



TREE COMMITTEE  
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TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
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## **WILTON TREE COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, June 10, 2009

### **Minutes**

In attendance: Chair Jessica Kaplan, Junius Brown, Paula Byrdy, William Meehan, Kate Throckmorton  
Also Present: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs, Karen Padowicz, Administrative Secretary and Paul Young, Tree Warden.

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Kaplan called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

#### **II. ONGOING BUSINESS**

##### **a. Arbor Day Celebration and Norwalk-Wilton Tree Festival Review**

Jessica Kaplan thanked the Committee members for their efforts and attendance on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Arbor Day celebration. She reported that there was a low attendance and she and Paul Byrdy have already discussed the possibility of changing the program to make it more successful and keep in line with the requirements of the Tree City USA designation and asked for some suggestions.

Ms. Kaplan thanked the members for their participation in the Tree Festival and reported that it was a success. Estimates place the attendance somewhere between 800 and 1,000. She stated that she would again like to have the Tree Committee involved in next year's festival on May 22, 2010 at Cranbury Park and would welcome any suggestions that the members may have for next year.

Bill Meehan felt that the only negative was the food service; they need to be able to serve people faster

Others expressed their agreement that the festival was successful and enjoyable, with Paul Young adding that 12 tree wardens from the area attended.

Patricia Sesto thanked the Committee for nominating her for the Tree Steward and is very pleased with her dedicated tree; a pink horse chestnut on Goddard.

##### **b. Tree Plan Implementation**

Ms. Kaplan acknowledged Kate Throckmorton and Nick Lee for their hard work and dedication to the Plan. She reported that twelve trees have now been planted and reviewed the locations.

Ms. Byrdy suggested an updated Wilton Center Tree Plan that marked the new trees and possibly acknowledge the donors on the map.

Ms. Sesto agreed that acknowledgement of the donors is needed in some form whether it be a book, poster or map.

Ms. Sesto reported that the oak tree that was planted in the fall in front of the American Legion building had died and has already been replaced by Nick Lee.

Ms. Sesto reported that one of the trees planted by the Library (Alice Levin's) was not looking well and presented the idea of a fund for situations where a tree dies or needs special attention. A policy needs to be devised regarding the length of time we will guarantee a tree, we cannot be held responsible in perpetuity.

Ms. Byrdy suggested a "back up" fund be established.

Ms. Sesto explained that the Conservation Commission would be likely to be able to replace a tree or two in a year and there is a possibility that DPW may have some funds set aside for the project.

Mr. Young stated that he was impressed with Nick Lee's fast response to replace the dead oak tree.

A discussion ensued concerning maintenance and funding available to the project.

Ms. Throckmorton suggested a five year monitoring of each tree and Ms. Sesto suggested setting guidelines for maintenance. Ms. Sesto will contact Westport for guidance on a maintenance program.

Mr. Meehan posed the questions of who would be responsible to replace a tree, the donor or the town or should the donor have right of first refusal to replace a tree.

Mr. Brown introduced the idea of insurance as a possibility and offered to look into it.

In reference to trees in front of Village Market, Ms. Sesto stated that Alice Levin is still willing to speak with the Pearsall family to try to get their participation once she receives a rendering from Ms. Throckmorton.

Sesto reported that the Parks and Recs department cannot commit to watering the trees so Mike Conklin has been watering the newly planted trees. This takes him approximately three hours per week.

Chairman Kaplan asked if there were any more areas for new trees.

Ms. Throckmorton responded that more tree could go in front of the Pearsall building. added we yet to gain Ms. Sesto suggested that the Committee try to induct more private property owners in the center to participate before more donors are pursued.

Chairman Kaplan commended Mike Conklin for his support in the ongoing project.

c. Tree City USA Designation

Ms. Throckmorton will forward some comments to Karen Padowicz for the draft Tree Ordinance.

A discussion ensued on the topic of difference between a tree ordinance (and statutes) and the Tree City USA requirements.

Chairman Kaplan stated that the tree ordinance should include the requirements for the Tree City USA designation. A discussion ensued regarding the difficulties of adopting even a moderately assertive ordinance and perhaps a more prudent approach would be to draft an ordinance that simply reflects the state statutes.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Draft Plan of Conservation and Development

Ms. Sesto reported that Bob Nerney, Town Planner had stated that approximately ninety people attended the public hearing on the first of the month and she offered to submit any comments the committee member may have to Sally Poundstone, P & Z Chairman. She added that the Conservation Commission basicallybasically covered the Tree Committee concerns.

Ms. Throckmorton and Chairman Kaplan expressed their thoughts that comments separate from Conservation should be submitted by the Committee. Chairman Kaplan will submit these.

b. Clear Cutting on Private Property

Chairman Kaplan reported that she had received two comments detailing the negative impacts of clear cutting. She described the difficulties in addressing this because although clear cutting causes problems, home owners want to have the right to cut trees on their property. She added that education to the public would be worthy and asked for a volunteer to write an article to which Ms. Sesto responded affirmatively.. Mr. Meehan suggested that staff contact neighboring towns that may have regulations concerning clear cutting.

Ms. Sesto suggested possible setbacks for clearing trees similar to wetland setbacks and P & Z setbacks to cause let impact to neighboring properties.

Chairman Kaplan welcomed more comments from the Committee.

c. Other

Chairman Kaplan passed out copies of an article from the New York Times entitled "A Museum of Tree That Speak of History".

IV. APPROVAL OF APRIL 8, 2009 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Brown requested that the approval of meeting minutes be moved to the top of the agenda in the future. There was general agreement.

Mr. Brown MOTIONED to approve the minutes of April 8, 2009, SECONDED by Mr. Meehan and carried 5-0-0.

V. ADJOURN

Chairman Kaplan adjourned @8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Padowicz