

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION MEETING
AUGUST 2, 2006**

ATTENDANCE: David Shockley, Chairman; Don Nelson, Tree Advisory Committee and Norwalk Tree Alliance; Laurel Anderson, City Scan; Durrell Martin, City Scan; Connie Blair (10:10 a.m.)

Leigh Grant, Silvermine Association and NASH;
Alice Gamache, Tracey Area Association;
Al Raymond, Spring Hill/Norwalk Hospital Association;
Katherine Griffing, Golden Hill Association;
Dorothy & John Romanelli, Harbor Shores Association;
Moravia Langley, Meadow Street Association;
Christine Abraham, West Main Street Association;
Laurel Lindstrom, Eastern Norwalk Neighborhood Association;
Maribeth Becker, Coalition Norwalk Neighborhood Association (10:15 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Shockley called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

REVIEW AND APPROVE JULY 5, 2006 MEETING MINUTES

**** MS. ROMANELLI MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 5, 2006.**

The corrections to the minutes are as follows:

On page 1, under Attendance, add Moravia Langley, Meadow Street Association.

On page 2, under Eastern Norwalk Neighborhood Association, 1st paragraph, last sentence, add "and a police enforcement issue".

On page 2, under Eastern Norwalk Neighborhood Association, 3rd paragraph, 3rd sentence, it should read: "She said that if a homeowner keeps the grass long, it should not be cited as a violation since it won't lead to a mosquito infestation unless standing water is present."

On page 2, under Eastern Norwalk Neighborhood Association, 3rd paragraph, last sentence, it should read: "Ms Lindstrom provided copies of information from the Internet on mosquito habitat."

**** MS. GRIFFING SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEED FOR RESTRUCTURING NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION MEETINGS;
DAVID SHOCKLEY

Chairman Shockley said that the City staff usually doesn't attend the August meeting. He wanted to review with the neighborhood associations some ways to see more productivity. He provided an overview and history of the Mayor's Neighborhood Preservation Meetings. He said that he wants to continue to review and address the issues from the neighborhood associations with them, and then present a more formal agenda at the meetings to the City staff with things that the neighborhood associations can't resolve. He wanted to stress that the capabilities of Customer Service are a good beginning point for some, not all, of the issues. He said that he would like to see a graffiti policy put in place. He said that residents are encouraged to phone in reports of graffiti to Customer Service, and the Silvermine area playground recently had an incident of graffiti. A suggestion was made to make graffiti removal kits available to the neighborhood associations. There is a part-time community service program through NEON that dedicates Saturdays to graffiti removal.

He said that there have been complaints of dog waste issues. He wanted to develop a public awareness campaign. There is only one dog warden in the City.

He suggested that the creation of subcommittees would be beneficial to some of the on-going issues in the City, such as litter, dumping, and the noise ordinance.

CUSTOMER SERVICE OVERVIEW; CONNIE BLAIR

Ms. Blair arrived at 10:10 a.m. She said that she would like to have one contact person be in charge of communicating to Customer Service. She said that anyone who answers the phone at the Customer Service number can be the contact; it doesn't have to be Ms. Blair. That would enable all the Customer Service Reps to be aware of the neighborhood issues. She also suggested that they email and/or fax the issues in list form so that they can be reviewed at the next meeting. She said that if the issue does not fall with the Customer Service area of responsibility, they can refer the information out to the State or whoever is responsible.

Ms. Grant asked Ms. Blair to provide them with a list of the services that Customer Service does provide. There was some discussion regarding having members of the neighborhood associations call in directly to Customer Service, and having that be a preferred way of handling complaints/issues. There is difficulty for both the neighborhood associations and Customer Service in tracking calls and complaints, and reporting back on them at the meetings. Customer Service is in the process of developing their website. There were some suggestions made regarding providing more publicity about Customer Service, and there have been newspaper advertisements run several times over the past 1 ½ years, as well as inserts in bills or correspondence mailed from City Hall, refrigerator magnets, and business cards. All of the City vehicles have the Customer Service information on them. Ms. Blair said she will copy the newspaper advertisements and provide them to the neighborhood associations at the

next meeting. She mentioned that the DPW is having their 3rd annual Open House on September 30 at the DPW Center at 15 S. Smith Street.

The bulky waste pickup program was run on Saturday, July 29 in East Norwalk, 4th Taxing District, and it was not as successful as they had hoped. A suggestion was made to run the program either in the Spring or the Fall. They will look into running the next program in the Spring Hill Neighborhood Association. A suggestion was made to notify the neighborhood association representatives of the next bulky waste pickup day.

Ms. Becker arrived at 10:15 a.m.

Ms. Gamache from the Tracy Area Neighborhood Association mentioned the health issues at 22 Union Avenue and said that it has become a safety issue now, with a porch being in disrepair for the residents and children there. She also mentioned the curb painting issue on Camp Street. Ms. Blair said that she submitted the complaint about 22 Union Avenue, and she said that the curb will not be painted. Ms. Blair asked if signage saying “No Parking Here to Corner” would resolve the curb problem. Ms. Gamache said it would. Ms. Blair said she will submit the Cannon Street rat complaint to the Health Department.

GOLDEN HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION; KATHERINE GRIFFING

Ms. Katherine Griffing said that the illegal apartments continue to be a major concern. The association has been busy getting volunteers to get the information to City Hall.

EASTERN NORWALK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION; LAUREL LINDSTROM

Ms. Lindstrom mentioned that it’s quiet now, and she had nothing new to report. She has been directing complaints/issues to Customer Service.

HARBOR SHORES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION; DOROTHY ROMANELLI

Ms. Romanelli said that the drain on Yost Street is still not fixed, and Ms. Blair said that it was on the schedule for today, but the work could not be done due to the high temperatures and the department being short-staffed.

MEADOW STREET: MORAVIA LANGLEY

Ms. Langley asked about the fence situation, and if it is possible to have a lock put on the fence at Meadow Gardens park. She also said the trees need to be trimmed. The trash problem is on-going. The planter pots remain empty. She mentioned the trucks and the speeding issue on Route 136, and because it’s a State road, Ms. Blair said she will submit the information to the State. Some discussion took place regarding possible street signs. The abandoned cars in front of the junkyard are a problem for neighborhood kids that play in them. Ms. Langley said she is in the process of setting up a meeting with the Mayor and the Police Department.

BROAD RIVER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION; DIANE LOCKWOOD

Ms. Lockwood was unable to attend.

WEST MAIN STREET; CHRISTINE ABRAHAM

Ms. Abraham said that children continue to play basketball in the park after it is closed at night. She mentioned that the Wilton Avenue park is closed and locked at night. She said that the groundbreaking for the park is taking place today. The park is intended for young children, from infants through age 10 or 12.

SPRING HILL/HOSPITAL AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION; AL RAYMOND

Mr. Raymond said that there was nothing new to report from the neighborhood. He said he was unhappy with the way the meeting was going. The meetings started out well, with the City staff and the neighborhood associations getting things accomplished, but now it seems that there are changes going on that make it seem like people don't care. He felt that the City staff and the Mayor should be at the meeting to listen to the neighborhood concerns. He said he attends the meetings faithfully, which takes time away from his job. He said that he thought that Chairman Shockley and Ms. Blair have done a good job.

Chairman Shockley said that the reason the meeting was held today in a different format is to allow the neighborhood associations, as a group, to be better prepared in order to get better answers. He said that it's possible they would alternate the meetings, with City staff attending every other month. Another suggestion was made to present the information to the City Staff two weeks prior to the next meeting, so that they could come to the meeting prepared to address the problems.

Ms. Grant mentioned that the last few meetings seemed to have been more on the negative and non-productive side, and the neighborhood associations were starting to feel disempowered. She feels it's important to have the residents of Norwalk have a voice through the neighborhood associations.

Chairman Shockley said that the approach has to be more refined, and he urged the neighborhood associations not to jump to the negative because the meeting was in a different format.

Ms. Lindstrom said she agreed with her colleagues in being frustrated with the fact that the City staff wasn't present today. She suggested that the City staff gather the information from the meeting, meet among their own departments after the meeting, and possibly form subcommittees to address the issues. At the beginning of the next meeting, they could discuss what was sent to Customer Service to be handled, as well as handle the situations that Customer Service could not address.

Some discussion took place regarding the neighborhood associations agreeing to shorten the amount of time that they talk and agreeing to send as many issues as possible to Customer Service so that they could address the bigger topics during the meeting. They mentioned that the topics that repeatedly come up at the meetings need to be addressed in a more aggressive way in order to get resolved. This could possibly lead to policy changes and ordinance changes.

Ms. Anderson from City Scan said that she remembers the old agenda format, where the City staff reported back and handled the issues from the previous meeting first.

Chairman Shockley suggested that the neighborhood associations send him the unresolved issues so that he can get it to the City staff.

A suggestion was made that the Mayor be made aware of their frustration with the meetings. Another suggestion was made to rotate the order of the neighborhood associations on the agenda.

WILTON AVENUE; MARK PIERCE

Mr. Pierce was unable to attend.

TRACEY AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION; ALICE GAMACHE

Ms. Gamache said her concern regarding 22 Union Avenue was discussed earlier in the meeting.

HEATHER LANE; CINDY MOTTOLESE

Ms. Mottolese was unable to attend.

NORWALK ASSOCIATION OF SILVERMINE HOMEOWNERS; LEIGH GRANT

Ms. Leigh Grant expressed her concerns earlier in the meeting.

LEXINGTON AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION; DONNIE SELLERS

Mr. Sellers was unable to attend.

TREE ALLIANCE; DON NELSON

Mr. Nelson said that the tree arboretum at Columbus Magnet School is complete, and it was inspected by the State last week. It was unanimously approved, and the grant money will be forthcoming.

CITY SCAN; LAUREL ANDERSON

Ms. Anderson said they did 30 scans at Silvermine School for graffiti. The graffiti at Wolfpit was remediated, but then it reappeared.

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN MEETING

**** CHAIRMAN SHOCKLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr
Telesco Secretarial Services