



TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

August 23, 2022

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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.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

Attendance: Richard Whitehead, Vice Chair
Cindy Cossuto

Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden
Dilene Byrd, Secretary
Lindsay King, GIS Analyst

Others: Jeff Scherr, President, Norwalk Tree Alliance
Jessica Guy

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

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 THE MINUTES OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF JUNE 28, 2022

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

4. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM- FALL 2022

a. Provide list of possible locations

Mr. Sotnik said that Mr. Whitehead has provided him with a list of possible planting locations and highlighted the areas below so that those Committee members who are still working on their lists do not duplicate locations.

i. TAC/DPW Plantings

- Housing Authority Complexes
- Schools – Fox Run, Ponus
- Hunters Lane
- Elmwood Avenue
- Woodward Avenue
- Plymouth Avenue

ii. TMP Funded Planting – Wilton Avenue

iii. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Initiative – DECD Grant - Continuation

5. UPDATE - TREE PLANTING PROGRAM CONTRACT RFP - AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING SPECIFIC

Mr. Sotnik provided an update on the RFP for the ARPA/Grant funded Tree Planting program and said that due to the legal requirements the purchasing agent and law office have said that an additional RFP would need to be advertised to include the clauses and contract language that is required for ARPA funded contracts. He said that has been done and the vendors were interviewed and due to the large amount of funding between the DPW and Economic and Community Development budgets totaling \$700,00 over two years, the City has decided to select two vendors. He said one of the vendors will be Almstead Tree for the larger projects and the other will be Minutemen Landscaping for the smaller projects. Mr. Whitehead said that he was part of the interview panel and process and agreed that having two vendors will work out well moving forward.

6. UPDATE - GRANT FUNDED INTERN – PRESENTATION OF GIS MAPPING OF NEWLY PLANTED TREE LOCATIONS - DASHBOARD

Mr. Sotnik said the Tree Advisory Committee was fortunate enough to be awarded a grant from the Connecticut Urban Forestry Council and were able to have a college student do an inventory of the trees that have been planted through the various tree planting programs by City agencies and the volunteer tree groups in the City such as the Norwalk Tree Alliance and update the City GIS mapping system. He introduced Jessica Guy who was the intern who worked on the tree inventory and said she did a great job. He also introduced Lindsey King as the GIS Analyst for the City of Norwalk and said she and Ms. Guy worked very well together.

Ms. Guy presented and said she went out into the field and filled out a survey that included the address and type of tree and she measured the tree and then entered the information and uploaded it into the GIS database. Mr. Whitehead asked how long on average it took to get the information. Ms. Guy said on average five minutes per tree for large groups of trees in one area and double that time to complete if they are part of smaller orders that are spread out around the City (to account for driving time). Mr. Sotnik said she located and entered 502 trees in less than three weeks, so now with that information, combined with the information that was gathered and entered last summer, there are now 819 trees that have been entered into the GIS database out of the 1,200 that have been planted since 2006. Mr. Whitehead asked if the inventory included the trees that were planted by the Third Taxing District. Mr. Sotnik said “no” those still need to be located and that volunteers are needed to collect the information and stated that he has asked Ms. Guy if she would be willing to come back over the winter, or next summer, but she is an architectural student, so school needs to be her first priority. He also said that once all of the trees have been added to the database the goal is to go out each planting cycle (Spring and Fall) each year and locate the trees as they are being planted and have them added to the GIS database as they are being done.

Mr. Sotnik thanked Ms. King for all of the work that she had done creating the surveys and dashboards and taking the lead on the GIS programing for the project.

7. UPDATE – ALMSTEAD TREE WATERING/MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Mr. Whitehead said he was in the SONO area yesterday and today and had checked the trees that were planted on Washington Street and found that they are in desperate need of water. He said the trees are no longer in the warranty period and there is not currently someone to water the trees, but requested that the trees be put on a supplemental watering list for the rest of August and September. Mr. Sotnik said one of the issues is that the city does not have a watering contract, but he will contact Mr. Torre to request that DPW operations do the watering if possible and if not contact the business owners to see if they would be willing to do the watering. Mr. Whitehead suggested contacting Mr. Norman to request pricing for supplemental watering for the trees that are out of the warranty period.

Mr. Sotnik presented the watering/ maintenance schedule and said they have been watering as much as possible under the current drought conditions.

8. D.P.W. OPEN HOUSE – OCTOBER 1, 2022

Mr. Sotnik said the DPW Open House will be held on October 1, 2022 and will be held at the DPW Operations Center located at 15 South Smith Street from 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. and said the Tree Advisory Committee will have a table and will have information available as we have done in the past and there will be a few trees on display that will be planted as part of the Fall 2022 planting program.

9. 2023 ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION LOCATION

Mr. Sotnik said it is time to choose a location for the 2023 Arbor Day Celebration and reported on the past Arbor Day celebration locations. Mr. Whitehead suggested going through the list of locations that have not yet hosted a second Arbor Day celebration and choose from that.

10. REPORT – NTA ACTIVITIES

Mr. Scheer reported and said that the NTA meeting was held last week, and he also met with Mr. Sotnik last month to create an overall strategy for planting and they will focus on cemeteries and churches while the TAC through DPW will focus on Housing Authority locations and schools. He said the NTA received a donation of 30 trees from the Church of Latter-Day Saints and are now looking for planting locations and have 21 locations to date. He said he will be meeting with the First Congregational Church to

possibly plant seven more trees and will plant the remainder of trees at the tree farm. He said that they are also looking at restarting the educational Tree School and have reached out to some teachers at Columbus Magnet school that they have dealt with in the past and will involve the students in the tree planting design to increase exposure to green careers in a fun way.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business discussed this evening.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd