

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION MEETING
NOVEMBER 7, 2007**

ATTENDANCE: David Shockley, Chairman; Maribeth Becker, CNNA, Laurel Lindstrom, ENNA; Al Raymond, Spring Hill/Hospital N.A.; Michael Wrinn, Planning and Zoning; Katherine Griffing, Golden Hill N.A.; Jim Clark, Golden Hill N.A.; Don Nelson; Marilyn Maitland, Health Department; Lee Bernardino, Lt. Paul Resnick, Norwalk Police; Marcia Powell, Village Creek Homeowners Association; Mark Pierce, Wilton Avenue N.A.

STAFF: Connie Blair, DPW Customer Service.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Shockey called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. Mr. Shockley congratulated Ms. Lindstrom on her election to the Common Council

**A. WELCOMING REMARKS;
REVIEW AND APPROVE THE OCTOBER 3, 2007 MEETING MINUTES**

**** MS. GRIFFINING MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 3, 2007.**

**** MR. RAYMOND SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER UPDATE

Ms. Blair said that many people were blowing their leaves into the street. The leaves clog the catch basins and drains. Blowing the leaves into the street is illegal. If The Customer Service Center is called, someone can be sent out to stop the contractors. Mr. Clark said that he had seen landscapers doing this. Ms. Blair said that if the address and the address of the property owner and the name of the landscaping company, the City would contact the property owner or the landscaping company.

D. NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS:

Neighborhood representatives will have the opportunity to present their neighborhood concerns, which stem beyond the scope of the Customer Service Center. Such issues may be reoccurring problems, and problems, which impact multiple neighborhoods, such as noise ordinance issues, graffiti, and dumping.

Mr. Shockley said that there had been several questions raised about the noise ordinance review that Lt. Resnick had given in October. Ms. Berardino said that her neighbors were being very noisy and she would like to mail copies of the noise ordinance to the neighbors. Ms. Blair offered to send copies of the noise ordinance to the various residents if Ms Berardino would give her specific addresses. Lt. Resnick suggested that Ms. Berardino call the non-emergency number of 853-3000 and report this problem. An officer would be sent to the address. Ms. Berardino said she thought that the property owner should be contacted, but Lt. Resnick disagreed, saying that sending an officer to the address would be best.

Mr. Clark asked some questions about details about the noise meter. Lt. Resnick explained that most noise complaints are handled without the use of the noise meter. However, in the event that there is an ongoing problem, an officer can come with the noise meter and stand on one foot away from the property line of the caller to take a measurement.

Mr. Shockley then asked Mr. Clark if he had received a copy of the memo regarding vagrants in the Golden Hill Neighborhood area. He then reviewed the details and the fact that some of the vagrants had been arrested. The areas will be monitored and the sites disassembled.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

City staff:

a. “Make A Difference Day” review

Mr. Shockley thanked everyone who were involved with the “Make A Difference Day” in Norwalk. The groups included Weichert Relocation Resources, Inc., Terex Financial Services of Westport, Builders Beyond Borders, a Norwalk based high school enrichment program; Norwalk Community College students, The Silvermine Association, The Friends of Cranbury Park, and the Wilton Avenue Neighborhood Association. There were about 140 volunteers who participated in the various projects concerning clean ups or helping the elderly with repairs to their residences. He then reviewed the projects that the various groups had accomplished.

Mr. Shockley then said that the Redevelopment Agency planned to continue the “Make A Difference Day” campaign along with the “Project Helping Hands”, which is the program that assists seniors or needy families with home needs.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

Ms. Maitland said that she had noticed that the address on page 3 of the minutes was incorrect and should read as “18 Cold Spring Road” rather than “18 Spring Hill Road”. She then gave an update on 18 Cold Spring Road situation. The property owners have been in court and have begun to clean up the property.

Ms. Maitland said that a neighbor of hers who lived on a street where a number of vehicles are parked on the street told Ms. Maitland she has been notified that her street will not be plowed because of this. Ms. Maitland said that the resident had difficulty getting in and out of her driveway because there were so many vehicles parked on the street. The neighbor told Ms. Maitland that she had been told last year by the snow plow drivers that they would not plow that street again. There was a discussion about the exact location of this problem.

Mr. Pierce asked Lt. Resnick about the City codes about vehicles having to move after a given period of time. Lt. Resnick said that there is no limit on parking a registered vehicle that is parked in front of the owner’s residence. Commercial vehicles are limited to four hours for on street parking. If the personal vehicle is no longer operable and in a state of obvious disrepair, then the vehicle can be towed. Lt. Resnick said that there was an officer on the force who routinely handles the issue of abandonment of vehicles along with his other duties.

Mr. Clark said that Golden Hill had a problem with this also. He related the details about a resident on Elmwood who has a truck belonging to a family member parked on the street in front of her residence for long periods of time.

Ms. Berardino said that the traffic on Low Street has increased since Route 136 in Rowayton was closed to truck traffic. Ms. Berardino said that at the intersection of Low and Flax Hill was so congested that the traffic backs up to Bouton Street. Mr. Shockley said that the Traffic Engineer had looked at Low Street in the past. Mr. Pierce suggested perhaps a three way stop sign at that intersection. Ms. Becker said that this had been a concern when Route 136 was closed to truck traffic. Mr. Shockley said they would speak with the Traffic Engineer.

Ms. Becker said that the next CNNA meeting on November 26th. Ms. Becker said that a number of CNNA volunteers had done a citizen’s concern survey at the polling places. Ms. Becker said that this was the first attempt and that when the raw data was processed;

she would be letting the group know the results. Ms. Becker said that there was also an element of trying to do public relations for the neighborhood associations.

Mr. Nelson said that the tree planting season is over for this year, but the neighborhoods should identify areas that need six or more trees. These locations should be given to either Mr. Nelson or Mr. Alvord and let them know. Ms. Grant said that the rehabilitation center on Silvermine Avenue had cut down a number of evergreen trees from the facility all the way to Silvermine Avenue. Ms. Grant said that the State had done the cutting for the rehabilitation center. There was some uncertainty as to whether the State or the City owned the property where the trees were located. Ms. Grant said that NASH would like some remediation on the issue. Mr. Nelson said that he would encourage Ms. Grant to attend the next Tree Advisory meeting in Room 101 at 6 p.m.

Mr. Raymond said that he had not realized there was a specific number of trees required for planting. Mr. Nelson said that the City had discovered that it would save the City's funding for trees if the contractor could do the plantings in groups. Mr. Raymond said that Spring Hill N.A. had requested five trees for the neighborhood, but the group has not heard any feedback on the status of the trees. Mr. Nelson encouraged Mr. Raymond to get the locations to him. Mr. Raymond said that the Maple Street locations were staked and have been for over a year and a half. Mr. Nelson said that he would look into this.

Ms. Becker said that she had been in the hospital for a meeting and had noticed that there was a landscaping plan for the hospital in the main lobby. Mr. Raymond said that he would go to the hospital and review this.

Mr. Clark said that he had missed last month's meeting because he was in Hartford and that the State had added Golden Hill as a Historic District. The State designation is just a title, but does not place any restrictions on anyone regarding their property. It simply recognizes the architecture and historical value. It does allow homeowners to apply for tax credits for maintenance. This also allows the homeowner to apply for grants up to \$30,000 for their homes. The Historical Commission has produced a booklet about how to use the tax credits and apply the grants. It is a fairly new program but if the homeowner is performing maintenance, there are some guidelines.

Mr. Shockley then asked what any other neighborhood association who was interested in doing this should do to get started. Mr. Clark said that the N.A. should contact Debbie Mathies of the Historic Commission or Tod Bryant of Norwalk Preservation Trust for the booklet and additional help. A discussion then followed on the degrees that people feel are necessary to preserve the historical aspect of a building. Mr. Shockley said that he would follow up and get copies of the booklet for the group.

Mr. Clark said that the State is discussing identifying individual properties that are historical but the buildings around them are not historical. There are sections of Golden

Hill that have infill and are not considered historical. Once a building is fifty years old, it allows the Committees to look at a building and determine whether the building had historical significant.

Ms. Griffing said that she lives near Ben Franklin and had some safety concerns. She said that there were a number of people who run the stop sign coming down the hill because they don't see the stop sign because of its odd location. She then asked if a sign warning drivers that a stop sign was present could be posted at the top of the hill by Elmwood. She also mentioned that the intersection of Golden Hill and Fairfield Avenue.

Ms. Griffing said that she had been unable to find parking near Columbus Schools to vote. Ms. Lindstrom said that she believed that the parking would have to go through the Superintendent of Schools.

Ms. Powell called the noise concerns at the Grasso property and that the police had been handling the issue. She was very pleased with this.

Ms. Becker had a information flyer about the upcoming "Smart Growth program" the 1,000 Friends of Connecticut will be hosting in New Haven next Thursday.

Mr. Pierce asked for an update on the Wilton Avenue paving. Ms. Blair said that she believed that the paving program was going forward as scheduled.

Mr. Pierce said that the Connecticut Transit buses have been stopping near the Courthouse and discharging passengers in the middle of the street rather than near the crosswalk. He said that this was very dangerous because people cross in front of the bus, in the middle of the street.

Mr. Pierce said that on the 15th of the month, the re-evaluation people would be in his neighborhood at 7:00 p.m. for a presentation. He invited anyone who wished to attend to come and hear the presentation.

Ms. Grant said that on October 13th, the Silvermine Center Historic District passed the State Historical District, with 76 properties. The group is moving towards being a National District. The district is focused on the themes of the old mill industries and the Silvermine Artist Colony. When the application was finished, the State requested that the group focus on the Art colony, which is virtually unknown. Ms. Grant reviewed the benefits of the National title. She also said that work was being done on the Silvermine Bridge, which is already a national historic structure.

Ms. Abraham said that she wished to thank Ms. Maitland about the overgrown area where the construction near West Main and Summer Street was being done. Ms. Abraham said that she was away for a brief period and when she returned, the underbrush

was taken care of. Ms. Abraham said that she had spoken with the developer, but it was not very productive conversation.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. Shockley adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service