

**TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
SEPTEMBER 23, 2025, AT 6:00 PM.
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Dilene Byrd at dbyrd@norwalkct.gov to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

Attendance: Richard Whitehead, Vice Chair
 Peter Viteretto
 Gay MacLeod
 Sonja Oliver

Staff: Paul Sotnik, Deputy Tree Warden
 Sarah Cruz, Arborist/ Horticulturalist

Others: Jeff Scheer, Norwalk Tree Alliance

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Whitehead called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Whitehead called the roll, and all those listed in the attendance were present. There was a quorum present.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A. Guests at committee meetings may speak to any item on the agenda. (Comments shall be limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker.)**

James Gallagher- Wallace Avenue

Mr. Gallagher asked why the tree stakes had been placed in the ground on Wallace Avenue the previous week.

Michael Garvey- 16 Wallace Avenue

Mr. Garvey stated that he had the same concerns regarding the tree stakes on Wallace Avenue that Mr. Gallagher just referred to.

Mr. Whitehead said the stakes typically mark the locations for new tree plantings. Ms. Cruz said she has received service requests and emails from folks in the Marvin Beach area. She provided an overview of the tree planting program and said the city is still in the process of having a consultant complete a citywide tree inventory. When the consultant was working on the inventory, they identified areas with very low tree canopy cover that would be suitable for potential tree plantings, including East Norwalk and the Marvin Beach area. She has been attempting to get in contact with people in the Marvin Beach neighborhood who may have been involved in the tree planting program in the past to discuss the tree planting locations, but she has heard everyone's concerns so will be reassessing and no new locations have been staked and there will be no plantings done until it is reassessed to ensure what is planted is very strategic and takes everyone's feedback into account such as the concern with waterfront views. There are very strict perimeters on what gets planted and where. She suggested that anyone with concerns

submit a request to customer service, as that is the best way for her to follow up with the contact information.

Mr. Whitehead requested that this item be added to the agenda going forward until it is resolved.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- A. Approve the minutes of the August 26, 2025, Tree Advisory Committee meeting.**

**** MS. OLIVER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.
** MS. MAC LEOD SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. REPORTS

- A. Fall 2025 Tree Planting Updates**

Ms. Cruz provided an update, stating that to date, 70 trees have been ordered. She is primarily working from the tree requests and has staked the locations that pertain to the public tree requests within the actual right-of-way. She is now working on the potential planting locations received from the consultant. She said that between this week and last week, excluding the Marvin Beach area, there have been 26 locations staked.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Specification for Structural Soils**

Ms. Cruz said she had emailed Mr. Sotnik and Mr. Viteretto regarding the potential creation of a city standard specification for structural soils. She said she had sent a CTDOT specification that has been used on engineering projects. She said she has received clarification that the structural soil currently being used in the tree pits for the Wall Street project is not the final planting material. Mr. Viteretto asked if the same material would run under the sidewalks entirely. Mr. Sotnik said that from what he looked at, it would be two different materials. Mr. Viteretto said this is where the value of structural soil meets conflicts. Structural soil is placed under the concrete to support it and may extend into the tree pit. Mr. Sotnik said they will need to see what the specification is, and as Ms. Cruz mentioned, they would like to come up with a standard

DOT formation specification that can be used every time, but the material has to be defined. Mr. Viteretto said the purpose is to provide free growth below concrete walks so they are not compacted to the point where tree roots can't expand. That is the purpose of structural soils, among other supporting mechanisms, to support concrete and roadways. That is why he wants to broaden the understanding, and he believes the committee needs to do so. However, this is a good start. Mr. Sotnik said that he and Mr. Viteretto would work together to develop a final specification.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Landscape Plan for Richards Ave/West Cedar St Roundabout

Ms. MacLeod said a new roundabout is scheduled to be built on Richards Avenue at West Cedar Street, near CT State University in Norwalk. She has been working with Ben Yeung of TMP. When she heard about the roundabout earlier this year, she had asked if some green areas could be included in the construction. Early this week, the drawings were sent, and a green spot was visible in the center of the roundabout. As of now, that is all that has been confirmed. She will be attending the scheduled public meeting, which will be held next Tuesday, September 30th, at 5:30 P.M., in the community theater located on the east campus of CT State University in Norwalk. The design concept will be shared, and community feedback will be collected with the support of the city's engineering design consultant. She provided an overview of the questions she will be asking at the public meeting. She asked if anyone on the committee had anything they would like to discuss now, and if not, she requested that they send it to her by email.

Mr. Whitehead said his understanding is that with structural soils, if they have a green island, they will not want structural soils beneath the roadway because they don't want to encourage roots to grow there. He asked Ms. MacLeod to inquire about the dimensions of the green spot. It's important to know they are probably going to limit any root development within that dimension, which is probably going to determine the size of the plant and or tree that can be accommodated within that dimension.

Mr. Viteretto suggested that when Ms. Mac Leod inquires about the watering, to ask about the water supply source that will be available for long-term use, who will be responsible for paying for it, and how it will be metered.

Ms. Oliver joined the meeting at 6:20 PM.

VIII. NORWALK TREE ALLIANCE UPDATES

Mr. Scheer reported that they have planted 300 trees this year, which is a record, and thanked the committee for their continued support of Norwalk residents and for providing the locations to plant. They will be continuing into the spring planting, so for anyone who has not received a tree this year, it will be on the list for the spring.

Mr. Sotnik stated that the DPW Touch a Truck event is scheduled for Saturday, September 27, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Ms. Oliver said she received a call from a resident at 32 Union Avenue who stated that she has been trying to get in contact with Mr. Sotnik and Ms. Cruz regarding a free tree. Ms. Cruz said she spoke to her this morning, and she will be meeting with her tomorrow.

Mr. Viteretto said he has received three calls regarding the tree removal on Cemetery Street. Mr. Sotnik said a public hearing is scheduled for tomorrow at 6:00 PM, where this will be discussed.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

**** MR. VITERETTO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd