

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 19, 2025 – 7:00 PM
VIA ZOOM**

ATTENDANCE: Lisa Shanahan (Chair), Heather Dunn, Anne Wennerstrand, Jalin Sead, Johan Lopez, Nora Niedzielski-Eichner

STAFF: Brian Candela, Assistant Corporation Counsel

OTHERS: Nicolé Eaddy; Tom Livingston, Chief of Staff; Jim Travers Director of Transportation, Mobility & Parking; Sarah Cruz, Arborist; James Walsh, Chief of Police

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Shanahan called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Shanahan called the roll as reflected above.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Candela read into the record an email submitted by Ms. Roberta Despelia of Osborne Avenue, Norwalk, advocating for the creation of a residential parking permit program due to ongoing congestion in East Norwalk.

Ms. Diane Lauricella, of Little Fox Lane, raised three topics: support for revising naming rights for city buildings and facilities to include donations, support for a residential parking permit program and the creation of an ad hoc community committee, and concerns with revisions removing detail from the noise ordinance. She asked for clarity on quiet zones and noise enforcement capacity.

Ms. Kat Rosenfield Anderson, of Cottage Street, spoke in strong support of the residential permit parking proposal, describing construction worker and commuter usage of street parking in her neighborhood, and citing precedent in other Norwalk neighborhoods.

Ms. Diane Cece, of Olmstead Place, representing the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, echoed support for residential parking. She requested more city oversight as opposed to leaving matters mostly to the Parking Authority, supported stakeholder engagement, and raised concerns about the enforcement of noise concerns and clarity on ordinance changes.

Mr. Brad Anderson, of Cottage Street, also supported resident parking and asked whether interim solutions could be put in place, such as event-style temporary “residents only” restrictions, while a permanent ordinance was being developed.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The June 17, 2025, minutes were presented with corrections noted by Mr. Candela, including a last name correction and a typo that had the words “to to” consecutively. Mr. Candela proceeded to make the corrections.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 17, 2025, REGULAR MEETING AS AMENDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The July 15, 2025, minutes were presented without changes.

****MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 15, 2025 REGULAR MEETING.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Vote on Chapter 27, City Buildings and Facilities, Article I, Naming, Sections 27-1 through 27-3

B. Discussion and Vote on Chapter 95, Streets and Sidewalks, Article II, Honorary and Historic Naming of Streets, Sections 95-37 through 95-39

Mr. Livingston explained to the Committee that the purpose of these revisions was to align both ordinances and create uniformity between the rules on naming facilities (Chapter 27) and naming streets (Chapter 95). Currently, the ordinances were inconsistent in their treatment of living honorees and procedural requirements. For example, the streets ordinance permitted naming after a living person provided there was a supermajority of the Council, whereas the facilities ordinance did not contain the same provision. The proposed change would ensure both ordinances contain equivalent language, thereby providing consistency across the City Code. Mr. Livingston further stated that the revisions removed an outdated reference to “10 votes” as a definition of a supermajority. He explained that leaving the precise number of votes undefined was more appropriate since Council size may change in the future through charter adjustments.

The revisions also inserted clarifying language to ensure that when a naming concerned a City park, the matter would be referred to the Parks and Recreation Committee of the Council for a

recommendation, so that the procedural path was transparent. He described these refinements as largely “housekeeping” designed to align and simplify the ordinances.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner raised two specific issues for consideration. First, she asked about the unusual standard of “two-thirds plus one” for approving honorary naming of facilities after living individuals. She observed that in her review of Council rules, majorities are normally defined as “simple” or “two-thirds,” and that “two-thirds plus one” was an unusual formulation. She recommended simplifying the language to “two-thirds” for uniformity across the ordinances. Second, she noted that the references to Council committees, such as “Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs Committee,” did not provide for the possibility of structural name changes that occur from time to time with committee reorganization. She recommended clarifying these references to include “or its successor” so that the ordinances would remain valid even if Council committee structures were altered in the future.

Mr. Livingston agreed with both observations and noted that while he had initially left the unusual “two-thirds plus one” language as it appeared historically, he had no objection to simplifying it to “two-thirds.” As to the committee naming, he agreed it was best practice to include “or its successor” in ordinances to guard against possible inconsistencies in later years.

At the request of Ms. Shanahan, Mr. Candela displayed the working draft language on screen and made the edits in real-time so the Committee could view the changes as they were incorporated. This included inserting “or its successor” after references to applicable committees, removing the words “plus one” after “two-thirds majority,” and clarifying that recommendations from Parks and Recreation would be advisory to the Council. Members agreed these changes improved clarity and consistency in the ordinances.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO SEND BOTH CHAPTER 27 AND CHAPTER 95 AS AMENDED DURING DISCUSSION, FOR A PUBLIC HEARING.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Discussion of New Ordinance: Residential Parking Program

Mr. Travers outlined steps needed to enable the Parking Authority to establish a residential permit parking program. He explained this would require council authorization, followed by authority development of the program, and possibly consultant guidance. He emphasized a 30-day citywide comment process, modeled after the process used for Complete Streets.

Committee discussion included contributions from Ms. Wennerstrand encouraging stakeholder committees, Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner emphasizing cautious cost control and possible piloting without consultants, Mr. Sead and Mr. Lopez supporting return presentations to the Council, and Mr. Lopez asking about interim enforcement for residential signs.

Mr. Travers explained the risks of non-enforceable signage, preferring legally supported measures when the ordinance is in place.

No vote was taken at this session, and members agreed that draft language would be prepared for further review in September, with a public hearing likely in October.

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 19, 2025**

D. Discussion of New Ordinance to be inserted into Chapter 98, Long-Term Parking

Mr. Travers explained the need for the Authority to address abandoned or long-term vehicles occupying City streets beyond reasonable periods. He described the process of chalking tires or photographing for inactivity and issuing citations as a first step, followed by eventual towing.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner and Mr. Sead raised concerns about balancing enforcement with sensitivity for residents facing financial hardship or temporary travel. They suggested coordination with community resource programs and hardship considerations, citing prior experience with blight citations.

Mr. Travers responded that determinations of need should involve other City departments rather than the Parking Authority but supported strong communication and outreach if such an ordinance were adopted.

Chief Walsh explained that current enforcement is handled by a police unit dedicated to abandoned vehicles, removing approximately 50 to 60 cars citywide year-to-date, but that Parking Authority involvement could supplement these efforts. He clarified rules on commercial vs. combination plates under CT law and how those affect enforcement.

E. Discussion of Chapter 112, Tree Ordinance

Ms. Cruz presented proposals to align the ordinance with the recently adopted Tree Master Plan.

Updates would clarify definitions such as Tree Warden under state law, update the role of the advisory committee to focus on education and stewardship, and establish clearer procedures for historic or legacy tree designation and removal. No increase in staffing or cost was anticipated.

This was presented as an introductory discussion, with draft ordinance language to be prepared for the September meeting.

F. Discussion of Chapter 68, Noise Ordinance (Sections 68-1, 68-2, 68-4, 68-6 through 68-10, and 68-12 through 68-15)

Mr. Candela reviewed proposed amendments, based on comparisons with 14 jurisdictions, focusing on simplifying enforcement provisions. Changes included streamlined penalties, simplified measurement procedures, combining related sections, and clarifying that plainly audible amplification at 100 feet is a violation even without a meter reading.

Chief Walsh emphasized the difficulty of the current ordinance, which requires complex multi-point readings that are easily disrupted by ambient sound. He supported the simplified model allowing single-point measurements close to the noise source.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner stressed appreciation for enforceability, Ms. Dunn commended progress, and Ms. Shanahan noted the importance of outreach to affected stakeholders. Mr. Candela advised that changes regarding decibel tables should be considered carefully and later in the process, while simpler enforceability revisions could proceed sooner.

Chief Walsh recommended eliminating special exemptions, like the Washington Street Development District noise levels, and instead adopting consistent decibel standards citywide. Members agreed to defer final decisions until public outreach and expert input.

No vote was taken, and further draft revisions will be discussed at the September meeting.

VII. DISCUSSION

There were no additional discussion items.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. LOPEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary

Candela, Brian

From: Roberta DiBisceglie <roberta@columbinellc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 10:23 AM
To: Candela, Brian
Cc: East Norwalk Neighborhood Association (ENNA)
Subject: Public Comment for Tonight's Ordinance Meeting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

You don't often get email from roberta@columbinellc.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders

Hello,

Attached is my public comment for tonight's meeting. I am unable to attend.

My husband and I live on Osborne Avenue and have been residents of East Norwalk for over twenty years. I'm here today to advocate for the creation of a residential parking permit program for our neighborhood—something I've supported since at least 2017. In the past five years, the parking situation has become noticeably more congested.

Parking has become a serious issue on our streets. On a daily basis, residents are competing with commuters, restaurant patrons, and visitors for limited street parking. Many of us come home from work or errands only to circle the block for 20 minutes—or park multiple streets away. This is especially difficult for older residents, families with young children, and those with mobility issues. It's more than just a nuisance—it impacts our quality of life and, in some cases, our safety.

- Our streets are consistently crowded with non-resident vehicles, including business trucks with combination plates and company branding from pool and plumbing services.
- Illegal rooming houses also contribute significantly to the problem, generating far more vehicles than a legal one or two-family home would. Now, with even more development on the horizon - many buildings will not even have minimum off-street parking requirements - we are approaching a critical tipping point in our neighborhood.

As someone without a driveway—and no feasible way to create one due to the siting of my home—both my legal tenant and I rely entirely on street parking. To date, my car has been sideswiped three times while parked on the street, resulting in stress, inconvenience, and costly repairs. This is largely due to the narrow two-way stretch of Osborne Avenue between Seaview and Goodrow, where there simply isn't enough room for two vehicles to pass safely, especially with every available parking space occupied. The situation on nearby Betts and Cottage Streets is just as problematic.

- Residents struggle the most during peak hours, weekends, and events at Vet's Park and the Pastime Club.
- There are even instances where emergency vehicles and sanitation services have had difficulty navigating due to the congestion.

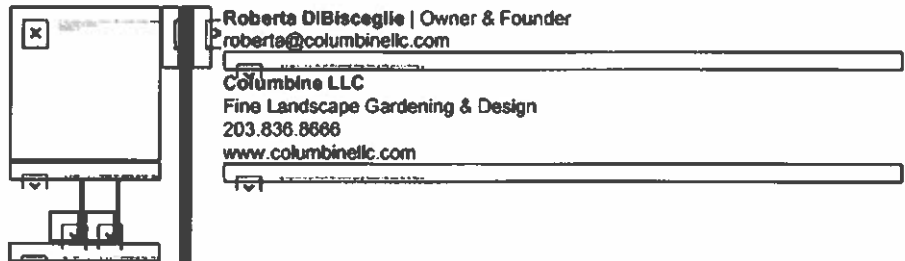
I strongly urge the City to implement a residential parking permit program that prioritizes residents on designated streets. Cities like Stamford, New Haven, and Greenwich have already established successful systems that balance the needs of residents and visitors. **I also do not believe that a petition system, which has been suggested, is a viable way to implement this.** On my block alone there are very few owner-occupied homes and many of the houses are illegal boarding houses. The owners of these homes have no investment in the quality of life in this community. **I believe it is the City's responsibility to implement this plan, not the residents.**

According to the 2020 census, Norwalk and Stamford are considered moderately dense cities. New Haven is the most densely populated of the four, and while Greenwich as a whole is less dense, its downtown core has population numbers comparable to ours. If these municipalities can manage permit parking effectively, there is no reason Norwalk cannot do the same. The precedent is already there.

I understand concerns some may have, but most permit programs allow for guest passes and visitor exceptions. Many residents, including myself and my husband, are willing to pay a reasonable fee to support a well-managed system. We are also open to phased-in or low-cost options that make the program feasible for the city.

Please continue taking steps toward a solution that supports the people who live here. I would appreciate being included in any next steps and future discussions.

Roberta DiBisceglie
2 Osborne Avenue
Norwalk
917-991-6648

A screenshot of a contact card for Roberta DiBisceglie. The card is displayed on a computer screen with a window border. The text on the card includes her name and title, email address, company name, business description, phone number, and website. There are two horizontal bars redacting parts of the card, one over the email address and one over the phone number.

Roberta DiBisceglie | Owner & Founder
Roberta@columbinellc.com
Columbine LLC
Fine Landscape Gardening & Design
203.836.8666
www.columbinellc.com