



## TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 28, 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](mailto:dbyrd@norwalkct.org) to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

Attendance:           Professor Kipp, Chair  
                              Richard Whitehead, Vice Chair  
                              Cindy Cossuto

Peter Viteretto  
Sonja Oliver

Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden  
Dilene Byrd, Secretary

Others: Jeff Scherr, President, Norwalk Tree Alliance

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Professor Kipp called the meeting to order at 6:04 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 MINUTES OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF APRIL 26, 2022.**

**\*\* PROFESSOR KIPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 26, 2022, AS AMENDED.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **4. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 24, 2022.**

**\*\* PROFESSOR KIPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 24, 2022, AS AMENDED.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **5. CAPITAL TREE PLANTING PROGRAM - FINAL SPRING 2022 UPDATE**

Professor Kipp noted that there was an article on Nancy on Norwalk about how there were far more trees planted then removed from either natural or unnatural causes.

a. Final Count- Spring 2022 and fiscal year.

i. TAC/DPW Capital Budget Planting

- ii. TMP Funded Planting
- iii. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Initiative-DECD Grant
- iv. NFWF- Highstead Grant

b. Capital tree planting budget balances

Mr. Sotnik said that in the Fall of 2021 a total of 93 trees were planted and, in the Spring of 2022, a total of 171 trees were planted for a total of 264 trees planted for fiscal year 2021-22 at a total cost of \$199,126.65. Professor Kipp noted that as a result of the staff at DPW Operations working with Mr. Sotnik and the Tree Advisory Committee they were able to be spread the NFWF grant and purchase a lot more trees than initially thought because they were able to use the pre-negotiated pricing and also reduced the price by having the holes pre-dug for the tree planting contractor.

**6. DEVELOPMENT OF FALL 2022 - SPRING 2023 TREE PLANTING LOCATION LIST**

Professor Kipp said there are still locations left from the Spring 2022 planting list. Mr. Sotnik said there are still 30 to 40 locations that are left from the last list of planting locations and will be carried over to the Fall 2022 planting list. Professor Kipp asked what the target number of tree plantings is for the Fall. Mr. Sotnik said there is \$200,000 in APRA funds for tree planting that can be spent over a two-year period for tree plantings in the City. Professor Kipp said that an additional 25 trees will be able to be planted in the Fall in addition to the locations from the last planting list and said that if anyone on the Committee has any locations that they would like to recommend, to send them to Mr. Sotnik and Ms. Cossuto so that they can compile a list.

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

Mr. Sotnik said the current contract with Almstead Tree has a cap of \$130,000 per year and with the \$500,000 in funds from Economic and Community Development combined with the ARPA funding of \$200,000 for TAC/DPW to be spent over a two (2) year period, the purchasing agent had recommended that another RFP be advertised and that the interviews will be held tomorrow to select a vendor.

**8. TAC AWARDED TWO (2) GRANTS**

Professor Kipp said that the TAC was recently awarded two grants and the CT Urban Forest grant is exciting in that it allows us to train and pay two (2) college students to enter trees into the GIS programming system and she along with Mr. Sotnik and Chris Torre if available with meet with them to be sure they have properly identified the trees and that all the information has been completed. She said the Urban Forest Equity

through Capacity Building grant is a grant that the TAC will be collaborating with the Housing Authority, and she has started speaking with Mr. Bovilsky and will concentrate those efforts at Roodner Court and the children's learning center. She said once they start meeting with Mr. Bovilsky and his staff there will be more details to report.

#### **9. GRANT FUNDED INTERN- GIS MAPPING OF NEWLY PLANTED TREE LOCATIONS**

Details of this item were discussed under Item 8 of the agenda.

#### **10. UPDATE - ALMSTEAD TREE WATERING/MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

Mr. Sotnik presented the watering schedule and said the trees that have not been watered were checked and did not need water at this time. He stated that Almstead will be installing gator bags on some of the other trees as we head into the summer weather. Professor Kipp requested to keep the Committee updated on if there is an issues that need to be addressed otherwise, the schedule looks fine.

#### **11. TAC WEBSITE**

Professor Kipp said she would like to bolster the online presence of the Tree Advisory Committee and would like to advertise some of what the Tree Advisory Committee does so that people understand that the Committee does plant trees, but also maintain them as well as participate in many tree related community programs. She requested that the Committee members send her some representative photographs from anything that they or the Tree Advisory Committee has been involved in and let her know the name of the program and date it took place before the next meeting. Mr. Whitehead suggested uploading a photograph of the planting that was done on Richards Avenue to show how much the trees have grown and how impactful they were. Professor Kipp said she would also like to include information on the website regarding the grants that the Tree Advisory Committee has been awarded since it shows the initiative on how they bolster the budget to plant more trees.

#### **12. REPORT - NTA ACTIVITIES**

Mr. Scheer said a Queen's tea fundraiser was just held and had a good turnout and raised \$1,300.00. He said he educated the attendees on how much the City of Norwalk does to plant trees and all of the hard work the Tree Advisory Committee and the Tree Alliance are doing. He also said that a member from the Norwalk Public Schools attended the fundraiser and Mr. Sotnik and Mr. Hughes have been in discussions with them regarding creating a cohesive arboretum plan for the Norwalk Public Schools. Mr.

Sotnik said if any of the Committee members recommend any schools for tree planting to add them to their list of locations.

Mr. Scheer said they also attended the Pride in the Park event and spoke to a lot of people including Senator Duff and he had said if locations to plant trees are needed to contact him.

Mr. Scheer said that the Tree Alliance was approved for an Urban Forest Equity through Capacity Building grant in the amount of \$10,000, in addition to what the Tree Advisory Committee was awarded.

Mr. Scheer asked that the information that is entered into the GIS programming system for tree locations be shared with the Tree Alliance.

### **13. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Viteretto said the trees on Belden Avenue look pretty good, but the tree wells need to be cleaned. Mr. Sotnik suggested installing flexi-pave and he said that he will look into available funding.

Mr. Viteretto requested that when interviewing the vendors for the tree contract to ask them where they get their trees and if they have multiple sources.

### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* PROFESSOR KIPP MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. COSSUTO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd