

TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 28, 2023

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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
Peter Viteretto
Cindy Cossuto
Sonja Oliver

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

Others: Anthony Cossuto
Sam Berg, Eversource

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Whitehead called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 JANUARY 24, 2023.

**** MR. VITERETTO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. 2023 EVERSOURCE TREE TRIMMING PERMIT

Mr. Berg presented the scheduled tree maintenance trimming for 2023 and said they are scheduled to trim 73 miles which is 33% of the total lines in Norwalk and are focusing on three (3) substations this year which are located on Riverside Avenue, Flax Hill Road and along Route 1. He said there was a meeting held with Mr. Sotnik, Mr. Torre, Mr. Ortiz and the liaison from Eversource to review the trimming schedule and plan and they supplied a list of the streets that will be affected by the pruning, and it included both Private and State roads. He said that no herbicides will be used and the work will be an ongoing process until approximately the beginning to middle of September to complete the 73 miles of trim work, and he will be in close contract with city staff throughout the process. Mr. Berg described the required clearances. Mr. Sotnik suggested that there be as much public outreach as possible and also to attend a Sixth Taxing District meeting and any other neighborhood groups so that people are aware of the trimming work and he will provide their contact information. Mr. Whitehead asked if trimming 1/3 of the city per year is average or if this is an aggressive year. Mr. Berg said it is not an aggressive year at all and it varies by town. Norwalk is on a four-year rotation and he can report back on what has been done historically and added that the tree related outages for Norwalk being a Tree City USA are very low. Mr. Viteretto said the new the poles increased by 5' over the past two years so managing trees in the future would mean that they would not allow new growth to come within their zone, but there will need to be a discussion if there is healthy growth that has not quite hit the criteria.

5. UPDATE - CAPITAL TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

- a. Development of Planting Locations List for Spring 2023.

Mr. Sotnik requested that the members of the Committee provide him with a list

of any planting locations they may have and said that he has a variety of locations that were left from the Fall, as well as the locations that were suggested at the community meeting that was held as part of the MLK Boulevard Corridor Initiative. He also suggested a special meeting be held over the next few weeks to discuss planting locations and the goal to have another 200 trees planted this Spring.

b. Available Budget for Spring 2023.

Mr. Sotnik reported and said there is an available budget of \$519,507.75 for the contracts with Minute Man Landscaping and Almstead Tree from the ARPA and Community and Economic Development funding, and \$9,925.02 in the DPW Capital Budget account for Almstead Tree, so there is plenty of funding for plantings this Spring. Mr. Viteretto asked if the tree plantings that have been done to date have been assessed. Mr. Sotnik said they have begun to geolocate the trees that have been planted and have entered them into the GIS system. Mr. Whitehead asked if the tree planting Contractors have a preference for planting in the Spring or the Fall due to the drought conditions last summer. Mr. Sotnik said he has not heard anything from them related to that topic, but that the drought conditions are not as severe as they were. Mr. Whitehead suggested having a conversation with the Contractors to see if they prefer to plant in the Spring versus the Fall. Mr. Viteretto said there also may be a supply chain issues and suggested if they have issues to contact staff. Mr. Sotnik said he will be scheduling a meeting with both Contractors to discuss their preference of planting time and any supply chain issues that they may anticipate.

Ms. Oliver joined the meeting at 6:15 P.M.

Ms. Oliver said she does not recall seeing any of the trees on her property replaced and asked which trees have been replaced. Mr. Sotnik said that Almstead had informed him that some of the Arborvitae trees were replaced, but he will follow up with Mr. Norman and that there will be a walk through in the Spring to be sure they are all done.

6. UPDATE - PLANNING FOR 2023 ARBOR DAY CLEAN-UP EVENT - APRIL 26, 2023

Mr. Whitehead said that last year, a Pre-Arbor Day cleanup event was held along MLK Boulevard in advance of the plantings that were scheduled and suggested holding another Pre-Arbor Day event this Spring along the NRVt trail on Riverside Avenue. Mr. Sotnik said that TMP staff had recommended an area of the trail by Union Park to West Avenue because the other section of the trail is still under construction. Mr. Whitehead said that he will review the area with Mr. Sotnik and update the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Sotnik welcomed Mr. Cosutto to the meeting.

**7. UPDATE - PLANNING FOR THE 2023 ARBOR DAY - ROWAYTON
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - APRIL 28, 2023.**

Mr. Sotnik provided an update and said the first planning meeting was held on Friday, March 24, 2023 and they will try and get tree related identification books for the teachers to use in the classroom as Professor Kipp had suggested. He said the next planning meeting will be held at the end of March.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Viteretto suggested that the Committee assess the tree plantings that have been done and use the GIS program as a way to determine where additional plantings are needed.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd