



**Public Hearing w for the removal of 10 City trees (Various Species). 7 Located at 31
Monroe Street and three located on Henry Street Extension**

June 26, 2024

Staff: Chris Torre, DPW Superintendent of Operations/Tree Warden
Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden
Sarah Cruz, Arborist/ Horticulturalist
Stephen Ivan, Redevelopment Agency
Dilene Byrd, Secretary

Others: Tanner Thompson, Chair, Bike/Walk Commission
Paul Fox

Mr. Torre opened the public hearing at 6:01PM.

Mr. Torre read the following statement that was provided by Diane Lauricella:

I have been made aware of a challenge to the removal of ten (10) City trees at the above-mentioned locations.

I ask that you reconsider because the South Norwalk area does not have an adequate canopy of mature trees to provide enough shade to reduce the heat island effect.

I have always been a proponent of the removal of diseased trees, therefore if any of these truly fit that category so as to pose a threat to life and limb, please remove either the damaged parts, branches, etc. or the entire tree.

Please try to preserve as many of the ten identified City trees from the "axe".

Please advise.

Diane Lauricella

Mr. Sotnik said a protest was received Mr. Paul Riley of 1 Chestnut Street, Apt.#307 but were not able to make contact with him.

Mr. Torre asked Mr. Thompson and Mr. Fox if they were protesting the removal of the trees or if they are here to just discuss the tree removals. Mr. Thompson said they would like to see the trees saved but also want to learn about the process

Mr. Sotnik said the point of the project is to make it easier and safer for people to use the train station and provided an overview of project and said it is a TOD project and as part of that project had to create a new road that connects Henry Street Ext. to Monroe Street, and in order to have the space that is needed for the lanes the existing island will need to be removed and as part of that the trees will need to be removed. He said the city roadway standards require 50' between the driveway so it had to be moved which puts one of the trees directly in the middle of the driveway. He also said the conduits for the historic street lighting are directly under the trees that exist there today and in total 10 trees will need to be removed, but a total 41 trees through the city streetscape and an additional nine trees will be planted through the developer for a total of 50 trees. Mr. Cruz noted that three of the honey locust trees are in poor condition and have decay and other conditions that they consider to be in poor condition.

Mr. Ivan said the approved site plans make the road functional and the trees will need to be removed and replaced in excess of what is currently there now.

Mr. Torre asked if anyone had any questions but noted that the purpose of the hearing is to discuss the removal of the trees and not the project itself.

Mr. Thompson asked about the oak trees. Sotnik said there are two other trees in that location that are protected and are being maintained but the tree that is in the driveway will need to be removed as well as the trees on the island. He said where they could save the trees and protect them, they have done that. Mr. Torre said last year and the year prior more trees were planted as a municipality than were removed. Mr. Sotnik said that 221 trees were planted this spring alone. Mr. Thompson said he didn't realize that two of the trees will be saved and that he spends a lot of time at the train station and appreciates the shade the trees provide and attended the hearing tonight to make sure that everything is being done to retain the mature shade trees and the trees that could be saved are saved.

Mr. Fox said he also didn't realize that two of the trees will be saved but his concern is with the new trees that will be planted it will take several decades before they will provide the same amount of shade that the existing mature trees do, and the trees around the station are almost all mature trees and by having a nice place to wait for the bus is important and would be unpleasant without any trees. Mr. Sotnik presented a map showing the existing trees that will remain on Henry Street and showed the areas where the trees will be replaced as part of the streetscape project and the goal was to try and keep the trees they could and fill in the areas that are barren of trees.

Mr. Torre said he understands the utility work but asked if there was any thought given to the oak trees. Mr. Sotnik said there was but there was no other way because there needs to be a road in order for people to have access and have to meet certain horizontal curve criteria as well as a vertical curve criteria.

Mr. Torre reviewed the process and said Mr. Riley had originally protested the removal of the trees and did not attend the hearing, but he will post his decision on the tree as well as in a public posting in the next three days and anyone will have 10 days to appeal his decision to the State Superior Court.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd