



**CITY OF NORWALK
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

August 27, 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
Peter Viteretto

Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden

Sarah Cruz, Arborist/ Horticulturalist
Dilene Byrd, Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Kipp called the meeting to order at 6:04PM.

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.)

There were no public comments this evening.

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

The minutes were tabled due to a lack of a quorum.

4. CAPITAL/GRANT FUNDED TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

a. Spring 2024-Overview

i. Total trees planted: 222 trees

Ms. Cruz provided an update and said 222 trees were planted in the spring of 2024, and there are a few punch list items for the fall. She said she would like to begin tracking the demographics for the trees that have been planted as it would be good to communicate that to the public.

ii. Tree requests completed, 2023- April 2024: 45/125

Ms. Cruz said they were able to complete 45 out of the 125 tree requests and were not as many as they would have liked to, but she and Mr. Sotnik were concentrating on stretches of space that could be quickly surveyed so they could give the contractor a batch of plantings at a time but are hoping to do more this fall.

iii. Top tree types planted:

1. Redbud
2. Dogwood

3. Maple
4. Hornbeam

Ms. Cruz said the top tree types that were planted included Red Bud Trees, Dogwood Trees, Maple Trees, and Hornbeam Trees and besides that had a good mixture of tree types. Ms. Kipp said she likes that being included on the report and it shows the top four trees that were planted are all native to Connecticut. Ms. Cruz said she did receive feedback that too many Dogwood Trees were planted, and it is valid as they are slow growing and don't have the impact that we want but it is hard to balance the size of the trees versus the quantity of what we are able to squeeze in and that is something to discuss moving forward.

- iv. Percentage of native trees planted: approximately 82%

Ms. Cruz provided an overview of the neighborhoods the trees were planted and said that 82% of the trees that were planted were native varieties.

- v. Neighborhoods planted:
 1. West Main
 2. Norwalk Center
 3. Spring Hill
 4. West Norwalk
 5. Woodward
 6. Rowayton
 7. Springwood

b. Fall 2024-Planning

- i. MLK

Ms. Cruz said that Mr. Whitehead had emailed her stating that he has some ideas on where to plant on MLK and he will provide an update at the next meeting. Mr. Sotnik said there will need to be coordination with the Redevelopment Agency.

- ii. Pending Tree Requests: 95

1. Coordinating with Gay MacLeod

Ms. Cruz said there are 95 tree requests remaining and she gave Ms. MacLeod a batch of private tree requests. Ms. Kipp asked with the requests if they are finding that most of the requests were handwritten and given to Ms. MacLeod during the Earth Day event or were most received online or via email. Ms. Cruz said at least 95% of the requests are received online.

- iii. Streetscape plantings following road/sidewalk projects

Ms. Cruz said there will be some street plantings done after the paving/sidewalk projects and include Beacon Street and the Berkley Street area.

- iv. Suggested species/species to avoid for fall planting

Ms. Cruz said she is seeking the committee's expertise for recommendations for species that should be avoided for fall plantings as well as any recommendations of species to plant in the fall. Mr. Viteretto recommended that Pin Oak Trees do well but other oaks don't do well when planted in the fall, but he and Mr. Whitehead will discuss the recommendations and report back. Ms. Kipp suggested that Mr. Viteretto and Mr. Whitehead go through the planting list and note which species would be best planted in the spring and the fall.

- c. Newly executed award: U.S. Forest Service IRA grant funding
 - i. \$450,000 budgeted for tree planting
 - ii. Expiration in 2029

Ms. Cruz said the grant has been formally and officially executed and can start allocating the funds and create contracts to expand the tree inventory and hope to inventory 90% of the city. She said they received \$400,000 for plantings over the next five years but will expire in 2029.

5. TREE PLANTING CONTRACTS: WATERING REPORTS

- a. Minutemen Land Services
- b. Almstead Tree & Shrub Care Company

Ms. Cruz said that all the trees that were planted this spring were watered mid-June by both contractors and Almstead Tree also watered in the beginning of July but due to the amount of rain there has been no watering reported from mid-July to early August. She said both contractors are fulfilling their contractual obligations and as usual if any of the trees fail, they will need to replace them. She also said it is important that if anyone notices any dead trees to call customer service and report it.

6. TREE LIAISON UPDATES

- a. Engaging Tree Liaisons

Ms. Cruz said there have been ongoing conversations on how to engage people more and holding an event was discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Sotnik said if there is an event held, we want to be sure we can get enough people to attend. Ms. Kipp suggested a guided walk and show people a forested area of Norwalk and point out the different types of trees and explain how the canopy needs to be increased and empower people to go back to their streets. Mr. Viteretto suggested a trip to Woodward Park and Calf Pasture Beach Road to show the investment in the trees that were planted. Ms. Kipp suggested the committee members email Ms. Cruz some of their ideas to engage people.

7. REPORT-NTA ACTIVITIES

There was no discussion.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Sotnik said that he and Ms. Cruz are beginning to enforce that every project in the city that will have an impact on trees (removed, modified, or pruned) provide a landscaping plan as well as a replanting plan if necessary so they we are in accordance with the ordinance.

Mr. Viteretto said that he emailed Ms. Cruz and Mr. Torre regarding the tree protection issue and perhaps this concept dovetails with that and suggested an inhouse luncheon so that the department members meet and discuss tree protection and why it's important. He also said there are vendors that would be willing to attend and talk about their products.

9. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. VITERETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. KIPP SECONDED THE MOTION.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd