



## REGULAR MEETING – URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION AGENDA

APRIL 28, 2026, 6:00 PM  
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone and/or Zoom, or a recording in the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at [norwalkct.gov/meetings](https://norwalkct.gov/meetings).



Members of the public may call in to participate. Callers will not be able to see the meeting participants. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial \*9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" may also use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.



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 included into the record, they must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please email Dilene Byrd at [dbyrd@norwalkct.gov](mailto:dbyrd@norwalkct.gov) with the subject line "Public Comment" to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER**
- II. **ROLL CALL**
- III. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- IV. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**
  - A. **Approve the minutes of the March 24, 2026 meeting of the Urban Forestry Commission.**
- V. **REPORTS**
  - A. **Tree Planting Spring 2026**
- VI. **OLD BUSINESS**
  - A. **Election of Vice Chair to the Urban Forestry Commission.**
  - B. **Information Booklet for events - Tree Care Guide**

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Tree Planting - West Ave**

**B. Outreach Materials**

**C. Legacy Tree Program**

**VIII. NORWALK TREE ALLIANCE UPDATES**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**  
**AGENDA-REGULAR MEETING**  
MARCH 24, 2026, AT 6:00 PM.  
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

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Members of the public who wish to view the meeting but are not participating can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.



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](mailto:dbyrd@norwalkct.gov) to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

Attendance:           Gay MacLeod  
                              Sonja Oliver  
                              Amy Verel  
                              David McGoldrick

Staff:                   Sarah Cruz, Arborist/ Horticulturalist

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. McLeod called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

## II. ROLL CALL

Ms. MacLeod called the roll, and all those listed were present. There was a quorum present.

## III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Diane Lauricella- 21 Little Fox Lane

Ms. Lauricella said she is a member of the Norwalk Tree Alliance, but she is not speaking on their behalf. She said she is also a longtime environmental advocate and follows budgets, land-use planning, and the tree canopy situation. The time has come for this city to stop using artificial Christmas trees in both the Wall Street and Washington Street areas and to set aside funds to plant a fast-growing live tree, so that artificial trees are never again used for holiday gatherings. She also suggested a bio-blitz for trees to engage the community, either online or in person, throughout the year, making it exciting and offering prizes, and also engaging high school science students to help put this together.

## IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION ON MARCH 3, 2026.

- \*\* MR. MCGOLDRICK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
- \*\* MS. VEREL SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## V. REPORTS

### **A. Tree Planting Updates: FY 25/26**

Ms. Cruz provided an overview of the tree-planting budgets and said there are two capital accounts used for the city's tree-planting program, Public Works and Recreation and Parks. There are currently three grant accounts: the MLK coordinator improvement grants; the GPP account, which began when the SONO Collection was developed as well as a grant from the US Forest Service under the Inflation Reduction Act; and the contract for this grant funding will begin this spring. The MLK corridor grant account has a balance of \$14,000 which needs to be spent by the end of this year, and she thanked Ms. Oliver and Mr. Viteretto for helping to spend a lot of that funding by installing a lot of trees directly on MLK Blvd, and eight tree pits and eight corresponding new trees in the were installed in the spring of 2025, and in the fall installed five new tree pits and trees on Ely Avenue. Those are 13 locations that could not accommodate trees in the past. She

said that with the \$14,000 that is still available, they should be able to plant 15-20 trees in the spring. In the GGP account, which is only to be spent in the SONO area, there is a remaining balance of \$8,000, and the average cost per tree is \$1,100, so eight to 10 trees could be planted. The DPW capital budget has a remaining balance of \$30,000 and can be spent citywide, and can plant 30-50 trees this spring. The contract value for the US Forest Service grant is \$455,000, to be spent by 2029, but only within certain census tracks. She will share a map of the locations at the next meeting.

Ms. MacLeod requested that Ms. Cruz share the budget updates with the committee members via e-mail.

Ms. Cruz said she shared a flyer with the committee about the Green Workforce Development Program and that 100 trees will be planted this spring as part of it. She said that the total tree count for each year will begin to reflect these additional plantings.

## **B. Spring 2025 Tree Planting**

### **1. Capital City-Wide Streetscape Planting**

Ms. Cruz said that the remaining \$30,000 will allow for the planting of 30-50 trees this spring, and she is prioritizing tree requests.

### **2. Grant-Funded Tree Planting: MLK Corridor, USFS IRA Planting Contract**

This was discussed under the tree planting updates.

### **3. Adopt-a- Tree Requests**

Ms. Cruz and Ms. MacLeod provided an overview of the adopt-a-tree program and said the trees can be planted on private property, but must be street-facing to increase the number of trees on private property in areas where there is no place in the right-of-way to plant. Ms. MacLeod said she will give a tutorial for addressing tree requests through the adopt-a-tree program to Ms. Verel and Mr. McGoldrick.

Ms. Cruz said the tree-count goal for the year is 400 to 500 trees and suggested discussing cost-saving ideas at the April meeting, as the contractual plantings average \$1,000 per tree. Ms. MacLeod asked who the new contractor for tree plantings would be. Ms. Cruz said that for the US Forest Service, under the Inflation Reduction Act grant, it was awarded to Oman's Nursery and that Almstead is still the contractor for the capital funding.

**4. West Ave.- Medians Adjacent to SONO Collections**

Ms. Cruz said that Mr. Viteretto suggested including this item for further discussion at the last meeting. The Tree Advisory Committee had previously discussed adding shrubs or trees to provide additional coverage in the medians adjacent to the SONO Collection. There is funding available through the GGP funds, and if the commission would like to develop a plan for plantings, the engineering and urban forestry team can review it. She said she will add this to next month's agenda for further discussion.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Election of Vice Chair to the Urban Forestry Commission**

There was no discussion.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. City Projects:**

**1. Richards Ave. Roundabout: [https://www.norwalkct.gov/3724/Richards-Avenue-West-Cedar-Street -Roundabout](https://www.norwalkct.gov/3724/Richards-Avenue-West-Cedar-Street-Roundabout)**

Ms. MacLeod said her concern is the planting plan and its maintenance, and she has the same concern for the roundabout at the SONO School. She said that installing them is a powerful statement and that they should be as attractive and as green as possible. She suggested Mr. Travers be invited to attend the next meeting to address the committee. Ms. Cruz said she has been in contact with TMP, and there is nothing new beyond the design and the information that is on the website. All of the comments regarding the Richards Avenue roundabout have been relayed, and suggested waiting until the landscape plan was released.

**2. SONO School Roundabout: <https://www.norwalkct.gov/3776/South-Norwalk-School-Roundabout>**

Ms. Cruz said there is now an urban forestry team that is part of the review process for city projects. She has checked with Mr. Sotnik in the engineering department regarding the permitting for any tree work on the SONO School roundabout. Phase I of the project is the berm removal, and TMP is going through the permitting requirements. They have a tree removal and restoration plan in

accordance with the permit. Berm removal is the only part of phase I; phase II will consist of the rest of the project which include plantings.

Mr. McGoldrick asked what the project timetable is. Ms. Cruz said she is not sure when construction will begin, as she believes the project was just awarded. Ms. MacLeod said the selection of the greenery for the Richards Avenue roundabout will be in the spring of 2026.

**B. April Events:**

**1. Arbor Day Celebration at Fox Run Elementary School, Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>**

Ms. MacLeod provided an overview of the Arbor Day celebrations, noting that they are held on a rotating basis: a tree is selected and planted, and the planting is celebrated.

Ms. Cruz said the tree will be planted in the courtyard at Fox Run Elementary School. She invited all of the committee members to attend.

**2. Earth Day on the Green, Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**

Ms. Cruz asked if the commission would like to table at the event. Ms. MacLeod said, “Yes,” volunteered, and asked if any other commission members would like to join her. Mr. Goldrick and Ms. Verel said they would also attend. Ms. Cruz requested that they let her know what materials they would like and what species of seedlings to purchase to giveaway.

**3. Discuss Potential Arbor Day Cleanup Event**

Ms. Cruz said this would be the third annual Arbory Day Cleanup Event that Richard Whitehead, the previous member of the Tree Advisory Committee, put together, where local tree companies would donate their time and equipment, and volunteer to do some stewardship and maintenance in an area of the city that we normally could not get to. The past few years, it has been along the NRVT. She said she can arrange with DPW and Eversource, but asked whether the commission is still interested in the clean-up event, as the commission would need to reach out to some local tree companies and coordinate. Mr. Goldrick said that he and Ms. Verel will discuss it to determine whether it is feasible this year.

**C. Public Outreach and Education:**

**1. Tree Selection Guide for Adopt-a- Tree Requests**

Ms. Cruz shared a draft of the Tree Selection Guide and said the final copy and species list are to be determined.

Ms. MacLeod said she uses the Morton Arboretum and the Stamford Arboretum as reference tools, and the Golden rain tree has been determined to be invasive and is no longer recommended for planting in city schools or parks because it self-seeds. Ms. Verel said she will need to research that, but she does believe she has heard that, and New York City is leaning away from planting it. Ms. Oliver confirmed that it is an invasive tree and that it should be removed.

Ms. Cruz requested that the commission review the Tree Selection Guide and provide any feedback they may have. Ms. MacLeod requested that the cost per tree be included. Ms. Cruz said she will categorize the trees by cost in a separate document.

**2. Information Booklet for events**

Ms. Cruz said there is currently no formal information booklet, but she thinks it would be great for this commission if they would like to develop one, and she can have them printed and help distribute them. Mr. McGoldrick said there are probably many organizations that have issued booklets like this and suggested coordinating with them so we can disseminate the same kind of information that they would like to disseminate. Ms. Verel said the ISA also has a lot of information, and she is a member, so she will see what they have available.

**3. Ideas for Community Engagement**

Mr. Goldrick suggested a tree ID program where public trees have a plaque or other identifier, such as a QR code, to raise awareness of the trees around us. Ms. Cruz said she hopes to make the tree inventory publicly available, and the QR code could link to a map in the inventory software to view information about the tree.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. OLIVER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. VEREL SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd



## Trees need to be pruned correctly:

If not, this damage can be compounded as the tree struggles to stay alive. In many cases, it may take years before a tree actually dies from incorrect pruning.

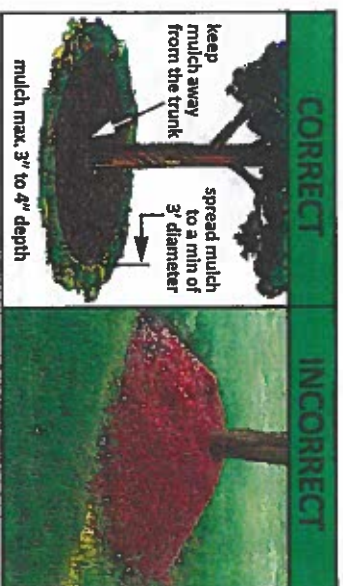
We see incorrect pruning all around us. People think this is the thing to do to trees, because they see so much of it. They believe cutting a tree is like trimming and designing a hedge. You just cut it to the height and shape you want, regardless of the actual natural height and the need of the tree canopy to survive. Often a landscaper will point out, the tree is still alive after the severe cutting, because the tree has to produce new shoots with leaves.

*This is a very wrong and false assumption. The tree is struggling to live and is forcing out leaves to continue the cycle of photosynthesis as a last attempt to capture food.*

Incorrect pruning shortens the life of the tree. It disfigures the natural form, causes wounds that the tree can't heal and creates sites for infection and invasion of pathogens. Eventually over a year or so, the tree even with some new leaves shooting out, weakens and dies.

## Proper Mulching

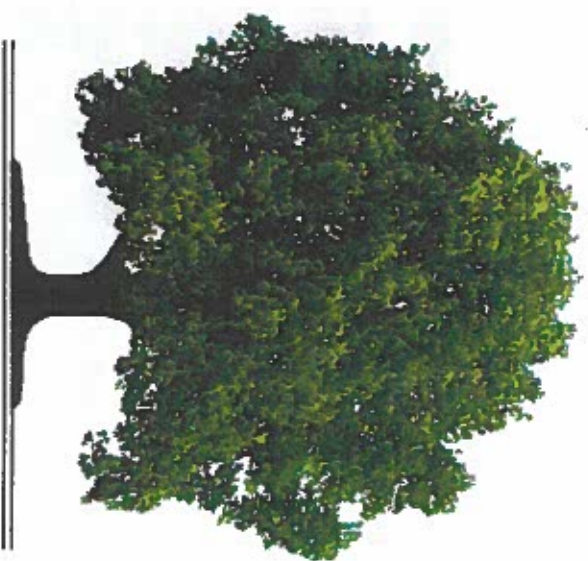
Never build a mulch volcano around a tree trunk. Keep mulch to a depth of 3 -4 inches, otherwise the tree roots are smothered, insects start burrowing into the mulch and rot from the trapped moisture may begin.



### Sources:

[www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org),  
[www.treeownermanual.info](http://www.treeownermanual.info), [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)

# How to Correctly Prune All Trees



City of Norwalk,  
Tree Advisory Committee -2017

Each year thousands of trees are killed by homeowners and non-professional landscapers who try to prune a tree without knowledge of what keeps a tree alive, healthy and beneficial to our environment. A licensed arborist is your best choice for pruning a tree.

**Correct way to prune a tree:**

Allow a tree to grow as much as possible naturally. However, when trimming is necessary, there are proper guidelines to manage the growth and not cause death and disease to the tree.



**Incorrect way:**

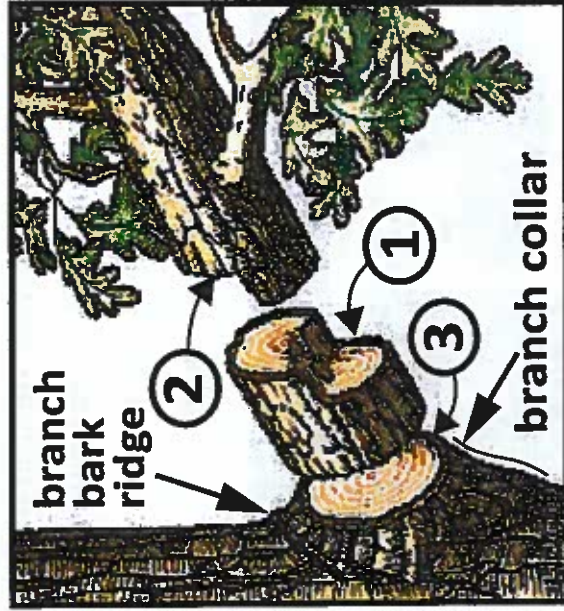
that leads to disease and the slow death of trees.



**See inside for more details....**

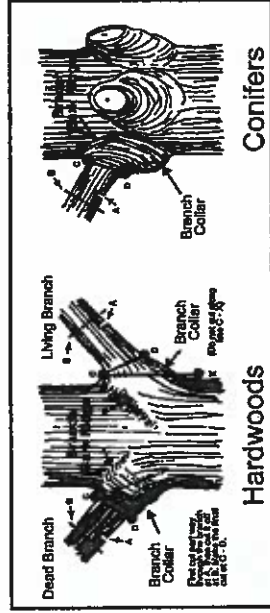
**Proper Pruning**

The key is to prune the unwanted branch while protecting the stem or trunk of wood of the tree.



1. Make a small wedge shaped cut on the underside of the branch, on the branch side of the stem collar. This will break the bark and prevent a tear along the bark.
2. Farther along the branch, starting at the top, cut all the way through the branch, leaving a stub end.
3. Finally, make a third cut parallel to and just on the branch side of the stem collar to reduce the stub length.

note the difference between hardwood and conifer trees:



**Tree Benefits from Pruning**

The new foliage is fresh and vibrant. Your tree receives new vigor to carry out its functioning from scratch. Conduction of minerals or nutrients to other parts of the plant reaches the target area undeterred.

Young tree pruning strengthens the growth and flowering ability of the plant. The best way to keep a check on low-lying branches, disproportionate trunk or limbs; is cutting them right when they are young.

**Season to Prune**

The dormant season, late fall or winter is the best time to prune, although dead branches can be removed anytime. Pruning during the dormant period minimizes sap loss, insect are not around and fungus infection is low.

**How Much to Prune**

As little as possible is the rule but certainly no more than 10- 15 % of the crown and it's best to ensure that the living branches compose at least 2/3 of the height of the tree.

# How to Care For Your New Tree

## Watering

- **Water:** 5 – 10 gallons a week for the first two years
- **5-gallon bucket:** Fill twice
- **Hose:** Run on low pressure at base for 15 minutes
- **Watering Bag:** Fill 1x a week
- **Year 1-2:** Water May – October
- **Year 3-5:** Water during dry summer months when possible

## Mulching

- When adding mulch to your tree, do not to mound it up around the trunk
- Purpose of mulching – Hold water, protect roots and trunk from mowers, and suppress weeds

**For more  
tree care  
tips, visit:**



## Signs of Stress

- Drooping or dry leaves Indicates your tree is experiencing stress
- Under watering – Evenly water the watering zone consistently ensuring the soil remains evenly moist
- Over-watering – Allow soil to dry out between waterings

Thank you for  
contributing to  
Norwalk's  
Urban Forest!

**§ 112-5. Legacy Tree Program.**

- A. The Tree Warden, after consultation with the Urban Forestry Commission, shall establish and maintain a Legacy Tree Program to recognize, preserve, and promote Trees of exceptional value to the City based on size, history, and public significance.
- (1) A Tree may be designated as a Legacy Tree if, in the judgment of the Tree Warden, it meets or exceeds a species-appropriate DBH threshold and possesses characteristics of exceptional value, such as historical or cultural significance, outstanding size or form, community or aesthetic importance, or ecological rarity.
  - (2) Any resident, property owner, City department, or organization may nominate a tree for Legacy Tree designation using a standard form provided by the City. The Tree Warden shall evaluate the nominated Tree's condition and confirm that it meets the established criteria. Upon confirmation, the proposed designation shall be presented to the Urban Forestry Commission for approval at a regular or special meeting. If approved, the Tree shall be added to the City's Legacy Tree Registry.
- B. A Tree may be removed from the Legacy Tree Registry at the discretion of the Tree Warden if the Tree dies, poses a public hazard, or no longer meets the minimum criteria due to decline or loss of significance. All such removals shall be approved by the Urban Forestry Commission based on supporting documentation from the Tree Warden. The City shall maintain a Legacy Tree Registry, documenting all designated Legacy Trees, along with relevant details such as species, location, DBH, and designation date. This registry shall be made publicly available in a format determined by the Tree Warden.