

Mayor's Neighborhood Preservation Meeting
10/04/06 meeting minutes

Attendees: Richard A. Moccia, Mayor, David Shockley Chairman, Michael Moccia, Parks Department; John Lomba, Fire Department; Harry Rilling, Police Chief; Connie Blair, Customer Service; Terri Tylo, Tracey Area; Moravia Langley, Meadow Street; Donnie Sellers, Lexington Ave.; Al Raymond, Spring Hill/Hospital area; John and Dorothy Romanelli, Harbor Shores; Katherine Griffing, Jim Clark of Golden Hill Association; Laurel Lindstrom, ENNA; Maribeth Becker, CNNA, Bob Wagman, West Norwalk; Christine Abraham, Nancy Whitmore, Helen Bryan, West Main Street.

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m. with review of the 9/06/06 meeting minutes. No changes were made to the minutes which were approved.

The chairman stressed the need to proceed with reviewing the items listed on the agenda first, with any new items to be heard later in the meeting under the "New Business" category on the agenda. Members were also reminded to log their neighborhood concerns with the Customer Service Bureau for possible resolution prior to placing them on the agenda for discussion. With this practice more meeting time can be spent focusing on the neighborhood concerns requiring City staff intervention.

The Chairman announced the Public Works "bulky waste" pilot program scheduled for Saturday 10/28 targeting residents who receive Monday garbage pickup. Connie Blair of Customer Service presented a one page "Bulk Waste Collection Pilot Program" general information handout sheet which was distributed to the group. The targeted area was stated to be in the hospital area which included the Spring Hill/Hospital Neighborhood Association.

The Broad River Neighborhood Association noise ordinance agenda item was reviewed. Chief Rilling informed the group that the City of Norwalk Noise Control Ordinance was designed to protect the residents from noise disturbances which could degrade the quality of life. Loud noises were restricted to daytime hours; 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. He indicated that measurement of noise is normally conducted with the use of a decibel meter; however the ordinance also reads that a noise disturbance is any sounds which unreasonably annoys or disturbs the area. He indicated that garbage pick up at 4:00 a.m. which causes a disturbance to the neighborhood violates the City's noise ordinance and should be stopped. He requested that a spokesperson from the Broad River Neighborhood Association call his office with the names and pick up locations of the garbage contractors suspected to be in violation.

The chairman reported that the telephone poles by the fence at the Harris Street park were examined by Hal Alvord of DPW who determined that they have a manufacture name only, and that he is in the process of determining if they belong to CL&P, Cablevision, or AT&T. He will follow up.

The chairman informed the group that the DPW traffic management section is reviewing the request for no parking signs on Grand Street. The chairman also reported on the status of the old MBI building at 80 Fair Street which has become an unauthorized adolescent hangout and dumping area. The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency now owns the building and is in the process of working a purchase agreement with a potential developer. The AIC Program community service has removed the graffiti on three occasions. The building has been secured, and the power to the parking lot lights has been restored to deter vandals from visiting this area. There are plans to cut down the overgrowth and remove the rubbish to help make this area more visibly agreeable to the neighborhood.

Several concerns from the Tracey Area Neighborhood Association will be removed from the agenda. The first is the rear structure at 22 Union Ave which has been inspected by the Zoning Department, Health Department, and Code Enforcement and found not to be in violation of any current city codes. Further discussion took place regarding the multifamily home at 5 North Avenue as neighbors believe that this house has too many living units. The Zoning Department reviewed their records and determined that this is a six family house which passed recent Zoning inspection. The Health Department was to provide a report regarding possible rodents at 3 Cannon Street however this information was not available for this meeting.

Donnie Sellers from the Lexington Avenue Neighborhood Association reported that he was grateful that the broken street sign on Lexington Avenue was repaired.

The chairman reported that the Zoning Department conducted an inspection to the property of 181 East Avenue and informed those responsible that the repeated sale of automobiles from the parking lot was in violation of city codes. This activity then moved from the parking lot to the street where Zoning officials have no jurisdiction. The chairman has since met with a tenant from the building and this practice has ceased. This item has been removed from the agenda.

There was discussion regarding the increase in the number of commercial signs being placed on public property and this has become an eyesore. Chief Rilling stated that he has requested Larry Langhorn of the AIC Program to have his community service workers remove them. He indicated that police presence would be helpful in the event of any controversy.

The chairman reported that he had met with the manager and the owner of LaJoie's auto wrecking to eliminate the problem of junk cars parked on the sidewalk in front of LaJoie's after they have closed for the day. LaJoie's agreed to stop this practice. Moravia Langley reported that this problem has improved.

Christine Abraham from West Main Street reported that the development of the Willie Moorer Park is progressing well. She indicated that the concerns of abandoned autos and speeding cars remain. Chief Rilling informed the group that abandoned cars should be reported directly to the police by phoning 854-3000.

Lee Levey reported that graffiti at the Silvermine School playground has been removed and it appears that the individuals responsible are no longer congregating there after hours. He thanked the police for staying on top of this concern. Mr. Levey indicated that the historical house tour went well. He also stated that the bridge railing design was still under review.

Under New Business Dorothy Romanelli indicated that neighbors are experiencing problems from overpopulation of deer in their neighborhood and that they are seeking assistance and advice from the city for urban deer control. Mayor Moccia stated that this has been a concern in other neighborhoods as well and recommended that the concerned citizens form an information gathering committee, possibly through the CNNA meetings and determine best practices for dealing with this problem. The Department of Environmental Protection Agency has prepared a booklet "Managing Deer in Connecticut" which will prove helpful. Dorothy Romanelli, Maribeth Becker and Mr. Shockley will work on this through the CNNA group if the board approves. The plan would be to learn from other towns experiences and report back to this group with a recommendation.

Dorothy Romanelli indicated that the tennis courts at Woodward Park have considerable weeds growing through the cracks which restrict use of them. Mike Moccia indicated that the tennis courts are getting to the point of beyond repair however he will have them sprayed.

Connie Blair stated that records are not clear as to the owner of the seawall at the Baxter Street end. She will be checking into a possible city easement and report back as to who is responsible to repair the seawall damaged during hurricane Ernesto.

Jim Clark stated that many residents are not complying with the new garbage ordinances with covered trash receptacles. He inquired as to a better method of informing the residents. Connie Blair stated that many residents are notified when they are in violation. She offered to provide neighborhood associations with an information flier which could be distributed to residents who need to comply.

Maribeth Becker stated that she would like to see better traffic calming measures on Crescent Street the rear of Devon's Playground. Numerous trucks speed past which makes it unsafe for pedestrians to cross the street. Mike Moccia indicated that Metro North has not honored the request to become involved with the park plan for this area which would include a crosswalk. Crossing the street at this location was discouraged.

Laurel Lindstrom raised a new business concern regarding traffic calming needs at Princess Pine and Fallow Street. Mayor Moccia stated that more slow down days will take place to help with the speeding car concern which is often a problem city wide. He indicated that the offenders are our neighbors. He suggested using fliers to educate drivers about the need to drive at a reasonable rate throughout the city. Ms. Lindstrom also noted the importance of saving the historical house at 93 East Avenue.

Moravia Langley stated that Meadow Garden Park continues to be a problem and should be fenced and closed at sunset. There was a recent shooting incident which has terrified many of the residents. She has requested more police patrol in her neighborhood. She asked that the police park the large police van in the parking lot to act as a deterrent. Chief Rilling indicated that they have conducted a police sweep of South Norwalk which resulted in numerous felony arrests which included narcotics and weapon charges. He indicated his concern for the circumstances at Meadow Gardens and stated that he would seek more police presence there.

Michael Moccia stated that Tauk World Discovery will be conducting a community service event by engaging volunteers in a city park cleanup day on Friday October 27, 2006. The parks to be cleaned will be Flax Hill Park, Ryan Park, Bouton Street Park, Meadow Garden Park, and Fodor Farm. Additional volunteers are needed and residents were encouraged to become involved. Mr. Shockley provided an information handout. Those interested in volunteering should contact Mr. Shockley or Lora Schapiro at Tauk World Discovery.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10.