



Public Hearing for Tree Removal at 1 Cemetery Street

September 24, 2025

- Staff: Chris Torre, DPW Superintendent of Operations/Tree Warden
Vanessa Valadares, Chief of Operations and Public Works
Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden
Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner, TMP
- Others: Diane Laureclla; Anne Wennerstrand; Tom Farrington; Lynnelle Jones;
Diane Lenkowsky; Nancy Lovas; Loretta Esposito; Debra Ross; Frank
Ross; Deidre Hunter; Matthew Silber; Peter Viteretto; Richard Bonenfont;
Randy Lynch; Jessie McGarty; Read Auerbach; Erik Kniss; Marilyn
Marino; Diane CeCe; Clair Schoen; Melissa Slatterly; Harrison Knowles;
Erik Vitaglione; Kristin Ruggieri; Kat Anderson; Joann Catino Joann
Broome; Andrew Parsons; Paul Fox; Linda Gray; Jack Gray; Jeff
Ehrismann; Cindy Schaer; Ana Tabachneck; Lisa Shanahan; Robert
DiBisciglie; Charles DiBisciglie; Tracey Barcay; Alex Knopp

Mr. Torre opened the public hearing at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Torre stated that this public hearing pertains to the tree on Cemetery Street, not the project on East Avenue. The tree was posted on August 27, 2025, and the first protest he received after the tree was posted on September 5, 2025, was from Kat Rosenfield and Rosalie Kensoa. He also received two additional protests within the 10-day protesting period. He provided an overview of the process and said that anytime a city tree is taken down for any other reason than being diseased, it has to be posted, and within that posting period, any resident has the legal right to protest that posting within the 10-day period, which prompts a public hearing when a tree is protested. Following the hearing, he has three days to render a decision on whether the tree should be removed. At that time, Ms. Rosenfield can appeal to the State Superior Court within 10 days of the decision if she disagrees with it.

Over the last several years, numerous public hearings and presentations have been held for the project. It is his understanding that, within this process, the tree was scheduled for removal from the beginning, based on the drainage project at that intersection.

Councilperson Wennerstrand read a statement on behalf of herself and Ms. Eddy, who could not attend this evening:

We are deeply passionate about this tree and are very concerned, as is the community, about this matter. The oak tree is not just a tree, but is a living part of our history, environment, and character of East Norwalk. We have a responsibility to you, our constituents, to ensure that if there is an alternative to removing this tree, it will be explored. She is here to say that if this tree can be saved and if there is anything that can be done, it should be done. This tree and the benefits it provides cannot simply be replaced. She has learned from many of those attending tonight, based on the emails she has received this week, in particular, that this tree provides an emotional rootedness that makes it not only a landmark but also connects generations of East Norwalkers. She and Ms. Eaddy encourage staff to fully exhaust every possible alternative before considering removal. We absolutely must find a balance between progress and preservation and do everything we can to honor both the needs of the city, which will be discussed today, and the voices of the people.

Ms. Valadares explained the reason the tree needed to be posted for removal and said it is because of the major drainage issues in East Norwalk, and requested that the DOT include it as part of their scope of work to improve the drainage in that area. In doing so, they are not only able to improve capacity but also water quality. She presented the proposed drainage project and stated that the tree would need to be removed, as it was planted directly on top of the culvert and is scheduled for removal in the spring. For engineering purposes, when they considered saving the tree, they would not be able to install the pipe without affecting the tree's health.

Diane Lauricella- 21 Little Fox Lane

Ms. Lauricella stated that she appreciates the work that Public Works and TMP do, and a lot of the projects are terrific, but, in this case, she believes that a lot has changed over the last five years regarding trees and the public, as well as the city, and they are becoming more aware of their benefits and value. The city hired its own arborist because Norwalk had the worst tree canopy in Western Connecticut. She applauds the city for taking its first steps. She said she is sure the staff knew that this proposed tree removal would raise emotions and concerns, and that this hearing should have been held at another time when another room was available to accommodate everyone. She also mentioned that she may want to continue the meetings for those who are unable to attend. She said that Doug Tallmay is the king of oak tree history and speaks about the importance of native oak trees, which can last up to 900 years, reducing carbon in the atmosphere. Of all the species that could have been cut, this is not one of them. She requested that alternatives be explored and that staff collaborate with the developer regarding on-street parking, as permits can be changed. If we want to be the greenest city, then we must be flexible, and oak trees in Norwalk are crucial to our well-being and environment.

Jack Gray- 15 Elliott Street

Mr. Gray stated that he is against the removal of the tree and would like to see the state divert its drainage. He is quite sure that the necessary abilities are there to do so without going through the tree.

Ms. Sanders- Cottage Street

Ms. Sanders stated that she agrees this is not about the Cemetery Street development, but rather about the character of the neighborhood and the quality of life for those who live there. This is the only city-owned state tree in this part of East Norwalk, and it is being lost at an alarming rate because developers have an incentive to deforest their properties in order to build the largest allowable structures. If Norwalk is going to encourage deforestation of private property in order to achieve growth, it becomes the city's job to maintain and preserve public green space. She understands the plan was always to remove the tree as part of the drainage project by that token, this was always a quite residential neighborhood surrounded by mature trees and wetlands so things have changed, and the original plan was made for a neighborhood that just no longer exists and will be losing the only street tree because the city either lacks imagination or the ambition to consider other options. She is asking the city to put its money where its mouth is and save the tree if possible, and more importantly, demonstrate its commitment to preserving the history and beauty of our neighborhood, which is not just a bunch of press releases.

Ms. Valadares said that planting trees is important to the city, and since 2021, and has planted 1500 trees, which is a record. Out of the 1,500 trees that were planted, 150 were in East Norwalk, not including the 50 that were planted in the Marvin Beach area.

Anna Tabachneck- 4 Gilbert Street

Ms. Tabachneck stated that if there had been a plan to remove this tree due to the East Avenue roadway project going back to at least 2021, why wouldn't the tree warden have known about it? What is the standard procedure for notifying the tree wardens when a city tree needs to be removed, and are they supposed to be informed simultaneously with the public? What is the role of the Tree Advisory Committee related to tree removals? Was there any discussion between DPW, CTDOT, TMP tree warden, or the arborist between 2021 and now about possible alternative ways to connect the conduit to the culverts that would not require moving the tree? Her statement is that the island reconfiguration is happening in part because of the placement of the new development's driveway, and to TMP goals to improve safety around the cemetery, and the final decision is by the state. If the state was not going to do the drainage work, would this tree need to be removed due to the placement of the driveway? She strongly believes that the tree should not be removed unless it is diseased, rotten, or poses other hazards that cannot be mitigated. She is fully supportive of the drainage and roadway improvements, but begs that all alternative options be explored for the connection to the culvert. Let this be an example of revitalizing the city while preserving the environment. (Mr. Torre said he will respond to Ms. Tabachneck questions offline)

Diane Wankowski- 31 Cannon Street

Ms. Wankowski stated that she feels confident that if pressure were applied, the CTDOT engineers could find a solution that could save the tree and provide proper drainage.

Paul Fox- 11 Hanford Place

Mr. Fox stated that if these tree hearings are to be effective, they should be held when the preliminary design is created, allowing alternatives to be considered without delaying projects. He also stated he finds it hard to believe that there are no feasible alternatives to connect the drainage and reconfigure the intersection that would preserve the tree.

Jim Anderson- 2 Old Well Court

Mr. Anderson stated this decision was made years ago, and the plumbing and drainage have already been set in the monstrous complex, so not removing the tree doesn't seem like it is going to be an option, and relocating it is out of the question, but planting a same-size tree would probably be the least expensive option.

Cindy Schaer- 52 Purdy Road East

Ms. Schaer asked what kind of trees would be planted to replace the existing ones. Ms. Valadares said that only native trees are planted, and she provided an overview of the process. Mr. Sotnik added that if this tree were being planted today, it would not have been allowed because it is over the box culvert.

Reed Auerbach- 2 Roland Ave.

Mr. Auerbach stated that he is the President of the Third Taxing District, and they currently maintain that island. He asked if the road had remained two lanes, would it have been easier to save the tree? Ms. Valadares said "No" because the drainage triggered the removal of the tree. Mr. Auerbach said the drainage could be moved.

Marilyn Marino- 4 Pequot Drive

Ms. Marino stated that since the arborist was hired recently, she was not on staff when these plans were presented, and asked if there was a public comment process for the road redesign. Ms. Valadares mentioned that there were public meetings as part of the Walk Bridge project. Ms. Cece provided an overview of the process that had occurred and stated that there was no public

comment period for what was happening today, and that the Third Taxing District was also not aware, as they have maintained the island for at least the past 31 years.

Tracy Barclay- Cove Ave.

Ms. Barclay stated that the 150 trees planted represent only 10% of the city and are on a smaller scale, and are not comparable to an oak tree. If this tree needs to be removed, there are landscape architects with vast knowledge about relocating trees like this, and it can be done. It is suggested that it be moved to a different location in East Norwalk.

Becca Stoll- 26 Emerson Street

Ms. Stoll stated that she is a frequent pedestrian, scooter, and cyclist in Norwalk and her concern is that tree provides much needed shade for her when crossing the street because there is so much traffic flowing in each direction and she is not convinced in this refuge does enough to protect pedestrians the way that big tree does and she appreciates the beauty that it brings to the neighborhood. Currently, it is a treacherous walk from Cemetery Street to Van Zan Street.

Loressa Esposito- 28 Emerson Street

Ms. Esposito said that because of the traffic that will be caused by the monstrosity, they are losing a lane and are using the drainage as an excuse to eliminate the island, when the real reason is that the monstrosity needs the space.

Randy Lynch- 5 Novell Road

Mr. Lynch stated that if this plan were papered, why couldn't the builder of the monstrosity be made aware of a possible plan for an alternate place for the drainage?

Matt Silver-230 East Ave.

Mr. Silver stated that he understands the need for proper drainage, but there are many people who care for this tree, and it adds significantly to the community. We would like to explore the possibility.

Claire Jones- 7 Studio Lane

Ms. Jones said we are losing tree canopy, and the Walk Bridge project has been responsible for a lot of it, and Norwalk needs to fight back with the state when necessary

Councilperson Shannahan said she has been working on changing the attitude about trees in the city of Norwalk, and she truly appreciates how DPW and TMP care for trees and thanked everyone who showed up this evening in supporting the idea that we love our trees and want to continue the long life of the trees, especially this tree. We have not been able to convince the CTDOT or Eversource to love trees the way we do, and asked staff to tell everyone how they can support them with CTDOT or Eversource, that this is not okay. These plans should have indicated that the tree was at risk, and at that time, she could have revised them; she hopes there is a way to save this tree.

Peter Viteretto-119 Comstock Hill Avenue

Mr. Viteretto said the island is the landscape that supports the trees, so we are not only losing the trees but also losing green space. Moving forward, we need to be mindful of this with other projects. In the mitigation for this, we could look at putting trees with 8" caliper or larger and supporting the system that supports those trees, and that includes underground construction.

Richard Bonenfant- 17 Park Hill Ave.

Mr. Bonenfant stated that he sees no other way around this outside of rerouting the drainage so he hopes they can find a reconfiguration of the drainage.

Alex Knopp-35 Fifth Street

Mr. Knop stated that the urban tree program was initiated in Norwalk during his tenure as mayor, and he takes pride in it. He congratulated everyone coming out tonight and joined with all their neighbors in urging DPW to develop an alternative drainage plan. While he appreciates that the tree is on top of a culvert, if there is an alternative drainage route, the culvert would not be part of the system. While there have been several problems with the CTDOT and the Walkbridge on a few occasions that have been open to public suggestions, and Ms. Valadares has been asked if she has ever been asked to develop an alternative drainage plan that could be costed and studied. Ms. Valadares said "No". Mr. Knopp said that, at a minimum, DPW should work with CTDOT to come up with an alternative plan and perhaps avoid this fundamental attack on the history and

character of East Norwalk, and thanked Ms. Cece for all of her work organizing this, and everyone who attended this evening.

Andrew Parsons- 17 Hillside Place

Mr. Parsons stated that, with all of the trees being removed due to disease, we need to be very careful before saying a tree is just an obstacle and should be cut down. Mr. Torre said he agrees that this discussion should have taken place before the plants were approved, and the oak tree is the charter tree; we should try to save it, and he will exert every effort to do so.

Betty Bono- 35 Fifth Street

Ms. Bono stated that she has traveled past that tree for at least the past 41 years, and it is a beautiful part of our neighborhood's heritage, located next to one of the oldest historical cemeteries in our city, which contains the remains of Governor Finch. She urged a delay in cutting down the mature, healthy oak tree, as she believes further transparency and discussion are required, according to the city code, Chapter 112, Section 112-1. Oak trees support more lift forms than any other type of North American tree. There has been insufficient time to challenge the assertion that the removal of the tree is the only means by which drainage improvements might be made, and trees do play a role in assisting with drainage. She encourages the postponement of this decision so a fully informed discussion can occur.

Roberta Di Bisceglie

Ms. Di Bisceglie said she is very much in support of trying to save this tree, but the time to save it was before construction started, and she understands that compaction greatly impacts trees. Norwalk needs to take a good look at what is being done to our environment and this is all unfortunate.

Jaimie Daly- 141 Winfield Street

Mr. Daily said that the large number of people showing up means something, and he hopes that this is not viewed as inevitable. He thinks it is important to explore other options, knowing that many people want to save the tree.

Jack Walsdorf- 39 Lockwood Lane

Mr. Walsdorf said he agrees with just about everything people have pointed out, namely that the tree is still alive and the plan can be changed. He also stated that this would never have happened if the monstrosity had not been built. It would behoove the city to think about what is going on, and that tree is beautiful, and there is no reason for that tree to be cut down because drainpipes

can be put wherever, and way too many utilities were built on that small piece of property, and need more drainage and more sewage, etc.

Jessia McCarydy- 10 Branford Street

Ms. McCardy stated that this tree means a lot to them and their community, and she agrees with what everyone has said this evening, and East Norwalk needs a win. The procedure is backwards, and this discussion should have happened years ago. She suggested that the money from 1 Cemetery Street, which was intended to cover the cost of the expansion, be used towards the cost of moving the tree.

Ms. CeCe said they would like to know what it would cost to raise or move the tree, because there is a \$25,000 pot of money that is to be returned to the city and spent within the community.

Aileen Murphy-1 Island Drive

Ms. Murphy said she agrees with what everyone has said this evening, and she wants the tree to be saved. However, if we reach the point where it is not savable, suggest creating a bench out of the tree to create an asset for East Norwalk.

Lynnelle Jones- 10 Pinepoint Road

Ms. Jones stated that without transparency, there is no trust, and too often decisions about substantial issues are made in Norwalk without honest transparency. She has many expenses that ironically include the CTDOT. This isn't about drainage; it is about public trust. Everything is a function of how it is framed, and it can be changed. Trees like this are part of the solution, not the problem. Please take the time to seek new and innovative, mature, tree-friendly engineered stormwater solutions, and consider the facts to realize that there is a public trust issue.

Dave Roger- 11 Hayes Avenue

Mr. Roger stated that, upon examining the map, if the pipe were shifted a few degrees to the northeast, it would not have to be placed directly under the tree.

Diane CeCe- Olmstead Place/East Norwalk Neighborhood Association

Ms. Cece stated that, as of a few days ago, even Chris Torre did not have the information issued by Ms. Valadares, so there was very little time for anyone to review it. She said that ENNA would like to consult with an outside engineering firm to review this. The tree has not yet been cut down, and the piping work is not yet complete. We are not convinced that every feasible alternative to the drainage, which would also save the tree, has been given its due consideration. She said they are requesting that this be reviewed again and that staff work with the state to see what can be done. She said it is her understanding that an objector can waive the three-day decision, or is it still subject to the statutory requirement? Mr. Torre said it is still under the statute, so he still needs to render his decision in three days. Mr. Cece asked if the comment period could stay open until Friday. Mr. Torre said "Yes".

Ms. Cece submitted a petition that was circulated through the ENNA, garnering over 120 signatures as of this morning. The issue is adding insult to injury, and she finds it disingenuous of Ms. Valadares to say there is no link between the development and the proposed tree removal and if the driveway was not there it would have been 43 units and all they are asking is that before that tree comes down and before the final drainage is done to hit the pause button to be sure they ruled out every feasible alternative.

Ms. Cece asked about the next steps. Mr. Torre said it will be to disseminate and process all the comments. If there are any additional comments or thoughts, he would love to hear them, as he will most likely not make a decision until Monday.

Ms. Valadares said she completely understands the concerns, and before tonight, she had looked into many alternatives related to the tree. However, independent of that, the one thing we can all take away from this meeting is how to improve the process. The staff is committed to Norwalk, and she appreciates everyone who attended tonight.

Ms. Valadares said she hopes everyone will attend the DPW open house, scheduled for this Saturday.

(The emails and petition that were submitted are attached.)

Mr. Torre closed the public hearing at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd

Byrd, Dilene

From: ana <serelle21@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 11:08 AM
To: Byrd, Dilene
Cc: Common Council; Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James
Subject: Public Comment for tonight's Tree Removal Hearing

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Hello,

I'm not sure if I'll be able to attend tonight's hearing to speak, so sending this just in case. If I am not able to attend can you please read it into the record?

My name is Ana Tabachneck, I live at 4 Gilbert St, right around the corner from the tree that is slated for removal. I am also an Alternate Planning and Zoning Commissioner, but do not speak for the Commission and am sharing my personal opinions. I reviewed the email from Vanessa Valadares with attachments sent yesterday afternoon. I have several questions about the need for this removal and the process around tree removals in general, along with some general feedback.

1) When I first reached out to Chris Torre, our Tree Warden, asking why this tree was being removed, he said that the tree was posted for removal for a reason unknown to him. If there has been a plan to remove this tree due to the East Ave Roadway project going back to at least 2021, why wouldn't the Tree Warden have known about it? What is the normal process for notifying the Tree Warden when a part of the city government thinks a tree needs to be removed? Are they supposed to find out at the same time as the public? How often do other parts of the city post a sign on a tree that it will be removed prior to the Tree Warden being in the loop? What is the role of the Tree Advisory Committee related to tree removals?

2) Was there any discussion between DPW, CTDOT, TMP, the Tree Warden, and the Arborist between 2021 and now about possible alternative ways to connect the conduit to the culvert that would not require removing the tree?

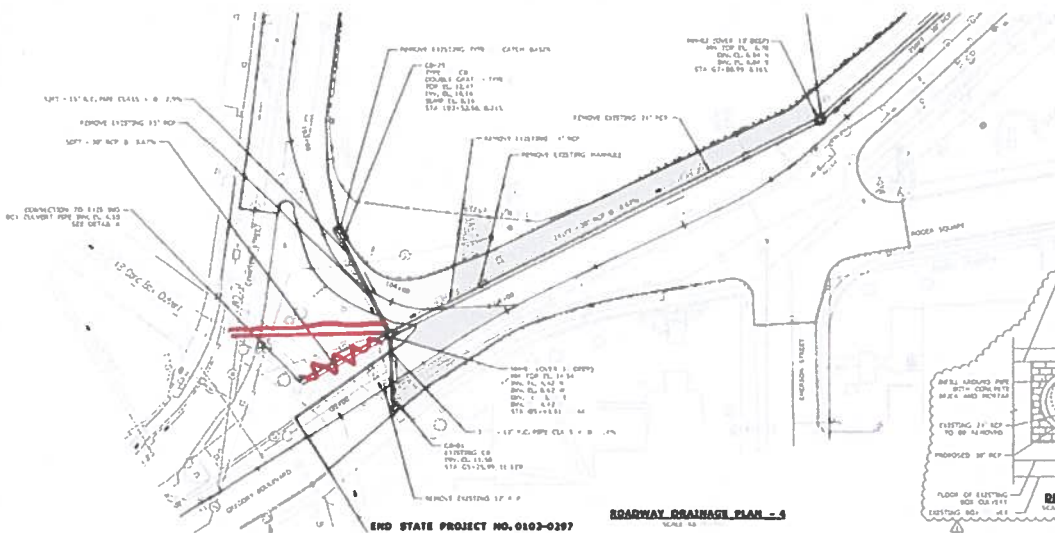
3) In the email from Vanessa Valadares she writes "However, because the drainage portion of the project was delayed, the island reconfiguration had to move forward ahead of schedule, which in turn anticipated the tree's removal". Based on the 2021 drainage plan, the drainage work and tree removal were unrelated to the island reconfiguration. If the island reconfiguration was not required for the drainage work, and the drainage work was delayed, why would the island part and therefore the tree removal be moved up? When were you originally planning that the drainage work (requiring tree removal) happen? When were you originally planning the island reconfiguration would happen?

4) My understanding is that the island reconfiguration is happening, in part, because of the placement of the new development's driveway and due to TMP goals for improved safety around the cemetery. That the city TMP decides how they want the roadway changed, and then the developer asks CTDOT to approve it, and that the final decision is the state's. Is that correct?

5) If the state wasn't doing the drainage work, would the tree have to be removed due to the placement of the new development's driveway?

6) If the development had never happened (i.e. no driveway) but the drainage improvements were still being done, would there have been another way to connect the conduit to the box culvert without removing the tree? Meaning, is the fact of the new development in any way constraining possible alternative ways to connect the conduit to the box culvert?

7) At this point, is there another way to connect the conduit to the box culvert without removing the tree? Could a point of articulation be added to the conduit in front of the island, maybe where the manhole is on the 2024 drainage plan, that would allow the conduit/box culvert connection to happen closer to the sidewalk in front of the development?



8) Can you share updated drainage plans that reflect new island reconfiguration from the August 2025 roadway plan?

9) In the 5/12/25 Public Works Committee meeting where Vanessa Valadares explained the new island reconfiguration that CTDOT approved, and that the committee needed to vote to pay for the construction designs to be revised accordingly, there was no discussion of the need to remove the tree. Are there earlier public meetings of any common council committees where the need to remove the tree was discussed? Was it discussed with the Tree Advisory Committee? I do not remember it coming up during the P and Z public hearings for the development, because I believe at that time we did not know what TMP would ultimately decide to do re: the roadway and island, and what CTDOT would approve. I recall discussing tree removals and replacements on the actual development property, but I don't remember talking about the tree on the island. That said, it was two years ago and it was at least 8 hours of meetings!

Those are all my questions for now. I also have feedback. :-)

1. In reading through past tree removal hearings, it appears that the standard process is that a tree gets posted for removal, and then only if someone lodges a formal protest are the reasons for the tree removal shared with the public. This seems inefficient. If, at the time that a tree is posted for removal, there was a website that the public could go to that would show the reason(s) it was being removed, it is

possible that there would not be protests lodged. Or that the public comment at the eventual hearing could be more informed. I read meeting minutes where people showed up to the hearing all upset, but once they heard the city's reasoning, they thought, "well that makes sense actually". They could have just stayed home if the city published their reasoning on a website. Sort of like the P and Z Pending Applications page, there could be a Pending Tree Removals page. It also seems like the Tree Advisory Committee should have a role related to tree removals. Maybe similar to the role that the Harbor Commission has with certain P and Z applications.

2. The email from Vanessa Valadares with attachments was super informative, but only came out a day before the hearing. I've been asking about this tree removal for weeks, as have many others. The City of Norwalk facebook page could have put out this information when people first raised questions about it. Quite often people post questions and concerns about things related to city parks on facebook and someone from the Parks department will pretty quickly share information, which tamps down conspiracies and fear mongering. Even if the City of Norwalk had popped onto a thread to say something information like "It's related to the drainage improvements, here's the website where you can see that information, and a public hearing is being scheduled related to the tree", that would have helped.

As I'm sure you know, this mature and healthy tree is a beautiful part of our neighborhood, provides shade and cooling, and is a habitat for many species. I feel strongly that it should not come down unless it is diseased, rotted, or causing some other hazard that can not be mitigated. I am fully supportive of the drainage and roadway improvements, and I know the development driveway is not moving. But I beg you to please explore all alternative options for the conduit/culvert connection. Norwalk has a well earned reputation of conservation and sustainability initiatives - let this be an example of revitalizing the city while preserving the environment.

Thank you,

Ana Tabachneck

Byrd, Dilene

From: Kathleen Boland <kdick33@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 11:13 AM
To: Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolé; Wennerstrand, Anne
Subject: Oak Tree on Cemetery Street

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Hello. I am writing in regard to the removal of the oak tree on Cemetery Street. There HAS to be an alternative. This tree serves as the welcome gateway to our charming beach neighborhood, and is part of our character and history. It also provides diverse food and habitats for wildlife, while improving air and water quality by absorbing pollutants and producing oxygen. It has been deemed mature and healthy, and is a symbol of wisdom, strength and endurance. It is irreplaceable.

Why can't the drainage system be moved closer to 1 Gregory Blvd? There are plans for that property to be sold and the building demolished. We need to find an alternative and re-route the pipes around the root zone.

Has transplanting the tree been discussed? Have we consulted with arborists and tree movers?

Please reconsider the removal, or at least table the decision in order to ensure all other possibilities have been exhausted.

Thank you for your time,
Kathleen Boland
1 Ludlow Manor

Torre, Chris

From: ANDREA LIGHT <alight32@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 10:44 AM
To: Torre, Chris
Cc: Rilling, Harry; Common Council
Subject: Public Comment - Pease save the oak tree at Cemetery Circle

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Dear Mr. Torre,

Please don't cut down the Oak Tree at Cemetery Circle in East Norwalk. We've made such efforts as a community to repopulate our urban forest it seems like a real affront, and a waste, to destroy a healthy mature tree.

Thank you.

Andrea Light
7 **Greenwood** Place
Norwalk

Torre, Chris

From: Julie McNulty <julie_mcnulty@ymail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 10:14 AM
To: Torre, Chris; Rilling, Harry; Common Council
Subject: Cemetery Street Tree

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Mr. Torre,

I am deeply saddened that the City is considering cutting down the magnificent tree on Cemetery Street, and urge you to reconsider. It seems as though there are workable options that would preserve the tree, the expense of which will be offset many times over by the gifts the tree gives, and will hopefully continue to give, to the residents of Norwalk for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie McNulty
15 Sunset Hill Avenue
Norwalk, CT

Byrd, Dilene

From: Bernard Schaer <schaerclan@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 7:15 AM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Public comment

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Dear Mr Torre

I write with a heavy heart that we are about to loose another beautiful mature tree in Norwalk in the name of progress. The residents' concerns regarding the scale of the Mill Pond development and the taking away of a vital lane on cemetery street to allow parking for this imposing development were disregarded. I would hope you would not further the hard feelings we have every time we drive by this development by cutting down a tree that has been here since I was a child growing up in east Norwalk 63 years ago. I would hope simply raising the canopy a bit would be sufficient and show A little goodwill towards your taxpayers

Cynthia Schaer,
Life long resident and stakeholder

September 24, 2025

Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed removal of the mature tree located in East Norwalk, a living landmark that has long been an integral part of our community's landscape and identity.

This tree is a symbol of East Norwalk's pastoral charm and historical continuity. Its presence evokes the natural beauty and tranquility that have defined our neighborhood for generations. It stands as a silent witness to our shared history, offering shade, serenity, and a sense of place that cannot be replicated or replaced.

Importantly, the tree poses no obstruction to traffic, nor does it present any hazard to life or property. Its removal appears to serve no public safety or infrastructural purpose, but rather seems motivated by a desire to alter the scenery to suit the preferences of developers. This is deeply troubling, as it prioritizes short-term aesthetic or commercial interests over long-term environmental and cultural stewardship.

There are several compelling reasons to preserve this tree:

Environmental Benefits: Mature trees play a critical role in carbon sequestration, air purification, and temperature regulation. They reduce stormwater runoff, prevent soil erosion, and support biodiversity by providing habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Community Well-being: Numerous studies have shown that green spaces and mature trees contribute to mental health, reduce stress, and foster a sense of community. This tree is part of the emotional and visual fabric of East Norwalk, offering stability and continuity in an ever-changing fabric of East Norwalk.

Cultural and Historical Significance: As an established landmark, this tree connects us to our past. Its preservation honors the legacy of those who came before us and reflects our commitment to maintaining the unique identity of East Norwalk which has been stripped away by the over-sized development on Cemetery Street.

Sustainability and Responsibility: In an era of climate awareness, removing a healthy, mature tree contradicts our collective responsibility to protect natural resources. Preservation is a more sustainable and ethical choice.

I urge you to reconsider any plans for removal and instead explore alternatives that allow for development while respecting and integrating the natural heritage of our community. Let us not sacrifice what makes East Norwalk special for the sake of expedience or profit.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to preserving the character and integrity of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

John Thomas Pinto
Life-long Resident of East Norwalk

Byrd, Dilene

From: Kristin Ruggieri <shash273@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2025 9:56 PM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: East Norwalk

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What's happening in East Norwalk is nothing short of shameful. The destruction of one of the few remaining mature trees in our area is yet another blow to a neighborhood already under siege by unchecked development and a blatant disregard for residents' quality of life.

I live on Gregory Point, and every single day I'm forced to drive past the monstrosity of an apartment building that now dominates our landscape. It has brought toxic dust and fumes into our air, created unsafe traffic conditions, and completely disrupted daily life with poorly managed construction and confusing detours. Now, to add insult to injury, we're losing a magnificent tree—one of the last of its kind in a neighborhood that once prized its natural beauty.

Mayor Rilling and the Planning & Zoning Commission have systematically stripped away the peace, charm, and livability of our community in favor of developer profits and political expediency. This isn't smart growth. This is destruction. And the residents are paying the price while Harry cashes his last checks and retires far from the city he destroyed.

Shame on anyone who continues to sign off on these short-sighted decisions. You are not just approving permits—you are dismantling what made this neighborhood a home.

Sincerely,

Kristin Ruggieri

Sent from my iPhone

Byrd, Dilene

From: Charles Chinzi <cmchinzi@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 8:34 AM
To: Byrd, Dilene
Subject: Norwalk cemetery East Avenue

[You don't often get email from cmchinzi@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Please keep the trees there, especially the dog woods. It's a small circle there and the shade is nice.

Charles M. Chinzi
203-984-5453
Sent from my iPhone

Byrd, Dilene

From: Jeff Bortolot <jabcpa@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 10:32 PM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: PLEASE SAVE THE CEMETERY STREET / GREGORY BLVD OAK TREE

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

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

To: Chris Torre - Norwalk Tree Warden

Dear Mr. Torre,

My neighbors and I are extremely upset to learn that the beautiful healthy mature oak tree in the traffic island intersection of Cemetery Street & Gregory Blvd is tagged for removal.

The senseless removal of this tree would be a great loss to East Norwalk and the entire Norwalk community. The tree has been there for decades and has never caused any problems. For the past 30 years during my residency in East Norwalk (lifelong Norwalk resident) I have watched the tree grow and flourish in that location, providing a much needed tree canopy where no other trees exist.

I believe that the tree can be trimmed or pruned to accommodate any changes in the traffic island configuration, or the design can be made to include the tree. This tree existed long before any plans for changing that intersection and should be preserved.

The removal of this tree is counterintuitive to Norwalk's mission to become a "Tree City USA" and would be a huge setback to restoring the much needed tree canopy that has alarmingly disappeared over the years.

Your assistance is appreciated in helping to save this treasured tree for present and future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jeffrey A. Bortolot
20 Pine Hill Avenue
East Norwalk, CT 06855**

**Cell: 203-722-5926
E-Mail: jabcpa@aol.com**

Byrd, Dilene

From: JULIE DIZON <ojdizon@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 3:47 PM
To: Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolé;
Wennerstrand, Anne; info@eastnorwalk.org
Subject: Save the Oak Tree in East Norwalk

[You don't often get email from ojdizon@aol.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Dear Town of Norwalk Officials,

Please don't destroy the beautiful Oak tree that has been standing for decades, through droughts and hurricanes, for a developer. It's all we have left of our quaint ENO beach entrance. There cannot possibly be a decent reason to remove it.

Thanks
Julie Dizon
41 Pine Hill Ave

Byrd, Dilene

From: JULIE DIZON <ojdizon@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 3:47 PM
To: Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolé; Wennerstrand, Anne; info@eastnorwalk.org
Subject: Save the Oak Tree in East Norwalk

[You don't often get email from ojdizon@aol.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

Dear Town of Norwalk Officials,

Please don't destroy the beautiful Oak tree that has been standing for decades, through droughts and hurricanes, for a developer. It's all we have left of our quaint ENO beach entrance. There cannot possibly be a decent reason to remove it.

Thanks
Julie Dizon
41 Pine Hill Ave

Byrd, Dilene

From: Jeanne Ann Heiser <jaheiser0501@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 9:18 AM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Tree

You don't often get email from jaheiser0501@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Leave the tree!!!!

Enough damage has already been done with the horrific oversized building.

Please leave the tree.

Trying to sign petition. Having problems.

Save the tree!!!!

Torre, Chris

From: christina olson <christinactt@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 3:38 PM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Oak tree on cemetery street

[You don't often get email from christinactt@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

Hello,

Is there anything I can do to help save that beautiful oak tree on cemetery street?

The destruction of this tree was never disclosed with that new development.

Thank you,
Christina Olson
3 heron court
Norwalk
Sent from my iPhone

Byrd, Dilene

From: Vara Neverow <vneverow@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 8:36 AM
To: Torre, Chris
Cc: hrilling@norwalkct.edu; Common Council
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT--PLEASE SAVE the Cemetery Street Oak Tree

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

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

Good morning, Mr. Torre,

PLEASE do NOT cut down the beautiful oak tree on Cemetery Street.

The City of Norwalk has already cut down the beautiful gingko trees along Wall Street and the mature trees along Burnell Boulevard next to the Yankee to "improve" the neighborhood. It's now unpleasantly hot to walk along Burnell Boulevard on sunny days and the air quality has been affected as well.

Norwalk claims to be a "Tree City" and was recognized in 2012 by the Arbor Day Foundation "for its commitment to urban forestry." Norwalk received "The prestigious Growth Award honors environmental improvement and higher levels of tree care in Tree City US communities" (see <https://www.norwalkct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2315/Tree-City-USA-PR-2012>). The Arbor Day Foundation would be horrified by what the city is doing.

Rethink this attack on trees. It would be a boon for the city to retain its gorgeous hundred-year-old trees. They cannot be replaced or restored. That mature, healthy tree provides invaluable shade, is the home of many living creatures, absorbs emission fumes from the vehicles in the crowded streets, and adds grace and beauty to an area that is supposed to be "improved" by the development. The tree should be saved to enhance the

new buildings and make the neighborhood nature-friendly. And, of course, it's a Connecticut oak in the Charter Oak state.

Cutting down this tree would be tragic. Please find a way to save the tree.

Sincerely,
Vara Neverow

Byrd, Dilene

From: Jennifer Balliett <jennielpc@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 11:50 AM
To: Torre, Chris; Byrd, Dilene
Subject: Oak Tree in E Norwalk

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

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Hi,

I will be in attendance at the meeting this evening but wanted to contribute my opinion in saving the tree. We all know this entire construction project has been more than controversial from the size to the effects on the environment including the pond behind it. I'm not sure what concessions (if any) were made to ease the communities concerns with the project at large but feel that THIS could be one. As Norwalk has one of the smallest tree canopies in the state and we are making efforts to plant new trees, it seems counterintuitive to be taking down this beautiful mature tree.

I ask you to please reconsider.

Jennifer Balliett
6 Crossland Pl, Norwalk, CT 06851
203.564.0337

Byrd, Dilene

From: Lynnelle Jones <lynnelle@hathersage.com>
Sent: Monday, September 22, 2025 11:59 AM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Transparency requested for Oak Tree in East Norwalk decision

Importance: High

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

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Hello,

Thank you for sharing when and why the decision was made to remove the beautiful and healthy Oak tree at Cemetery St and Gregory Blvd?

Like many, I am opposed, strongly opposed, to taking down a perfectly healthy and beautiful tree on public property.

Thank you for sharing any information you have before the public hearing scheduled for this Wednesday evening. Surely it cannot surprise you that citizens were surprised at this new decision, which has yet to be explained.

Lynnelle Jones
203-866-5503

Byrd, Dilene

From: lormesp@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 8:35 AM
To: Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolé; Wennerstrand, Anne; info@eastnorwalk.org; dross56@aol.com
Subject: Save the Oak Tree

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

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I was very disappointed, but not surprised, to read your email regarding saving the tree on Cemetery Street. I think it's total BS. The tree is being removed because of the apartment complex that you shoved down our throats knowing how apposed we all were to it. To say it has to do with the train bridge is pretty funny. I hope you don't think we are all that stupid.

I will be at the meeting letting everyone know how much I appose the building and the cutting down of that tree.

Try to be honest since you haven't been since the beginning of the project. The reason the tree has to come down is because it's in the way of your disgusting building, it's blocking the driveway and so it has to go. Period. That's the only reason.

Regards,
Loretta Esposito
Emerson Street
East Norwalk

Byrd, Dilene

From: Gene T <gene_tiernan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 3:19 PM
To: Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolé;
COUNCILMEMBERAWENNERSTRAND@NORWALKCT.GO
Cc: Michelle Tiernan; Torre, Chris
Subject: Fw: ENO Tree Sacrifice

Some people who received this message don't often get email from gene_tiernan@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Forwarding - see below.

From: Gene T <gene_tiernan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 12:46 PM
To: ctorre@norwalkct.gov <ctorre@norwalkct.gov>
Cc: Michelle Tiernan <marty147147@yahoo.com>; Scott Goodwin <ascottg@gmail.com>; Marie Kenney <mariekenney8@gmail.com>; georgia Firman <gpfirman53@gmail.com>; Julie and Oliver Dizon <ojdizon@aol.com>; ShawnAndKaren Foster <shawnmailbox@yahoo.com>; TMBuono1994@gmail.com <TMBuono1994@gmail.com>; Scott Maxwell <scottlmaxwell@gmail.com>; news@nancyonnorwalk.com <news@nancyonnorwalk.com>
Subject: ENO Tree Sacrifice

Mr. Torre --

I join the chorus of voices upset by news of the seemingly imminent destruction of the beautiful, iconic oak tree that stands at the intersection of Cemetery Street and Gregory Boulevard. In the 27 years I've been an East Norwalk homeowner, and the decades prior when I would head to Calf Pasture Beach, this tree has served as a symbolic reminder of entering "the beach zone" — like crossing a bridge to one of the Long Island barrier beaches, this oak tree triggers emotions — as you pass it, it means you are heading toward an area that conjures good spirits.

The tree is surely a hundred years old, and likely older. Its beautiful surrounding gardens and the little path that traverses it reflect an "island" oasis as we transition from a commercial area to a residential waterfront area — a beauty break in the middle of blacktop, and a grounding vision of where East Norwalk is and where it came from. It belongs here and has resided here longer than any living resident, for sure.

Of course, it is beautiful -- anyone can see that. Obviously, it also provides shade — so badly needed in Norwalk and often touted as a priority for the city — surely no new planting could capture the value of this tree in our lifetime.

It is irreplaceable, and should not be destroyed.

And why would it be? Who benefits? Surely not the community of East Norwalk — I challenge you to find any East Norwalk resident who wants it removed or feels that it must be for the good of the community.

Will it be felled under the guise of "improving road safety?" "Calming traffic?" Any such argument would be ridiculous. Traffic can be calmed without destroying the beauty of such a tree. In my mind, having the tree there actually serves to calm traffic — it certainly does for me — taking it away would have a negative effect. Regardless — there could be many ways to "calm traffic" without destroying this wonder of nature that has survived so much human interaction to date.

Does the developer who has been given free landscape in the form of our city giving away a lane of our roadway, which allows the developer to exceed normal setback distances under the guise of enabling community parallel parking that disproportionately benefits the Mill Pond development over all others, want the tree removed for aesthetic reasons to improve the view for new tenants? That would certainly not be a good reason to take the tree away from the entire community to benefit one commercial interest.

In fact, with the height of the new development exceeding the 45' limit that was supposed to be maintained for the 3.5 story exemption given the builder (exception to 2.5 story zoned limit, and I guess since this side of the property is downhill, the 45' limit seems to only apply to highest topography of the site), this tree plays a vital role in counter-balancing the loss of skyline and nature diminished from the excessive height. Removing this tree stands to exaggerate the stark height differential from the cemetery and roadway. The new construction stands to cast long shadows, and so the tree stands to preserve life and color within the shadows, as well as ease the sightline from the new buildings to the cemetery and roadway throughout the day as the sun's positioning shifts.

There is no good, valid reason to take away this tree from a community standpoint. The community does not want it removed.

If the Norwalk community and governance believes trees have value, then killing this one would be an illegitimate sacrifice. Should this tree be killed, it is the exercise of killing a beautiful living thing that absolutely has a soul of its own and contributes to the holistic soul of East Norwalk. It would be done from a place of arrogance and conceit, not community benefit and respect — there is no valid reason to kill this healthy and beautiful tree that is a part of and should live its entire natural life in East Norwalk.

Please accept this email as vehement opposition to the inexcusable destruction of this tree from a long-time East Norwalk resident. I send it now as I understand all public comments are needed by September 24th. I expect you are hearing similar concerns from other East Norwalk residents, and so I appreciate your consideration of residents' concerns aligned with the irreplaceable majesty of this tree above all else.

Thank you.

--Gene Tiernan
5 Marvin Street

Byrd, Dilene

From: Martha O <marthaoutlaw@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 1:45 PM
To: Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolás; Wennerstrand, Anne
Subject: Tree at Cemetery and Gregory

[You don't often get email from marthaoutlaw@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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I won't be able to attend the hearing next Wednesday, so I am voicing my opinion here.

Granted I am not a traffic consultant, nor am I an arborist. But I pass this point multiple times most days, and this really is a beautiful tree. And the traffic is already dodgy. I would appreciate all efforts be made to save it and not create more traffic issues by adding parking on the street.

Allowing parking on the road there seems like a very bad idea. If that is the reason the tree may be removed, that is a very reason. People will be opening their doors, loading things and children into and out of the car, parallel parking, backing up etc.

There will already be additional traffic due to the appts. Anyone tenant or visitor or vendor parking there should park in the lot and the building should be responsible for accommodating that. One day I'm sure the lodge across the street will become apartments...and there will be even more traffic on those roads.

That's my two cents. Do your best.

Thank you,
Martha Outlaw

Byrd, Dilene

From: Allison Kaspriske <alpark2000@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 12:31 PM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Opposing Removal of Oak Tree from Cemetery Street

You don't often get email from alpark2000@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Chris,

I am writing to strongly oppose the removal of the beautiful oak tree at Cemetery Street and Gregory Boulevard. This tree is one of the few remaining natural features in an area that has already been significantly altered by recent development. The new apartment building, constructed without adequate setback from the street, has already diminished the character of the neighborhood and will soon add to traffic challenges by reducing a driving lane.

Preserving the oak tree is especially important for maintaining the beauty, livability, and environmental balance of East Norwalk. Mature trees provide shade, improve air quality, and contribute to the sense of place that makes our community special. Removing it would only compound the negative impacts of overdevelopment and further erode what residents value most about this area.

While I am unable to attend the upcoming meeting, I wanted to ensure my concerns are on record. I respectfully ask that the city take steps to preserve this tree for the benefit of the community.

Sincerely,

Allison Kaspriske, East Norwalk Resident

Byrd, Dilene

From: Tony Olmer <tonyolmer@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 12:19 PM
To: Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolé; Wennerstrand, Anne
Subject: Stop the Needless Removal of the Oak Tree
Attachments: site plan copy.jpg; Lofts-2023-03-11-at-4.54.37-PM.jpg; Cemetary Circle.jpg

You don't often get email from tonyolmer@sbcglobal.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed removal of the oak tree at the intersection of Cemetery Street and Gregory BLVD. Cutting down this healthy, mature tree would be a sad and unnecessary loss for our community.

There is ample room for the developer to provide both parking and roadway access without eliminating the oak. The proposed large brick-paved extension from the southeast corner of the cemetery is not essential, and preserving the tree should be prioritized.

It is also troubling that the sidewalks have already been narrowed to the point where the trees shown on the original renderings cannot be planted. Please do not add further injury by removing one of the few remaining natural assets of this area.

I respectfully urge you to protect the oak and ensure that this project enhances, rather than diminishes, the character and livability of our neighborhood.

There is enough room for the traffic pattern without cutting the oak. It needs to be redesigned with the tree in mind. Saving it would show that the city values livability and natural assets as much as construction.

Thank you for standing with residents on this.

Sincerely,
Anthony Olmer
6 4th Street
Norwalk, CT 06855
203-249-3415

Byrd, Dilene

From: Gabriella Najmy <gabriella.najmy@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 18, 2025 9:57 PM
To: Torre, Chris; Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Rilling, Harry; Eaddy, Nicolé; Wennerstrand, Anne
Cc: Michael Ramsey
Subject: Please Protect the Oak Tree

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

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Dear Council Members,

Our city has committed to becoming the greenest city in Connecticut. Removing a perfectly healthy, mature oak at the cemetery directly contradicts that goal. The original traffic plan did not call for its removal, making this loss unnecessary.

Mature oaks provide unmatched ecological and community benefits. They support wildlife, improve air quality, reduce runoff, and anchor our shared history. Once this tree is gone, it is gone forever.

Please uphold the city's commitment to sustainability and prevent its removal.

Your constituent,

Gabriella Najmy

Byrd, Dilene

From: Diane Cece <dmcece@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 18, 2025 8:42 AM
To: Valadares, Vanessa; Travers, James; Torre, Chris
Cc: Eaddy, Nicolé; Wennerstrand, Anne; East Norwalk Neighborhood Association
Subject: OAK TREE REMOVAL AT GREGORY/CEMETERY: REQUEST FOR FILES AND INFORMATION

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

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Good morning all,

East Norwalk Neighborhood Association is requesting the files regarding the proposal to remove the tree at the traffic island at Gregory & Cemetery Streets.

Multiple objections were filed with the City and a Public Hearing has been noticed for 9/24 at 6pm. Prior to the meeting, preferably by tomorrow, we would like all information leading to a decision to post this tree for removal.

Additionally, we would like to know the alternative plans that were or can be considered in order to save this tree.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention as the hearing is just 5 business days away.

Best,
Diane Cece
ENNA

Torre, Chris

From: Russell McCallum <russellmccallum@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 12:39 PM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Opposition to Removal Mature Oak Tree on Cemetery Street and Gregory Boulevard

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

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Hello,

I am a 68-year-old Norwalk native and a 24-year resident of East Norwalk, and I am *strongly opposed* to the removal of the mature oak tree on Cemetery Street and Gregory Boulevard.

This tree has been in its spot for ages and has efficiently been contributing to the limited tree canopy in the neighborhood. Chopping it down would be a travesty and, in my lifetime, I would not be able to benefit from any saplings planted in its place. ✪

I implore you to reconsider removing this tree and instead, very carefully study alternative methods of handling drainage for the area. The preservation of this tree is essential for us today and for future generations.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Russell McCallum

Byrd, Dilene

From: Lesly vega <leslyv613@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 22, 2025 10:34 AM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: East Norwalk Tree Removal - Does Norwalk Care about their Residents?

You don't often get email from leslyv613@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To whom it may concern,

I'm Lesly, a resident of Norwalk, specifically one that lives on Gregory Boulevard. I've lived in East Norwalk all 21 years of my life. These words I'm writing to you, do not express the amount of frustration I have due to not being able to physically attend the meeting on Wednesday. I write to you, my opinion and significance on the Oak tree removal as I'm Studying Abroad in London. On my drives home, whether that be from school, work, or a vacation thousands of miles away, the constant reminder of why I love living in Norwalk is that Oak tree on the corner of Cemetery St and Gregory blvd. After every drive back from the airport, that tree lets me know I'm only a couple hundred feet from home. When family members who visit from the other side of the country they always point out the oak tree as they don't get many in their area. Everything around Norwalk has had its changes and remodeling, which is all great and amazing for our community, but removing a part of nature shouldn't be something that we change. Removing the Wells Fargo bank and creating those new condos has been a big change in our town, what big difference will removing the oak tree do?

I love my walks to the East Norwalk train station for school as I cross right under the tree. Those walks during the day being able to soak in the nature is something I have taken for granted now living in London for 2 months. Be aware not only does this change mean something for older generations, younger generations can see these changes as well. I hope this message has created another perspective for everyone to view the significance of potential tree removal. Please make the right decision for the residents of Norwalk.

Kind Regards,
Lesly Vega

Byrd, Dilene

From: Robin Hayes <robinhayes@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 11:44 AM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Cemetery Street Tree

[You don't often get email from robinhayes@msn.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Mr. Torre,

Unfortunately I will not be able to make the meeting tonight regarding the oak tree on Cemetery Street, but I feel compelled to email you my opposing viewpoint to its removal.

As a resident of East Norwalk who's quality of life will be diminished EVERY day from the chaos and traffic the new apartment complex will cause, I implore you to keep that beautiful majestic tree and find a workaround to whatever proposed self-serving traffic debacle is planned.

We have been served an injustice by the zoning committee of Norwalk and we have no recourse but to accept it. The First Taxing District did such a lovely job with the upkeep of the now decimated island, and I always thought it was a wonderful gateway to the beach area. Please let us keep that natural beauty to continue to serve as a reminder that Norwalk wasn't always the urban sprawl that it has devolved into.

I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter.

Regards,
Robin Hayes

East Norwalk Neighborhood Association Board of Directors	We must preserve what little tree canopy we have left in the center of East Norwalk and not allow ANY mature, healthy trees to be removed unless & until all reasonable alternatives have been considered and NEVER for the benefit private, for-profit, property owners.
1 Aaron Levan	This tree brings beauty to the area. They have already removed much of the island that contained flowers. The people of East Norwalk do not want the tree removed
2 Kenneth Prince	You can't replace a tree like this. It adds so much to area
3 Tracy Auerbach	The overbuilding in Norwalk has to stop. The Mill Pond project is awful and now they want to destroy this beautiful mature tree.
4 Tracy Barclay	This beautiful tree predates us all, has watched over the cemetery and is the state tree. Enough of the city bending knees to developers and leaving this city void of mature trees.
5 Rosalie Canosa	Grew up in East norwalk and what has been happening is awful.
6 Liz Daher	
7 Jenn McMurrer	I live in East Norwalk
8 Jim Anderson	An icon of the city and beauty of nature.
9 Xavier Guzman	
10 Chumley Twist	
11 Joe Gallo	
12 Randy Lynch	This is a beautiful tree that should not suffer for the bad planning of the developer nor the town! The developer always intended to overbuild on the location to make more money for themselves. The town zoning commission should've been pushing back on the size and scope of the development. Instead we, the townsfolk, are being asked to sacrifice a beautiful tree for a greedy developer that knew nothing but greed!!!
13 Louisa Steinhardt	Please do not take down this beautiful old tree. It is important that our city maintain as many trees as possible...for the health of the city, protection against floods and the beauty trees bring. Don't let Norwalk be paved over.
14 Pamela Meskunas	The City is overdeveloping what was once a charming coastal community by building ginormous, unaffordable "affordable housing." This tree should not be another victim of overdevelopment.
15 Vincent Scicchitano	Cutting this tree down to accommodate an overdeveloped property is disgraceful
16 Lisa Mangan	Mature trees are irreplaceable and should be left standing
17 Dale Mayer	This is a majestic example of an Oak tree that should remain.
18 Lisa Fitzpatrick	
19 Glenn Martin	Please stop the overdevelopment of Norwalk, specifically East Norwalk.
20 Brian Fitzpatrick	
21 Jocelyn Cole	
22	

23 Kat Anderson	This is the only mature public street tree in this urban neighborhood, it would be terrible to lose it.
24 Chelsea King	Trees are important!
25 Abby Beaumont	The developers got their way with the massive complex there. They're getting greedy with the tree. Leave the tree alone, let us have a win. It's ridiculous.
26 Patricia Wallace	This tree is important to East Norwalk. It's healthy & beautiful. Let's find a work around to save it.
27 Kimberly Ann Bastoni	This tree is part of Norwalk and should not be taken down. We are losing the charm to our east norwalk neighborhood. Keep this tree please.
28 Sharon Maddern	
29 Matt Gifford	What they are doing to the cemetery circle with no input from us East Norwalk residents is comical. This is ruining our neighborhood and we have no say in it, what's going to happen when we have summer beach traffic? Is anyone thinking about the people that chose this wonderful area and now it's being destroyed? So sad
30 Alexandra Featherston	This tree is beautiful and mature and should not be removed!
31 Alex Ross	This tree is a beautiful addition to the neighborhood and helps to blend the mega complex that was erected in that small space.
32 Jan N Broome	We need to preserve oak trees. The City is taking down too many large, established native trees, which implies that City leadership and local developers do not honor the value of this tree in the ecosystem.
33 Joyce Abate	This is not just a tree, it's part of our neighborhood's character and history. Once it's gone, it's gone forever. Planting three 8" caliper trees will not replace its value in our lifetimes.
34 Norah skutnik	This project can be an example of progress that works with nature, not against it. We want to preserve the neighborhood look and feel of this community with mature trees and as much green space as possible
35 Justina Healey	This tree SHOULD never be cut down. PERIOD!!
36 Jane Shanahan	This is a viable healthy tree. Norwalk is planting trees for loss of trees.
37 Kimberly Ruff	Nature needs protection from greedy, unisightful corporations.
38 Lisanne Franco	Alternative solutions need to be considered by the DPW for the drainage project before destroying this invaluable tree. Technology exists that can be used to avoid having to excavate.
39 Jeffrey Bortolot	
40 Jennifer Young	Removing that beloved oak tree was not part of the original approved plans to my knowledge and they are trying to sneak this in. That oak is very healthy and the developers should have made plans that help preserve it not destroy it. Mature landscaping is an asset to this community and green spaces should be preserved. This project is already overpowering the natural landscape we need balance.
41 Aileen Murphy	

42 Dana Markiewicz	<p>It's not right that the cemetery rotary oak tree is even being considered to be chopped down. That new apartment complex is taking enough from east Norwalk already - more limited access if any at all to the public water space behind it now! An ENTIRE lane for parallel parking which will be incredibly dangerous and a complete hazard with the traffic on that street and now the tree! It's too much - the tree and current rotary should remain in tact. It's as long standing a Norwalk resident as any of us!</p> <p>All,</p> <p>I would like to add my support to the effort leave the tree as it stands. Visually it enhances the corner and adds maturity and style to a now grossly overdeveloped housing project. This is, as you know, the gateway to East Norwalk and the beach. With so many passing cars and people the tree softens the impact of the development. W can only imagine how stark and bare this corner would look without it.</p> <p>I see that there is an underground infrastructure component used as a reason to cut down the tree. It is my experience as one who is in construction for 40 + years that a workaround is always possible. Given the outcry for the saving the tree it's time to task the engineers to come up with a solution for this.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>David Paqua</p>
43 David Paqua	To save tree and area from developers
44 Patrick Edmonds	This tree should be saved.
45 Susan Hawley	City planning should aim to maintain any existing natural features and work in harmony with the environment. Removal of mature trees should be an absolute last resort. Removing this tree in particular is unnecessary and would have a significant negative impact.
46 Julie McNulty	
47 Gary Jacobson	
48 Joe Balestriere	The city has destroyed enough of our character as Norwalk. Removing beautiful, iconic fixtures, let alone those that are part of nature, is a travesty. Let's put our attention as a city on better things than destroying nature
49 Gerry Shanahan	This is a healthy beautiful tree and mitigates some of ugliness of the massive construction of Mill Pond
50 Jamie Garcia	The tree is beautiful, I pass by it everyday.
51 Ashley Camiglio	
52 Valeria Piasecki	

<p>53 Emma Dupont</p> <p>54 Lynda Crowell</p> <p>55 Tom Hight</p> <p>56 PJ Kokias</p>	<p>East Norwalk can evolve, but we have to respect and take care of the nature that was here before our developments! It seems fully possible to save this tree as a perfect median in the intersection. It's beautiful!!</p> <p>There is too much building and not enough preservation of nature in Norwalk right now</p> <p>This tree is an important and beloved part of our East Norwalk community. It stands as a natural landmark that welcomes us into the neighborhood and adds beauty, shade, and character to the area. As a mature and healthy oak, it represents the kind of thoughtful, long-term growth we should be preserving—not removing.</p> <p>Trees like this are rare in our part of town, and we have few that match its size, age, or presence. Its location is ideal, and there is no clear reason for it to be taken down.</p> <p>We understand and support change that genuinely benefits the community—but removing this tree is not one of those changes.</p> <p>Please reconsider. Do not take down this tree.</p>
<p>57 Chelsea Walsh</p> <p>58 Caitlin March</p> <p>59 Claire O'Neill</p> <p>60 Mary Romanillo</p> <p>61 Mimi Chang</p> <p>62 Taylor Gramps</p> <p>63 Gabriella Najmy</p> <p>64 Brad Anderson</p> <p>65 Andrea Gores</p>	<p>Protect the natural beauty of east Norwalk!!!</p> <p>We as a community need to support preserving the oak trees especially this mature Oak tree . These mature trees provide natural beauty to our public spaces , and cannot be replaced . PLEASE SAVE this oak tree !</p>

	<p>I live in East Norwalk and see/drive by this beautiful, healthy, mature tree on a very regular basis. As this tree is being removed exclusively as a result of the new development that replaced the bank across from the cemetery, if it must be removed (and I do believe there may be other solutions), the DEVELOPER should be responsible for having the tree transplanted elsewhere within Norwalk for the environment and for the public to enjoy. This should have been designed prior to the construction of the development, NOT as an afterthought.</p> <p>Mature trees are important for many reasons</p> <p>We need to keep nature in our city and an iconic tree like this needs to stay!!'</p>
<p>67 Lisa Lisa Roger 68 Laura Varga Daum 69 Phillip Loughton</p>	
<p>70 Theo Olmer</p>	<p>After reading both sides of the argument I strongly feel that all possible options for the drainage project should be explored before cutting down the tree. It is a mature healthy oak that enriches the East Norwalk community.</p>
<p>71 Kathleen Boland 72 Pamela Anne Mahon 73 Gina Arena</p>	<p>We've lost so much greenery, especially established full grown trees, due to One Cemetery being built. Please help us retain the beauty of East Norwalk along with the health reasons for maintaining these beautiful trees that make our neighborhood the desirable place it is to live.</p> <p>Protect the beauty and charm of East Norwalk. The culvert can be redirected.</p>
<p>74 Jessie McGarty 75 Thomas J Farrington 76 Carolyn Wheeler</p>	<p>This beautiful mature tree is an asset to this area. It takes many years to get to this size. Norwalk needs more trees, not less. Save this tree!!!</p>
<p>77 Marlene Bortolot</p>	<p>This tree anchors the merging traffic with an appeal that speaks to the character of the neighborhood - greatly scarred already by the new building. Without the tree, the ocean of asphalt will border the cemetery and disrupt the wee bit of tranquility which is a better pairing with the spirit of the cemetery. I have been a homeowner for 20 yrs in ENO. To see the construction encroaching our neighborhood has been rough. Losing the tree so that traffic lanes work better for the new construction should not happen. Solve the drain pipe solution differently.</p>
<p>78 Margaret B Shiverick</p>	<p>With so much development, Let's keep some parts of the green and traditional views of the East Norwalk that was the original reason many of us came here</p>
<p>79 Jillian Sakovits</p>	

	<p>This magnificent, healthy oak has stood proudly in the circle for many years, serving as a living gateway to Gregory Boulevard. After reviewing both sides of the argument, it is clear that the drainage pipe could be rerouted to preserve the tree. Too often, engineers take the path of least resistance—what is a single tree to them? But for those of us who live here, this oak is a treasure.</p> <p>At this stage, redesigning the drainage is not only possible but also the right thing to do, especially given how controversial this project has been from the start. Please do not allow engineers, who have no lasting stake in this community, to destroy something so valuable for the convenience of a drain pipe that can—and should—be relocated.</p> <p>We need our trees! From what I see this is a perfectly healthy tree, let it live.</p> <p>Grew up in Norwalk for first 22 years. Lived in South Norwalk and East Norwalk. The level of tree destruction is unacceptable. The good work done to ensure affordable housing for residents should never come at the needless expense of environmental destruction especially when minimal effort is needed to save this tree. Do better please.</p> <p>There is no good reason to eliminate this gorgeous tree. The community benefits from having it - fresher air, shade, beauty, haven for birds, and joy for everyone who passes under it. Please do not let developer greed take this lovely piece of character away from what little remains of this intersection.</p> <p>I grew up for 15 years on Gregory Blvd and it constantly saddens me to see just how over developed East Norwalk has become. It used to be a section of town where families and wildlife flourished together. Now it resembles a concrete jungle, suited for apartments and commuters drifting through town.</p> <p>I am a life long East-Norwalker, and this Oak has been here longer than me. Save the Oak.</p> <p>Norwalk needs to do a better job preserving Natural and historical treasures that make the city what it is. There's a shortage of adult trees in East Norwalk, everything should be done to preserve it.</p>
80	Anthony Olmer
81	Cristina Mendez
82	Kathleen Marsh
83	Emily Hadin
84	Jack Snedaker
85	Brenda Grant
86	Jamie Freitas
87	Emily Barbara Callahan
88	Stacey Hebert
89	Eddie donnelly
90	Ellise Rose
91	Bridget E McCallum
92	Toni Hernandez
93	Terrill McGoldrick

	<p>This petition is important to me not only one the tree does not bother the community but we are losing so much of Norwalk value to developers. The peaceful environment in one peaceful place be one time had in Norwalk, Connecticut.. I live directly across from the tree. I can see it from my window every morning. It's beautiful. It's amazing. It shows the true definition of what mother nature can do. We should fight to keep the oak tree.</p> <p>We need to save our trees</p> <p>Large trees are priceless! This tree was in the original plan ! YOU MUST NOT CUT THAT TREE DOWN! Keep to the plan that was passed by ZONING!</p> <p>Norwalk has got to start taking accountability for destroying the natural world.</p> <p>There is absolutely no need to kill this beautiful tree. If the developer needed more room they should have built a smaller complex that actually fit in the space. Shame on those who approved this over sized complex. Stop unnecessary tearing down and building of unnecessary and unwanted structures....to preserve the so - called coastal feel of norwalk</p> <p>It's a beautiful tree. Save it. Don't just take the easy, lazy way.</p> <p>It's very important because trees are very important for our environment. The tree is healthy and shouldn't have to be cut down for developments. Please don't cut this tree down.</p> <p>The City Government should seriously consider the views of East Norwalk residents.</p> <p>This a beautiful mature tree that adds character to the neighborhood. It should be preserved rather than cut down to appease a greedy developer and their enablers.</p> <p>This tree is a staple of our city and the East Norwalk Community.</p>
94 Xavier Medel	
95 Eric LaBonte	
96 Aidan Whalen	
97 Jalna Jaeger	
98 Bonnie Summers	
99 Roberta DiBisceglie	
100 Amy Sornatale	
101 Joanne Rondello	
102 Tina Clinchy	
103 David McGoldrick	
104 Terence John McGarty	
105 Katie Streit	
106 Anne Mulligan	
107 Paola Mejia	
108 Emma Jacobson	
109 Mary Jo Romano	
110 Lynn Dacey	
111 Alex Knopp	
112 John Deacy	
113 Allison Latour	
114 Valerie Rocco	
115 Richard Bonenfant	

<p>116 Tiffany Rabe Dilorio</p>	<p>Green space History Shade</p>
<p>117 Dianna Santora</p>	<p>This is a perfect tree in every respect. It is mature, healthy, strong (it is an oak), symmetrical, and is a prime example of what a specimen tree should be. I do not understand why it has to be removed, since it is not bothering anyone or in the way of anyone (except for the developer across the street). Norwalk has gone absolutely insane with allowing all the development over the past umpteen years. The end result is more people, more cars, more traffic, more congestion, more air pollution. One can barely get anywhere at any time. I-95 is consistently jammed, even outside of "normal" rush hours. The local streets are routinely under construction for one thing or another. Enough is enough already!</p>
<p>118 Gina Balducci</p>	<p>119 Richard Contolini</p>

Byrd, Dilene

From: marlenejan (null) <marlenejan@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 28, 2025 10:45 PM
To: Torre, Chris
Subject: Oak Tree

[You don't often get email from marlenejan@aol.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

Dear Tree Warden Chris Torre,

Thank you for everything you do for our community. I appreciate the forum addressing this beloved tree and I learned a lot from listening to all facilitators and participants.

I have been a Norwalk resident for 28 years. My address is 2 Gilbert Street, Norwalk CT, 06855. I see the oak tree multiple times a day.

I write to ask that you please defer any immediate plan or decision to remove the tree and that you give extensive consideration to the other options presented at the meeting. I think that it will be well worth the time and effort involved in reconsidering.

Thank you for your discernment in this matter.

Marlene De Bellis