

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

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



Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" will need to register in advance and use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. Please find the information using the link above.



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  
                              Gay MacLeod  
                              Sonya Oliver

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

Others:                 Jeff Scheer, Norwalk Tree Alliance

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Kipp called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

## II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Kipp 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.)**

There were no public comments this evening.

## IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- A. **Approve the minutes of November 24, 2024, and February 25, 2025, Tree Advisory Committee meetings.**

**\*\*MS. MACLEOD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 26, 2024, MEETING.**

**\*\* MR. WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**\*\*MS. MACLEOD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 25, 2025, MEETING.**

**\*\* MR. WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

## V. REPORTS

- A. **Tree Master Plan: Workshops and Feedback**

Ms. Cruz said the draft master plan was completed in January of this year. Therefore, last Wednesday, a workshop was held with city staff from various departments and external stakeholders, which was very well received. She provided an overview of the workshop and stated that 1,100 trees would need to be planted annually to meet their goal, adding that the exercise was helpful for participants to see. On Thursday, a public workshop was held, and it had a good turnout. It was nice to have organizations that already work within Norwalk. She mentioned that a brief survey was conducted following each workshop, and she received feedback on how to prioritize the recommendations. She noted that they will continue to raise the tree canopy by 10%, and currently, there is 43% tree cover across Norwalk. The goal is to reach 53% by 2053. The consultant has done a very good job on the plan and would like to receive feedback from the committee and others by the end of

next week, as they plan to present it to the Common Council for adoption the first week in April.

Ms. Kipp asked if the goal of planting 1,100 trees annually was based on the 53% projection. Ms. Cruz said “yes,” stating that the city would be responsible for planting 70% of what the goal should be, and 30% of the plantings would be led by developers, the community, private owners, and others. Still, the city hopes to plant 1,100 trees each year, and for reference, is currently planting 400-500 annually.

Ms. Kipp requested that photos of the workshop be shared on the website, as people need to see that action is being taken.

Mr. Whitehead asked if the goal of 1,100 trees takes into account the tree's growth rate. Ms. Cruz said “yes,” and the plan includes assumptions that were considered, including the number of trees that will be lost each year.

Ms. Oliver joined the meeting at 6:15 PM.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business discussed.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Arbor Day Celebration 2025: Cranbury Elementary School, Friday, April 25, 2025 (Arbor Day)**

Ms. Cruz said the annual Arbor Day celebration will be taking place at Cranbury Elementary School, and they are very excited about it. Mr. Sotnik provided an overview of the event and stated that the ceremony will take place on April 25th from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM. Ms. Kipp said it is nice to give out seedlings, but a vast majority of them don't end up being planted and suggested providing educational materials instead.

### **B. Arbor Day Clean-Up 2025: Location: NRVT, 40 Cross Street, Wednesday, April 23, 2025.**

Mr. Whitehead said that the Arbor Day cleanup event will take place on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. However, it is not a public event, and private tree companies and Eversource will be donating their time and staff to assist with tree cleanup. This will be the third year they will be working in the new section of the NRVT.

### **C. Planting List and Species Selection**

Ms. Cruz said that during the last couple of meetings, the committee discussed refining the species list for the contract and shared the list of trees included in the current contract. Ms. Kipp said that Ms. Cossuto had spent a great deal of time putting together the scientific and common names of the trees, whether they were native or non-native, and a photo of the tree, which was helpful for most people who don't know what a majority of the trees look like, which would be a great starting point. Mr. Sotnik asked if she had a copy of that and, if so, if she could distribute it to the committee.

Ms. MacLeod asked Ms. Kipp if she could find a student to assist with putting together a guide with the species on the list. Ms. Kipp said "yes". Ms. Cruz said that she is in the process of hiring an intern if students are looking for an internship. Ms. Kipp requested that Ms. Cruz send her the job description so that she could share it with her students. Ms. MacLeod noted that, in addition to trees, shrubs will also be included on the list.

Mr. Whitehead said the planting list is constantly being modified because we should not plant trees that are known to be problematic such as species affected by pests, so the list is constantly evolving.

Ms. Cruz asked the committee members to review the current list to be discussed at the next meeting.

### **D. SONO School- Opportunities for Tree Planting**

Ms. Cruz stated that Ms. Oliver had contacted her regarding some of the residents near San Vincenzo Place, expressing interest in the potential to plant trees at or around the SONO School. She said she is currently working with the Superintendent of Recreation and Parks to determine the landscaping plan and to gauge residents' interest in identifying potential tree planting locations.

Mr. Scheer stated that on April 11, 2025, from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM, a poetry event related to trees will take place at the Rowayton Library.

Mr. Scheer asked anyone on the committee who has a location for tree plantings on private property to let him know, as the Tree Alliance would be happy to help. Ms. Cruz said they definitely will because a majority of the funding for the spring is solely for South Norwalk. Mr. Scheer said they will be planting in the 6<sup>th</sup> Taxing District and will also continue the partnership with the Third Taxing District.

Mr. Scheer said the Tree Master Plan workshop event was a very good event.

Mr. Sotnik stated that the Arbor Day Foundation has notified us that Norwalk has received recertification as a Tree City USA for the 21st consecutive year and also received the Growth Award for the 19th straight year.

Ms. Kipp said that the CT State Norwalk campus has also received the Tree Campus award for the 6<sup>th</sup> year. Mr. Whitehead asked if that is the only Tree Campus award for the state. Ms. Kipp said “yes” other than UCONN.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

- \*\* MR. WHITEHEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- \*\* MS. MACLEOD SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd