

CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION MEETING
APRIL 4, 2007

ATTENDANCE: David Shockley, Chairman; Christine Abraham, Hal Alvord, DPW Director; Maribeth Becker, CNNA; Leigh Grant, NASH; Katherine Griffing, Golden Hill Association; John Lomba, Fire Department; Laurel Lindstrom, ENNA; Cedric Goo, Norwalk Health Department; Mayor Moccia, Don Nelson, Norwalk Tree Alliance; Helen Bryant, Alan Kingsbury, Jim Clark, Golden Hill Neighborhood Association; Mark Pierce, Wilton Avenue N.A.; Al Raymond, Spring Hill/Hospital N.A.; Dorothy Wilson, Zoning Department; David Tracey, Norwalk Tree Alliance.

STAFF: Connie Blair, Customer Service

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Shockley called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

WELCOMING REMARKS; REVIEW AND APPROVE THE MARCH 7, 2007
MEETING MINUTES

** MS. GRIFFING MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 7, 2007 MEETING MINUTES.

** MS. LINDSTROM SECONDED.

** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

GUEST SPEAKERS: DAVE TRACY, NORWALK TREE ALLIANCE; NORWALK TREE
PROGRAM AND THE NORWALK TREE FESTIVAL.

Mr. Tracy introduced himself and greeted everyone. He explained that the Tree Alliance had started in 1995, but had picked up significant momentum in 2001. Mr. Nelson, who is also the Chairman of the Norwalk Tree Advisory Committee, had noted the steady loss of trees in the City and that invasive species were taking over. The Tree Alliance began to work on inventorying the various trees and their locations in Norwalk in coordination with the Norwalk Tree Advisory. Mr. Tracy explained that the core of Urban Forest activities resides with the Tree Advisory Committee. Last year, Norwalk was designated as a Tree City USA mainly through the efforts of both the Tree Advisory and the Tree Alliance efforts. Mr. Tracy explained that Ms. Lindstrom has facilitated much of this.

Mr. Alvord then explained the base requirements for designation as a Tree City include the protection and preservation of urban forests. It is also important to reforest the trees in areas where the trees have fallen into disrepair in order to restore the streetscape. Mr. Alvord then reviewed the approach for planning how and where the trees are planted.

Mr. Alvord then distributed copies of the Norwalk Neighborhood Tree Liaisons List to those present.

Ms. Grant asked about guidelines for pruning in the Silvermine area. Mr. Alvord then reviewed the pruning permit practices and guidelines with the group. It was also suggested that if a crew is pruning in one's neighborhood, that watching the crew at work from a safe but visible distance would be good.

Mr. Tracy then explained that the Tree Alliance and the Tree Advisory had worked together to create the Rosa Parks Tree Arboretum and that an additional tree will be planted in the arboretum on Arbor Day.

Last year, the Tree Advisory had received an award from the Home Depot Foundation for the amount of \$75,000 for the various programs sponsored.

Mr. Tracy then distributed copies of the May 5th Tree Festival flyers to those present. He informed the group that the Festival is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. with hourly drawing. Mr. Alvord said that the goal was to inform Norwalk residents on how to take care of their own trees.

Mr. Raymond asked about the recent cuttings along the bike trail and trees that were removed from Mathews Park. Mr. Raymond said that some of the trees that were removed had trunks measuring 20'. Mr. Alvord explained that Mr. Mocciae and a group of others had inspected the area where the trees were removed and the ones that were cut down were Norway Maples. Ms. Grant commented that Norway Maples, which are an invasive species, are known to grow as much as 6' a year and provide heavy shade, which blocks out other trees. Mr. Raymond said that the bike path is a good thing but stated that one tree trunk had measured 23" and that he was not happy with this action on the part of the City. Mr. Alvord explained that the City had been very careful not to take out quality trees during the removal.

Ms. Grant asked about the cutting that was being done by the New Canaan Avenue bridge. Mr. Alvord reviewed that ongoing project with her. Mr. Clark asked if it would be possible to mark the trunks of trees slated for removal. Mr. Alvord stated that in accordance with the City code, yellow permits are affixed to the trunks of trees that are scheduled

for trimming and red ones affixed to the trunks of those trees slated for removal. The public has ten days to contact Public Works and request a public hearing. There have only been two instances where there has been concern expressed. The concerned residents were then contacted and the reasons for the work were then explained. Those two situations were resolved prior to the need for a public hearing.

Ms. Grant stated that the 272 power lines seemed to be generating excessive trimming. Mr. Alvord said that the crews involved in the trimming were working closely with the City on this project.

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER UPDATE

Ms. Blair reported that many residents were calling in about the bulky waste pick up. Ms. Blair said that she would be mailing these residents a schedule. She then distributed computer print outs of the report to those present who could not open the reports on their computers.

With the onset of the spring planting season, Ms. Blair encouraged everyone to be aware of sight line issues when planting trees and shrubs near street, sidewalks and driveways.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Mr. Shockley said that the Meadow Street park project was progressing. He reported that the City was working with SNEW to locate CDB grants for lighting the park. A fence has been installed around the park and the cleaning is progressing.

Mr. Clark reported that the Golden Hill Clean Up at the parking lot at the corner of Fairfield Avenue, Flax Hill and Martin Luther King Drive went well. The amount of garbage on the hillside was amazing. Mr. Clark thanked Mr. Shockley for his assistance along with N.E.O.N., and the Fairfield University students. Mr. Clark explained that 50 Washington Street actually owns the lot, but that the Parking Authority had leased it for a number of years. He also expressed concerns about illegal dumping on the hillside.

Mayor Moccia encouraged everyone present that if they see illegal dumping, to try and identify who is doing the dumping. He then gave an example where illegal dumping had been occurring. The resident was able to locate the name of the person involved through a piece of correspondence in the garbage.

Mr. Pierce reported that there was an ongoing situation at Horton Street where a new property owner was dumping garbage over the fence onto property owned by Hicks and Otis. A discussion about the proper procedure regarding this followed.

Ms. Becker stated that the next CNNA meeting would be held on April 9th in Room A300. She said that the topic of discussion would be about easements to put land in open space permanently.

Ms. Griffing said that she appreciated the recent flyers about proper garbage and trash disposal guidelines, but pointed out that there are many residents who speak other languages. She also suggested that there be less text on the page. A discussion about garbage pick up then followed.

Mr. Shockley said that he would be open to suggestions for future speakers for the group. Mayor Moccia suggested having Redevelopment come in to address eminent domain issues might be a good idea. Ms. Lindstrom suggested possibly having someone address the group on the budget process.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shockley adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services