

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
APRIL 22, 2025, AT 6:00 PM.
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Dilene Byrd at dbyrd@norwalkct.gov to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

- Attendance: Erica Kipp, Chair
 Richard Whitehead, Vice Chair
 Gay MacLeod
 Sonya Oliver
- Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden
 Sarah Cruz, Arborist/ Horticulturalist
- Others: Jeff Scheer, Norwalk Tree Alliance

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Kipp called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Kipp called the roll, and all those listed in the attendance were present. There was a quorum present.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A. **Guests at committee meetings may speak to any item on the agenda. (Comments shall be limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker.)**

There were no public comments this evening.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- A. **Approve the minutes of the March 25, 2025, Tree Advisory Committee meetings.**

****MS. MACLEOD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 25, 2025, MEETING.**

**** MR. WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. REPORTS

- A. **Tree Planting Program**

Ms. Cruz said that 14 trees have been planted or ordered to date. She and Mr. Sotnik will be exploring planting opportunities on South Main Street for new tree pit construction; still, there are also quite a few private yards that they would like to try to connect with the residents to see if they can plant trees with our Adopt-a-Spot tree program. She said she and Ms. Oliver will connect as more people request trees at the Madison Condominiums and hope to plant more in the spring. Ms. Oliver said she should have a list of people interested in planting the trees by the end of this week.

Ms. Cruz said that, as she had previously mentioned, the funding for the spring is low except for the funds that are in the MLK corridor, so they are trying to find more locations to be able to use the funding that is currently available. The funding in the capital budget will be refreshed on July

1, 2025, and we will reach out this summer to those who had planting requests to set them up for the fall. She hopes to have 100 plantings done this spring and somewhere between 300 and 400 in the fall, which is looking good in terms of funding to hit those numbers.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. SONO School- Tree Planting Opportunities

Ms. Cruz said that Ms. Oliver had contacted her regarding the new SONO School because it is adjacent to San Vincenzo Street on the very back side of the property. Ms. Oliver said she has spoken to some folks in the area, and they are very interested in having trees planted to provide a buffer. When she talked to Ms. Young, she said she wanted to see the city's plans but had not heard back. She will follow up with her. Ms. Cruz said she was able to look at the preliminary landscape design, and there are plans to plant 70-90 trees across the property, but the lot is quite large and may be able to accommodate more trees. There is a meadow in the back adjacent to the community garden, so she has been speaking with Mr. Hughes about establishing a tree line to meet what they are looking for.

Ms. Kipp said some folks from Norwalk High School have reached out to her due to the tree work there a lot of trees have been removed, including trees that the city has planted in the past and a Sweetgum tree that had been there for a very long time and asked if there is a replanting plan for that area. Mr. Sotnik said that when the permit was issued, they tried protecting all of the trees from being removed at once, so it was broken into two phases, and they could only remove what was being worked on last year at that point. They are now in phase II, so some trees were posted recently and received no protests. They were issued the permit last week, but a large replanting plan exists. Ms. Kipp suggested reaching out to the Board of Education. Mr. Sotnik said they have been included in the process. Ms. Kipp noted that if the Board of Education is being told information, there seems to be a disconnect between that information filtering down to the facility and staff. Mr. Sotnik said anyone with questions regarding the permit or the planting plan should contact him. Ms. Kipp asked Mr. Sotnik if he would oppose a presentation on the planting plan if people wanted it. Mr. Sotnik said, "No," he would not oppose it.

Mr. Scheer said if more trees are needed, the Norwalk Tree Alliance can provide them at the SONO School. He also requested an offline meeting to discuss Jefferson School.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. ARBOR DAY EVENTS

1. Arbor Day Cleanup 4/23 on NRVT

Mr. Whitehead said the cleanup will take place tomorrow. This will be the third year working on the new section of the NRVT trail. They will meet at 40 Cross Street, and the cleanup will occur from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. They are looking forward to a fun event that will call attention to the value and importance of trees in our community and elsewhere. He said the event is not open to the public, but the committee members and staff are welcome to attend. Ms. Cruz noted that Greer's Southern Table is helping to sponsor the event.

2. Arbor Day Celebration 4/25 at Cranbury Elementary School

Ms. Cruz said they have just received the posters for the poster contest, and they all look really good. They are in the process of judging them with the folks at City Hall and Norwalk Public Schools. There will be a planting ceremony, and the mayor will read a proclamation.

VIII. NORWALK TREE ALLIANCE UPDATES

Mr. Scheer reported that the Earth Day Festival will be held this Saturday on Norwalk Green from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Ms. MacLeod said she would manage the Tree Advisory Committee table, have a sign-up sheet for tree liaisons, and give out seedlings.

Mr. Scheer said the poetry reading event was well attended and positive. Over 20 people attended.

Mr. Scheer said they have planted approximately 11 trees and have another 15-20 planting locations. He noted Ms. MacLeod had contacted them regarding planting a shrub at Union Park and asked if they could plant a few trees there, as there is plenty of room. Ms. MacLeod said "yes," and she had emailed him some suggestions for species.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. MACLEOD MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd