

**TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
AGENDA  
FEBRUARY 25, 2025, AT 6:00 PM.  
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

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



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

Attendance:           Erica Kipp, Chair  
                              Richard Whitehead, Vice Chair  
                              Peter Viteretto  
                              Gay MacLeod

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

Others:                 Jeff Scheer,  
                              Matthew Hellman, Transmission Arborist, Vegetation Management,  
                              Eversource  
                              Sam Berg, Eversource

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

## **II. ROLL CALL**

Ms. Cruz called the roll, and all listed on the attendance were 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.)**

There were no public comments this evening.

## **IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

- A. **Approve the minutes of the January 28th, Tree Advisory Committee meeting.**

**\*\*MS. MACLEOD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

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

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

## **V. REPORTS**

- A. **2025 Eversource Distribution Tree Trimming Permit**

Mr. Berg reported on the scheduled maintenance trimming for 2025 and said it is very light this year. There will be approximately 16 miles, compared to almost 80 miles last year, so it will not be extensive.

Mr. Sotnik said that staff met with Eversource on January 22, 2025, to review and issue the permit.

Mr. Berg presented the mapping for the permit that was issued. The backbone mileage for the three-phased lines will be 7 ½ miles, and the lateral mileage will be 4.3 miles, so there is just over 11 miles total of tree trimming for the area. He shared the circuit areas they will work in and that they have started in the substation at Route 123 and New Canaan Avenue. Lewis Tree Company will be doing the trimming, and the process has not changed. They will get consent from the neighboring abutting properties for the work.

Mr. Whitehead asked why there was such a decrease in the trimming this year. Mr. Berg said the trimming is done on a four-year rotation and cycles through, so some of the towns that are heavy

this year will be lighter next year, and the other towns that are lighter this year will be heavier next year. He said they also select circuits within that cycle that are performing poorly based on historical outage data that is tree related.

Mr. Viteretto said that, in his opinion, the three-phased lines in the Silvermine area are done regularly and that the committee is cognizant about maintaining tree canopy. He asked how Eversource has input into the tree management plan so we will know how to create streetscapes that can work with the high-tension power lines because we have not seen that happen. We have spoken with Eversource over several years on managing and planning tree canopy cover, so they are not in conflict with any of the power lines, particularly the high-power lines, which are more critical to larger groups of people. Mr. Berg said planning and species selection will help progress in the future, but trees are on their timeline and will take a long time to grow and get to a canopy cover. As a joint effort, managing those trees on the city and Eversource's sides is another answer, and noted that ground to sky pruning no longer exists for roadside distribution. Mr. Viteretto said he thinks it may be more about looking at planting trees on the opposite sides of the streets as well, and we work with Eversource on some level. He said that selective removal at the ground level of the trees that will eventually affect the power lines is not discussed much. He asked if there is a way to strategize where we go down to the ground and think about what our long-term should be. Mr. Berg said that location means a lot and suggested looking at and walking to those locations and seeing what can be done together.

Mr. Scheer said that the Norwalk Tree Alliance is happy to partner with the city and Eversource to help with the education and outreach piece.

Mr. Sotnik said the mapping and permit will be posted on the website.

## **B. 2025 Eversource Transmission Tree Trimming Permit**

Mr. Hellman said he manages the vegetation underneath the transmission lines for southwest Connecticut. This year, a maintenance project on the transmission lines goes over the Metro-North railroad through the City of Norwalk. He shared the map, provided an overview, and said it is approximately 4 ½ miles, and the transmission lines are on the north and south side of the Metro North train tracks for most of the lines in Norwalk. The scope of work for the maintenance entails removing trees and removing the incompatibles within 25' from the outside conductor. Their cycles run on a 4-year cycle, and even though the last cycle just ended in 2023, we are starting the 4-year cycle because of this project. This year, we will just be pruning new growth and cutting the saplings, which will not significantly impact the town. The work will go much faster, and we will begin working in Norwalk within the next month.

Mr. Hellman discussed the outreach efforts and said a letter will be sent to all the butters describing work occurring and attempts to meet with property owners to review the scope of work on or near their property. He said if anyone has any questions, they can call 888-673-9943 or email [ctvegmaintenance@eversource.com](mailto:ctvegmaintenance@eversource.com)

Mr. Viteretto said there is an opportunity to team with the public sector to underplant the margin to improve its appearance and ecological stability. Mr. Hellman noted this project is unique because it is on the CTDOT property.

Mr. Sotnik said that staff also met with Mr. Hellman on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the permit was issued and will now be posted on the website.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business discussed.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. ANNOUNCEMENT: TREE MASTER PLAN**

#### **DRAFT TRE MASTER PLAN NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE:**

**[HTTPS://WWW.NORWALKCT.GOV/3649/TREE-MASTER-PLAN](https://www.norwalkct.gov/3649/tree-master-plan)**

#### **- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND WORKSHOP COMING IN MARCH**

Mr. Whitehead said that Arbor Day is April 25<sup>th</sup> and will be doing Arbor Day cleanup with the local tree companies and working on the NRVT as we have in the last couple of years. Last year, the northern section was done along Riverside Avenue, and two years ago, the southern section was done. This year, the center section will be targeted, meeting at 40 Cross Street, and doing the trees along the river. He noted that this is not a public event and will be closing the section of the trail where they will be working. We are at the preliminary planning stages but are targeting Wednesday, April 23, 2025, so as not to conflict with Arbor Day or Earth Day celebrations. He said he will provide the committee with an update at the next meeting.

Ms. Kipp said Earth Day event on the green will be held on Saturday, April 26, 2025. Mr. Sotnik said that Ms. Cruz has been working with the planning committee and attending the bi-weekly meetings. Ms. Kipp noted that the registration form is due by April 3, 2025.

Ms. Cruz said the workshop for the Tree Master Plan is scheduled for March 20, 2025, in the Community Room at City Hall and will be held from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM and will focus on how to implement the strategies recommendations in the Master Plan, and will be looking at the tree planting strategies and will also be doing an educational activity and discussing maintenance as there are over an estimated 25,000 public trees in Norwalk. She said the link is now posted on the city's website, and any updates would be provided there. She said the day prior, there would be an internal workshop between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM at city hall and invited the committee members to attend. She noted that Eversource is an essential stakeholder in the plan, as are any other agencies interacting with trees in the city. She plans to reach out to get as much engagement as possible. She noted that the plan is available in draft form on the website.

Mr. Whitehead hopes Eversource will participate in the Arbor Day cleanup event. Mr. Berg said they will donate two crews for the cleanup.

Ms. Cruz said that Ms. MacLeod was officially sworn in as a member of the Tree Advisory Committee to fill the recent vacancy.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*MS. MACLEOD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

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

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

The meeting was adjourned 6:50 PM.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MARCH 25, 2025**

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd