



CITY OF NORWALK
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Norwalk City Hall
125 East Avenue, PO Box 5125
Room 225

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

September 24, 2024

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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
Sonia Oliver
Peter Viteretto

Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden
Sarah Cruz, Arborist/ Horticulturalist
Chris Torre, Tree Warden
Dilene Byrd, Secretary

Others: Jeff Scherr, President, Norwalk Tree Alliance
Gay MacLeod, Tree Liaison

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Whitehead called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC INPUT- 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.)

Ms. Verel introduced herself and said lives in Norwalk and is a certified arborist and landscape architect interested in learning more about the Committee and the Tree Programs.

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 28, JUNE 25, 2024, AND AUGUST 27, 2024

**** MS. OLIVER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2024, AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. VITERETTO SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. OLIVER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2024, AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. VITERETTO SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. OLIVER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 2024, AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. VITERETTO SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION-MR. WHITEHEAD.**

4. CAPITAL/GRANT FUNDED TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

- a. Fall Planting
 - i. Over 60 tree locations so far

Ms. Cruz provided an update for the fall planting season and said there are approximately 60 locations that have been staked and marked, and Ms. MacLeod has been handling several tree requests in the Wolfpit area. She said they will also be adding a healthy number of trees near Wilton Avenue and quite a few trees that will be planted on Strawberry Hill Avenue near Naramake Elementary School and will have had over 90 trees planted over the last three years.

ii. Focusing on tree request responses

Ms. Cruz said that she and Ms. MacLeod have a few other locations in Flax Hill Road/Brookside School area as well as a few locations in Rowayton. She said there are several tree planting requests in East Norwalk that she will share with Ms. MacLeod and several requests near the Norwalk cemetery area.

Ms. Cruz said that there had been a few removals at Shady Beach as well as in the vicinity of Ripka's Café since December of Norway Maple Trees that were in the windbreak area and were past their point of maturity and were very strained and would like to replace some this fall and more in the spring. Mr. Viteretto suggested in the windbreak area to keep security in mind and that Evergreens may not be the way to go for visibility. Mr. Whitehead asked if there was a specific species in mind for the plantings at Shady Beach. Ms. Cruz said "no" and she is happy to take suggestions. Mr. Viteretto said there was a mix of three species for the plantings on Calf Pasture Beach Road to provide shade tree canopy. After further discussion, Ms. Cruz said she would send Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Viteretto a map of the planting area to give suggestions.

Ms. Kipp joined the meeting at 6:10 PM

5. TREE PLANTING CONTRACTS: WATERING REPORTS

- a. Minutemen Land Services
- b. Almstead Tree &

Ms. Cruz said the Almstead sent their watering list today so they are fulfilling their contract obligations, and she will have the water list from Minuteman Landscaping by the end of the week. Mr. Whitehead said they need to keep an eye on the watering because this is the third driest September on record.

6. TREE LIAISON UPDATES

Ms. MacLeod provided an update and said there were 15 tree requests, and she reached out to all 15 residents in which 8 have responded and a total of eight trees will be planted on private property. She said in addition to that she staked two locations on Bramble Lane and four trees on Union Avenue.

7. REPORT- NTA ACTIVITIES

Mr. Scherr reported and said they are continuing with their tree plantings and have planted several trees so far and he has received the emails from Ms. MacLeod and Ms. Cruz on the locations they had submitted, and they will be included on the planting list.

Mr. Scherr said there was an event held this past weekend at Fodor Farm to paint the shed and applauded the volunteers for their help.

Ms. Cruz asked if the Tree Alliance has a list of species that they primarily plant. Mr. Scherr. said “yes” and he will send her the list of trees that they can procure. Ms. MacLeod requested that the list also be sent to her.

Mr. Scherr asked if the trees that were planted on Grand Street were planted by the city or Eversource. Ms. Cruz said they were planted by the city. Mr. Scherr said they will need to keep an eye on those because columnar trees may push into the sidewalk.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Viteretto said Hornbeam trees that were planted in the neighborhood of Fairfield Avenue are a full branched trees and they were pruned and look awful, and they are not conducive to be pruned so if they are being used for street trees, we need to be careful that doesn’t happen.

Mr. Sotnik said the DPW open house will be held this Saturday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and the Tree Advisory Committee and the Norwalk Tree Alliance will have a table, and Almstead Tree has committed to bringing one Arborvitae Tree and welcomed the members of the committee to join him at the table and help. Mr. Whitehead asked if Minutemen Landscaping had been contacted to participate. Mr. Sotnik said staff is in conversation with them and is optimistic they will be attending.

Ms. Oliver said that she and Mr. Sotnik had spoken about adding some additional trees at SONO Gardens and asked if she should resubmit the tree planting forms. Mr. Sotnik asked Ms. Oliver to choose the species and locations and he and Ms. Cruz will do a site visit.

Ms. Oliver said she believes her term on the committee is up and asked what the process is to be reappointed. Ms. Cruz said that she will email her on the steps for terms and reappointments.

Mr. Viteretto the trees in front of the Norwalk Inn look pathetic and have been completely butchered yet again. Mr. Sotnik said the city has no jurisdiction over private property, but that Mr. Viteretto is welcome to speak to them as a resident. Ms. Kipp suggested Mr. Scherr go with Mr. Viteretto as a non for profit in the area as well as a landscape architect. Mr. Viteretto suggested if anyone sees another property where the trees are first cut that would be the time to reach out to the individual. Mr. Scherr said we could also share the tree pruning rights and wrongs as part of a newsletter or hold a teaching class. Mr. Whitehead said this is the season when a lot of people prune their trees like that so it would be a good time to address it. Mr. Sotnik said quite a few years ago Ms. MacLeod had put together a brochure for the committee. Mr. Viteretto asked if there was something on the website regarding pruning. Ms. Cruz said “no” and it is primarily for tree plantings, but the brochure would be very helpful. Ms. Kipp said the Arbor Day Foundation has some very nice literature on pruning and suggested adding a link to the website on the Tree Advisory Committee website.

9. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. OLIVER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd