

CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION MEETING
JULY 11, 2007

ATTENDANCE: David Shockley, Chairman; Christine Abraham, West Main Street N.A.; Hal Alvord, DPW Director; Maribeth Becker CNNA
Jim Clark, Golden Hill Association; Fred Eshraghi, Traffic Engineer; Leigh Grant, NASH; Katherine Griffing, Golden Hill Association; John Lomba, Fire Department; Laurel Lindstrom, ENNA; Don Nelson, Norwalk Tree Alliance; Al Raymond, Spring Hill/Hospital N.A.; Dorrie Wilson, Planning and Zoning; Lee Berardino, Pamela Ballard, Planning and Zoning.

STAFF: Connie Blair, Customer Service Center

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Shockley called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. He said that the Mayor had a schedule conflict and would come if his schedule permitted it.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 6, 2007 MEETING MINUTES

- ** MS. GRIFFING MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2007 AS SUBMITTED.
- ** MS. LINDSTROM SECONDED.
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE

Ms. Blair announced that the Bulky Waste pick up flyer will be translated into Spanish. She also said that if residents have questions about hazardous waste, they should call the Customer Service line and ask.

Mr. Shockley said that the Keep Norwalk Beautiful program has sponsored 22 events, had 429 volunteers and logged approximately 1,400 man hours of labor. He then thanked everyone for a job well done.

Ms. Wilson then announced that the Zoning Commission will be holding a hearing on July 18th regarding a change to the ordinance regarding the center line reference point. The original ordinance was established in 1930. A problem can arise when there is a House that is below street level. The measurement from the center line reference could allow a home owner to construct a three story residence because of this. Ms. Wilson said that the set backs are not being changed and the Zoning Commission will continue to residents to level their lots with up to three feet of fill.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

Mr. Shockley stated that there had been an increase in noise concerns lately.

Ms. Berardino said that her area on Low Street was unable to form a Neighborhood Association because all of the houses have violations. Many of the two family homes now have three families and vehicles are frequently parked on the front lawns. She went on to say that the government had lost its integrity by allowing these types of violations. She said that her neighborhood is becoming a blighted area. Mr. Shockley requested that she give specific house numbers to Ms. Blair for further investigation.

Ms. Berardino also said that she had a problem getting yard waste picked up. She said that she had called Customer Service but nothing had happened until she spoke with her Council Representative. Ms. Blair said that she would look into the situation.

Ms. Lindstrom said that she had received a number of calls and emails regarding the appearance of the area at Exit 16. She said that the Adopt-A-Spots were not being maintained. Call to the various organizations sponsoring the Adopt-A-Spot had produced some improvement but it is important to have the litter picked up and have the curbing, signage and Adopt-A-Spots cohesive.

Mr. Alvord said that the State is not interested in working with the City on this problem. Mr. Eshraghi said that he had sent a proposed traffic plan to the State in December of 2006 and that the State was just now reviewing it. Mr. Alvord said that currently, the Department of Transportation is undergoing a complete restructuring, so he did not expect much from them during this transition time.

Mr. Alvord also said that the City would contact those who have the various Adopt-A-Spots and inform them that if the spots are not maintained, the City will remove the signs and reassign the spaces.

Ms. Lindstrom asked when the East Avenue railroad underpass would be done. Mr. Alvord said that work was progressing on the Rowayton and Darien sites, so he expected work to commence on East Avenue once those projects are completed.

Ms. Lindstrom said that there was a public hearing scheduled for September. She then asked Mr. Alvord if the Department of Transportation would be present. Mr. Alvord said that there were plans to invite the Department of Transportation, but he could not guarantee that they would attend.

Ms. Grant said that she had some serious concerns about the tree trimming in Silvermine. She said that at a meeting with the power company, the removal of saplings, respect for ornamental trees and the cutting back of pine trees had been discussed. Despite this, there were two red maples at 10 Comstock that were severely trimmed. Ms. Grant said that CL&P should replace these trees for the residents. She also wondered if the wires had been moved from their former position. Ms. Grant said that she had noticed that a number of dead trees and branches had been left. She repeated that these issues had been discussed previously at a meeting with CL&P.

Ms. Grant said that she found the neighborhood meetings to be very helpful. She commented that sometimes the solutions are quite different from what might be expected. The presentations by the developers and the departments have been very helpful.

Mr. Raymond said that he agreed with Ms. Grant about the trimming. He said that he and Ms. Witkowsky watched one of the crews trim on Truman Street. They sheared off all the branches on the left side of a pine tree at 82 Truman and also deeply V'ed a maple tree. Mr. Alvord said that the right of way varies on each street. The new foreman for Mr. Raymond's area is Mr. Jose Lopez and that Mr. Lopez will work on determining what should be done about those situations.

Mr. Raymond also informed Mr. Alvord that there was an excavation being done on Prospect Street and that a pile of dirt was left in the roadway. Mr. Alvord said that he would have a department member check that out.

Mr. Raymond then said that the Spring Hill Hospital Area needed a park. Mr. Alvord suggested that the Association approach the Hospital or possibly Mr. Hiscock from the Second Taxing District about using some of their property.

Mr. Clark said that he appreciates the meetings. The illegal apartment issue is a key problem for the Golden Hill area. He said that he feels that the meetings revitalize the neighborhood representatives.

Mr. Alvord commented that the staff is just as frustrated as the residents over some of the situations. He also pointed out that there is a delicate balance for the DPW between quality of life and maintaining the infrastructure.

Ms. Becker said that she was frustrated that so much needs to be done. The discussion then moved to litter and graffiti control.

Mr. Clark said that there were some concerns that a resident on Hillside was running a limo service from his property. He also noted that people frequently park in the Ben Franklin parking lot that are not attending events at the center. A discussion about the details of both situations ensued.

Ms. Abraham said that she found the meetings to be helpful. She also commented that the developer who was working in her area was piling dirt all over the place.

Ms. Becker said that the CNNA meeting would be on August 13th at 7:30 p.m. and that Mr. Mocciae would be speaking about the City parks.

Ms. Becker then asked about the litter on Wall Street. Mr. Alvord said that Mr. McQuire had tried to start a Wall Street Business Association, but that it had not worked out. Mr. Alvord said that he had spoken to the Mayor about the litter on Wall Street and that the City will be issuing citations for \$250 to the merchants for each day that the garbage is handled improperly.

Ms. Griffing left the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Mr. Shockley said that the SoNo Stars were working on litter in the SoNo, but he had no way to transport them to the Wall Street area.

Mr. Raymond asked about the construction on the Wall Street bridge. Mr. Alvord reviewed the details of the repairs to the bridge arch with the group. Mr. Raymond then asked if they would be replacing the flags on the bridge. Mr. Alvord said that there were no plans to do so because the flags had been stolen and the poles had been destroyed by vandals.

Ms. Becker asked about Klondike Park. Mr. Alvord said that there was no easy access to the park and that it is overgrown. He said that there were plans to make Klondike Park part of the of Head of the Harbor project.

Mr. Lomba left the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Ms. Becker said that one of the trees on Harbor had been deeply V'ed by the power company and that it looked like it might split. Ms. Blair said that she would send someone to check on the tree.

Mr. Shockley asked if the group wished to have a meeting in August. It was agreed that this would be acceptable.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shockley adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service