito administrations. This is why they need the checks and balances.

Lastly, the City needs a well-managed Planning Commission, which has never really optimized its responsibilities.

Ms. Shanahan noted that Council Member George Tsiranidis had joined the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Ms. Shanahan closed the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSIONS.

• Chapter 37, Article II, Section 37-10

Mr. Livingston said that they do need to get out and educate the public more on this issue. It will be important to make sure the public is aware of these changes.

Mr. Heuvelman asked what kind of enforcement they would have on this. Ms. Shanahan said that when they receive complaints, they generally call Atty. Candela who contacts the store to inform them they are not in compliance. Atty. Candela said that when he receives complaints regarding plastic bags or straws, he would give the store management a legal opinion. Some of the stores had exceptions, others had already purchased the plastic bags. At that point, Atty. Candela works with the business to resolve the issue.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE SENDING CHAPTER 37, ARTICLE II, SECTION 37-10 – DEFINITION OF POLYSTYRENE FOOD SERVICE PRODUCT TO THE COMMON COUNCIL AT THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

• Chapter 38, Article II, Sections 38-7 through 38-13.

Ms. Shanahan said that this would allow the Fire Marshal to inspect stores that were selling illegal fireworks.

Mr. Heuvelman gave a shout out to Fire Marshal Broderick Sawyer and Atty. Candela for the work that they did on this issue. He thanked them and said that it would help the Fire Marshals perform their jobs.

**** MR. ROBERTS MOVED TO APPROVE SENDING CHAPTER 38, ARTICLE II (FIREWORKS AND FIRECRACKERS) SECTIONS 38-7 THROUGH 38-13 TO THE COMMON COUNCIL AT THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Shanahan said that Mr. Livingston had some comments about the last meeting and Mr. Kleppin might also have some information.

Mr. Livingston said that he wished to review some changes from the last meeting that resulted from comments from Mr. Shulman, Ms. DiMeglio, and Mr. Sepienza in the Law Department. He then displayed the various changes on the screen to Chapter 30-5.

Mr. Livingston said that the Planning Commission deals with the Capital Project Budget every year. The goal is to streamline the process a bit more manageable.

Chapter 30-7 just clarifies the language and would have the Planning and Zoning Commissions review the Capital Project and generate a report stating whether the projects were in line with the Master Plan.

Chapter 30-8 just included some clarifying language.

Chapter 30-10 has significant changes in the last sentence. He reviewed the wording with the Committee members, which requires that any project that is not consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development be removed from the Capital Budget. Otherwise it would have to be approved by a 2/3rds vote.

Mr. Livingston then reviewed Chapter 79, and explained that most of the changes involved eliminating brackets. They also removed one sentence that could potentially be confusing. Mr. Livingston said that they had discussed having this effective as of January 1, 2022, but the first meeting of the Council would be on January 11th. He said that the statute would be effective as of January 11th, but the terms would run from January 1st to January 1st.

Mr. Kleppin then addressed the Committee. He explained that the Department was in the process of updating the Zoning Regulations and a consultant was working on this. The first meeting will be on July 29th and it is expected to be a 12 to 14 month process until the adoption of the new regulations. The new regulations will make everyone's life easier.

Mr. Kleppin said that Ms. Lauricella had mentioned the Zoning Commission functioning as the Aquifer Protection Agency. Mr. Kleppin said that since he joined the City almost five years ago, he thinks they have only met as the Aquifer Protection Agency twice a year for about 10 to 15 minutes. It is a very small role. If the City decided to transfer the Agency to the Conservation Commission, it would not be a major issue.

Mr. Kleppin then addressed the amount of the Planning Commission's workload. He said that Mr. Livingston had noted that it was focused on the Capital Budget. The Commission interviews all the departments and then constructs a capital budget, but it does not have teeth. It is the way the system is set up. He gave a brief overview of a potential alternate process.

Mr. Kleppin said that a majority of the Zoning Commission work is generated by the Zoning Commission itself. When there are regulation changes or amendments, they have to be referred to the Planning Commission for review. It would be more seamless if the Commission was one body. An applicant has to go to two separate bodies for permission for a project and there is not only the cost to the applicant, but also to the City in terms of posting notices, hiring secretarial services and staff overtime.

Another main function of the Planning Commission is looking at sub-divisions. Since Norwalk is very developed, there are only about four to five subdivision applications a year. If the

application meets the requirements, then the Planning Commission can't veto it. This is also the same straight forward process for an 8-24 review.

Mr. Kleppin said that the staff direction has changed over the last few years to a planning first mentality. The City wide Plan and the East Norwalk Plan. They are working on final stages of the Industrial Zone study, so much of the legwork has been completed. Once the plans are completed, the regulations are written to uphold the plans. This results in plans that are consistent with the 2019 City wide Plan.

Mr. Livingston asked about the reduction in staffing. Mr. Kleppin said that he was not sure what that referred to but there were no plans to reduce the City staff.

Mr. Livingston asked about the reference to the Connecticut General Statutes. Mr. Kleppin said that he had not spoken with Mr. Conroy, but there was recent legislation passed regarding the overall 8-2, the enabling legislation. He said that the Department was aware of the changes, but did not think it would affect the City.

Mr. Livingston asked about the combined group meeting separately to consider the planning application from the zoning issues. Mr. Kleppin said that the Commissioner would wear two different hats, one when they are in the legislative mode and another when they are in planning mode. It will not change the way they act. He said that they would do some training about the enabling legislation and the sub-division legislation.

Ms. Johnson asked whether merging the two commissions would remove the checks and balances, particularly in the neighborhoods that were not seeing developments aligned with what they would like to see. Mr. Kleppin said that the Planning Commission does not have a voice on applications that don't have to do with a map amendments or a text amendment. When they do have a map or text amendment, the Planning Commission does not hold public hearings. Their role is to decide if the amendment is consistent with the City wide Plan.

Mr. Kleppin explained that there were three different types of permits, the zoning permit which is often referred to as an "over the counter" permit; a site plan approval which is similar to a subdivision application; and a special permit, that automatically triggers a public hearing. Ms. Shanahan said that nothing would change with the merger.

Mr. Keegan explained he had to leave for another meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if they would need to change the name of Section 118, article 1400, which is titled Zoning Commission. He added there were more additional duties that the Zoning Commission was responsible for. Discussion followed.

Ms. Shanahan said that this would be one of the things that they would discuss in August.

Ms. Shanahan said that they would close the Discussion portion at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Acceptance of the minutes

• May 18, 2021 – Regular Meeting of the Ordinance Committee

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2021 REGULAR MEETING OF THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.**

Mr. Livingston noted a number of corrections that had already been made in the minutes.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2021 REGULAR MEETING OF THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

• June 15, 2021 – Regular meeting of the Ordinance Committee

**** MR. ROBERTS MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 15, 2021 – REGULAR MEETING OF THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.**

Mr. Livingston noted a number of corrections that had already been made in the minutes.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 15, 2021 – REGULAR MEETING OF THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

• Discuss Chapter 47, Article IV – Outdoor Dining

Jessica Vonachek, Chief of Community and Economic Development, presented a PowerPoint presentation about Outdoor Dining. Key points included:

- the existing outdoor dining ordinance and, much like the zoning regulations, the outdoor dining ordinance was done a number of years ago and needs to be updated.
- Parklets are ways in which cities can basically increase vitality and increase pedestrian use of the streets.
- In some cities, the restaurant owners pay a portion of the parking space fee for the season. And they would also pay to build out the modular platform, as well as the structure that is the railing structure to go around the outside. And generally, it's modular.
- Parklets meet ADA compliance, because the idea is that you build a platform that's as high as the curb.
- The legislation that is put in place currently is good to March 2022.

A discussion followed about how long the parklet might be. In one photo, it was very long, but in others, it was only one or two spaces long. The ordinance language needs to be updated. It was also noted that since it was a permitted situation, if there were violations, the permit would be revoked and the parklet would be taken down. During COVID, it was evident that there was a great interest in outdoor dining. The current statute is very limited.

Mr. Roberts expressed concerns about the parklet removing parking from street and whether the police would have easy access to the areas. He was told the intention of the parklets are to provide the restaurants and the small businesses an opportunity for their patrons to be able to sit outside. The challenge with the barriers that we had that was that the barriers were put out to be responsive to COVID and responsive to the fact that the restaurants had a lower capacity. The way in which these parklets would work, is that they don't need to be back to back to back to back. The guidelines and standards are one that need to be built with DPW and the Police Department to be able to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the way in which they're being put together.

Mr. Heuvelman said that he like the idea because it put the pedestrian traffic back in front of the stores that were not restaurants.

Mr. Tsiranidis agreed and said that it was time to look forward and change the old practice. However, it is important to be aware of the restrictions. Yet this looks like it is a solid ideas that will work across the board. And the Committee definitely has to take the Police department and the Emergency Services into consideration.

• Discuss and Vote on Chapter 7, Article II – City Seal – Section 7-9 and 7-10

The discussion moved to updating the gateway signs at the highway exit ramps. Many of them have business names that are no longer there. At Exit 16, the City seal needs to be updated and cleaned up a bit.

One of the statutes in the actual ordinance speaks to any changes in designer inscription upon the seal. And if that's the case the Committee would need to go to Town Clerk and to the Secretary of State. But the language on the seal, and the content on the seal on the right is the same as the one on the left. So the Committee just need to determine, whether to through the process of the Town Clerk and the Secretary of State, or if we feel as though it's not really a design change, because it's the same content. Discussion followed about using the updated design for marketing purposes.

Atty. Candela pointed out that Chapter 7, Article 2, Section 7-9 and 7-10 allows the Council to do this. The last sentence is really what matters here. It said city may have a common seal and alter the same at pleasure. So that's the most important thing, because otherwise the Committee would be talking about charter revision. So that landmine has been avoided. The conservative approach would be to go through the process of filing the certificate with the Town Clerk and then having the Town Clerk provide the city seal the CCL to the Secretary of State.

Secondly, Atty. Candela said he could not imagine that the Secretary of State would have any issue with changing the City seal, especially when everything looks so similar. He proceeded to outline the various steps that would have to be taken to move this forward.

Ms. Shanahan said that Atty. Candela should start a conversation with the Secretary of State and report back at the next meeting.

Mr. Heuvelman and Mr. Livingston wished to know if they could register both designs. Atty. Candela will look into this.

Mr. Keegan rejoined the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

• Discuss Chapter 112 – Trees

Ms. Shanahan reminded everyone that there had been a meeting regarding scheduling a tree summit in late May with a variety of different, interested groups. Our current tree ordinance is a pretty bare bones type of ordinance. And it was pretty much adopted so that Norwalk could be designated as a tree city in the State of Connecticut. The planning group for the tree summit had pretty extensive conversations with the DPW staff and conservation groups that there could be some a little bit more be a meat put on the bones of this.

Ms. Danica Doroski, the State of Connecticut Urban Forestry Coordinator, greeted the Committee members. She gave the Committee an overview on the urban forestry program is housed within the Division of Forestry and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The purpose of a program is to advise, assist and provide resources to municipalities, nonprofits, volunteer groups, residents that are looking to grow, maintain and improve their urban and community forest.

In the urban forestry program one of the main objectives is to maintain the existing canopy cover and to increase canopy cover particularly in target areas. This means investing resources in the mature canopy and that might take the form have ongoing maintenance and care or structural pruning throughout a trees lifecycle, but also things that can be done to preserve these larger trees that proportionally provide a majority of the services rendered. All of the benefits that urban trees can provide can include forested national areas and parks as well and increasing urban tree canopy cover. Larger trees provide a majority of the benefits, but at the same time, it is important to also invest in the future tree canopy and particular focus is in investing in areas that has historically been underserved. There's a lot of great research that's coming out right now that's highlighting the disparities that is seen in things like income and surface temperatures, or the heat island effect and tree cover. There was a recent TNC study, some of you may have seen that actually called out Connecticut as one of the states that had the most pronounced disparities.

Ms. Doroski explained the urban forestry program doesn't handle on the ground management which is what the local municipalities are doing. Another big objective of the program is to support municipalities and nonprofits and help them grow their capacity so that they can perform this great on the ground work that, is going to be maintaining and increasing the canopy cover.

She also spoke about what this might look like at a municipal level, with the caveat that every municipality is incredibly distinct. There are 169 very diverse municipalities in Connecticut, so there's no one size fits all urban forestry program. Norwalk has both a local Tree Alliance and an Advisory Committee, which are very important to having good urban forest management.

There are also national standards and having a tree ordinance along with a tree board is part of a national certification for Tree City USA. Those designations can help really expand that capacity municipality, they can extend outreach, pursue funding opportunities, provide a channel for residential concerns to municipal land managers, and then the tree ordinances are just a very important way that the individual communities can set community forest goals. These ordinances can really range they run the gamut, and there maybe 18 cities in Connecticut that have tree ordinances that range from ordinances that are setting requirements for tree plantings, to tree protection; and there are ordinances that are protection trees of a certain size or that have historical significance, or to just setting stand standards for tree care and maintenance.

Some questions the Committees might want to consider are:

- What do you have?
- What's your resource like?
- What is your current urban forest canopy like?
- And once that is determined, where do you want to go with it?

Once you know where you want to go, identifying the steps that you need to get there. Those are sort of the key components to the ordinance related to this idea of what do you have another really critical component of a good urban forestry program is implementing data driven forest management. Other questions to consider will be

- Where do we have trees? Where do we not have trees?
- Where we do have trees, what species do we have?
- How big are they?
- What kind of condition are they in?
- Do they need care? Do they need maintenance?
- Are they a potential hazard?
- Where we don't have trees, will the community plant trees?
- What are the demographic breakdowns of those neighborhoods?

These are some of State's big picture objectives and when we were obtaining goals and where we're reaching all these objectives is through a series of grant programs, which have yet to be announced, but will be forthcoming. These are really big grant opportunities that are going to be able to fund projects, urban forestry projects to maintain and grow our urban canopy cover.

Tree planting is expensive, both, economically and carbon wise, when one thinks about how much carbon goes into growing seedlings, and transporting them and planting them. And so it is important to make sure that the trees that are planted survive, and are able to provide all of the services that are associated with them.

Very few municipal programs have the capacity to do things like preventative pruning, or rotating pruning schedules, and going through to check the trees every couple of years to see if they need any structural pruning. But there's a lot of research that demonstrates that things like preventative printing can make trees more wind resistant and can prevent damage in large storms. More frequent storms, storms that bring down trees become a problem because people lose the benefits of those trees. It's also a problem because it changes public perception of the urban canopy. People shift their perspective all of a sudden from the trees being this asset to being a huge disservice and to being a liability.

Another consideration is thinking about things like diversity, and thinking about what types of trees are being planted. Certain species are going to provide more services than others. Things like diversity are so critical in the wake of invasive pests and diseases, which again with climate change, are going to become more and more problematic.

Ms. Doroski said it sounds like this is something Norwalk is already doing and there's so much power and strength that can come from collaboration, communication, not only within the municipality, but with other municipalities as well. No tree ordinance is one size fits all. It needs to meet the needs of the individual municipality. But there's some helpful models and space for collaboration and shared learning across these different municipalities.

Ms. Shanahan asked about the percentage of tree canopy and whether an inventory would be the best way to go on a limited funds.

Ms. Doroski said there's a lot of value in each municipality pursuing, like tree cover analyses as they pertain to the specific needs of that municipality. But she noted that things like street cover is being considered at the state level. They have really high resolution satellite imagery that goes up to one meter. And so DEEP actually can do some pretty robust urban canopy analyses for the whole state. And that is part of our initiative that DEEP is working towards right now.

An analysis of something like urban tree canopy cover is helpful from the perspective of seeing where there is tree cover and where there isn't. Having tree cover analysis helps in understanding how canopy cover is distributed. For most of Connecticut, most of the urban tree canopy cover actually falls on private residential properties. And that's something that the municipality doesn't have jurisdiction over right now. Even just understanding parks and where parks are located is helpful for the big picture of urban tree canopy cover and the tree inventory. Ideally they should use those inventory to form the future planting palettes. It really depends on what the goals are at the individual municipal level, and what the capacity is at any given moment. DEEP really wants more and more municipalities to be doing this sort of data driven forest management. So there are funding opportunities available to fund these kinds of projects.

Ms. Shanahan asked about the good studies out there that says if a municipality really come up with a good tree management policy, it actually can be less expensive if they maintain their urban forestry then to deal with the end of life.

Ms. Doroski said Tree City, USA is a program runs through the Arbor Day Foundation. There are 18 cities in Connecticut that meet the standards for Tree City. As part of that application,

municipalities need to report how much money they spent on tree planting, how much they spent on maintenance and pruning, and then how much they spent on tree removals. Tree removals are so incredibly expensive. And so there is an economic case to be made for doing more preventative pruning, investing more in younger trees, investing more trees throughout their lifecycle, in the hopes that it leads to better outcomes at the end of their life. When a tree is maintained throughout its lifecycle at their end of life outcome, they are able to persist longer. They're less of a liability.

Mr. Livingston asked if there were other sources of funding for the inventory and canopy studies. Ms. Doroski explained actually DEEP has three different funding opportunities right now for on the ground project. That would be things like tree planting, tree maintenance. And there are urban forestry projects that are going to target climate change and environmental justice issues, but there's some specific criteria for those grants, which will hopefully be announced soon. The short answer is that it is not just for inventories or management plans. There is flexibility. But the important part is that the need for the data is demonstrated as is the follow through on the management side.

Ms. Shanahan thanked Ms. Doroski for her presentation.

Chris Torre, DPW Superintendent of Operations and Tree Warden of the City of Norwalk, then spoke about the preparations for the Fall Tree Summit. He noted that the City does not do enough to protect the trees during construction, such as putting fencing around the tree's drip line. He also noted that when the utilities come in to remove a tree, in the past, they have been required to replace it on a one for one basis. He suggested planting 10 trees for every single City tree that is removed. Discussion followed about the details for replacing trees.

Mr. Torre explained that typically the City tends not to want to plant trees in the snow shelf anymore. But that were for many years, that was what the city did. But now what they're trying to get the homeowners involved in plant the trees on the other side of the sidewalk where it's protected a little bit more. Maybe the homeowner has an active investment to make sure that it has water/ and is healthy. One of our policies for those that don't know is even if a tree is planted on private property, sometimes the tree if it grows on the public property, even an inch, the city then owns the tree. The tree is our tree, it is no longer your private tree, it is the city tree. So it needs a permit to remove it. You can't just remove it and even if you said hey, my great grandfather planted that 75 years ago, it doesn't matter, it's a city tree.

Ms. Shanahan said that Mr. Sotnik of the Norwalk Tree Alliance was present. The Tree Alliance is the 501(c) arm of the Tree Advisory Committee. They have been doing outreach for decades.

DISCUSSION ITEM

There were no additional items to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services