

TREE COMMITTEE
Telephone (203) 563-0180
Fax (203) 563-0284



TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON TREE COMMITTEE
November 19, 2008 – 9:00 A. M.
TOWN HALL - MEETING ROOM "B"**

PRESENT: Members; Jessica Kaplan; Paula Byrdy; Bill Meehan; Kate Throckmorton; Junius Brown and Nick Lee

ABSENT:

ALSO

PRESENT: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs; Karen DeSantis, Administrative Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

Patricia Sesto called the meeting to order @ 9:05 am.

Ms. Sesto described the process of forming a committee.

II. ELLECTION OF OFFICERS –

The Committee determined that a chairman was the only officer needed for the type of work this committee had.

Nick Lee MOTIONED to elect Jessica Kaplan as Chairman, SECONDED by Kate Throckmorton and carried 6-0-0.

Ms. Kaplan accepted the position and requested staff put together a contact list to be distributed to each member.

III. MEETING SCHEDULE–

A discussion ensued and it was determined that the meetings should be held the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 am.

Ms. Sesto stated that staff would draft a schedule for 2009 for approval at the next meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. Implementation of Tree Plan – Status

Ms. Sesto reported that 22 trees have been donated to this date; five have already been planted in front of the library. She added that there are two trees ready to be planted and she, Ms. Throckmorton and Mr. Lee will be meeting after this meeting to confirm placement.

b. Village Market Building

Ms. Sesto reported that the Piersalls, owner of the Village Market property, are not interested in having trees planted as the "Tree Plan" proposes. She stated that the Piersalls have concerns of visibility and maintenance so at this time they are not giving approval.

Ms. Byrdy asked if a planting plan had been presented to the Piersalls. The response was affirmative.

Ms. Throckmorton suggested trying to work out a compromise with the Piersalls. Perhaps fewer trees would be acceptable.

Ms. Kaplan suggested a meeting be arranged to discuss other possibilities.

Mr. Meehan asked if the tenant, Village Market, was positive about the proposed trees.

Ms. Sesto answered Mr. Meehan by saying that she had spoken with Nancy at the Village Market and Nancy was not negative but left it solely up to the property owner.

Mr. Lee will speak with Peter Keating, the owner of the Village Market.

Ms. Throckmorton, Mr. Lee and Ms. Sesto agreed to meet and discuss the proposed location and assess possible alternatives.

MS. Sesto reported that there is a tree ready for installation in front of the American Legion building. She reported that the elm trees proposed at Schenck's Island will be planted in the spring and she will arrange to meet with Bill Brennan concerning the proposed flag pole installation.

Ms. Sesto expressed her concerns that planting the donated trees is taking too long and she is worried the donors will become disgruntled. These gifts should be honored in a timely fashion. Ms. Kaplan offered to follow up with the current tree donors with a schedule of planting.

Ms. Byrdy inquired about the possibility of a plaque at either the town hall or the library with donor names and dedications.

Ms. Sesto suggested looking into options that might be available such as a well-scripted book that can be updated or modified. She added that the plaque would be more costly.

Mr. Lee suggested the possibility of a framed poster that could easily be modified and/or updated.

Mr. Brown suggested that if a donor preferred a plaque by the tree donated, the donor could incur the cost.

Ms. Sesto had concerns of the Town maintenance that might be involved.

Mr. Lee suggested that when ordering trees, it should be by January 15th for spring planting and July 15th for fall planting.

Ms. Byrdy suggested an announcement in the newspaper of the new committee.

Ms. Kaplan requested a letter be drafted by staff to submit to the editor of the paper.

It was detailed that the plan includes some 60+ trees, of which 22 have been donated already. It was envisioned that this is a long range plan, one that will be implemented over several years. Ms. Byrdy added that this first phase focuses on the Center and the work of the committee could be expanded on to other areas in town.

c. Norwalk Tree Festival

Ms. Kaplan reported that the Garden Club has been active with awareness of trees. She described the nonprofit "Norwalk Tree Alliance" and its annual Tree Festival.

Ms. Byrdy passed around some photos from the last festival to the other members. She stated that the next festival will be held at Cranberry Park on the Wilton line in Norwalk on May 16th from 11:00 to 3:00 and suggested that Wilton partner with Norwalk. She also described the tree inventory that Norwalk is compiling with GPS to be entered in a tree database and felt that if Wilton partnered with Norwalk, Wilton could learn some valuable information.

Ms. Byrdy offered to investigate the cost involved and report to the Committee.

The Committee was agreeable and would wait for the cost involved and what entities may contribute funding.

Mr. Lee offered to approach some commercial businesses who may want to contribute or participate in the festival.

Ms. Byrdy passed out a list of contributors and participants in the past.

Ms. Kaplan suggested recruiting Wilton residents to volunteer.

Ms. Byrdy indicated that she would like to notify Norwalk by mid December if the Committee chooses to participate.

Ms. Sesto stated that the budgets are being reviewed with anticipation of cutbacks. The cost, if any, is of concern.

Ms. Byrdy thought that donations would be necessary.

Sign costs were discussed and staff will provide the cost for her department's recent purchase of "no idling signs" which are similar to what this group had discussed.

The Committee agreed that conceptually, depending on cost and logistics, partnership with Norwalk would be desirable.

Mr. Brown suggested looking into any legal concerns. Ms Sesto agreed to follow up on this.

Ms. Kaplan suggested asking the First Selectman to issue a proclamation.

d. Tree City, USA designation

Ms. Kaplan explained that this is in connection with the Arbor Day Foundation and she described its foundation and requirements to be designated.

Ms. Kaplan explained that there are grants available and listed the possible benefits. She reviewed budget, maintenance, and ordinance requirements in order to qualify for the Tree City, USA designation.

Ms. Kaplan suggested that a Town specific ordinance be drafted and it was suggested that the committee review ordinances of existing Tree City towns.

Ms. Byrdy circulated a copy of Greenwich's ordinance to the Committee members for review.

Ms. Throckmorton requested that a summary be sent to each member.

Ms. Kaplan offered to supply Ridgefield's and Fairfield's ordinance to the Committee and stated that the Tree City applications are due in December.

The Committee agreed that December 2009 would be the goal for filing an application for designation.

Mr. Brown cited the "Re-greening" of the Post Road program in Westport project and he offered to follow up on more information.

e. other

Ms. Kaplan reported that the Garden Club was active in the Tree Contest, Arbor Day celebration, and participation in the Wilton Tree Plan and has been granted two awards, one from the state garden clubs and one for the region. She passed around documentation submitted, termed a "book of evidence," for members to review.

Ms. Byrde mentioned that Paul Young, Tree Warden had suggested an Assistant Tree Warden be considered and asked Ms. Sesto for guidance.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A Motion was made by Jessica Kaplan at 10:05 a.m., SECONDED by Kate Throckmorton and carried 6-0-0.

Submitted by

Karen DeSantis
Recording Secretary