

**Minutes of the West Norwalk Association Board
January 4, 2016**

Board Members Present: Anthony Carrano, Brian Forschino, Kristin Clemens, Rob Notley, Isabelle Hargrove were in attendance. Ken D'Arinzo was not in attendance.

Joe Fusigno, Stephen Galyas, John Igneri and Tom Livingston attended as guests.

Anthony called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

Rob motioned to approve the December meeting minutes, Kristin seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved the December meeting minutes.

CNNA Meeting for December was cancelled.

No Board members were able to attend the Oak Hills Park Authority Meeting.

Scholarship Process - Isabelle will circulate the application to the Board for recommendations. Isabelle will also coordinate with Brien McMahan High School to discuss timing. The Board discussed whether the community service requirement should be limited to projects within the West Norwalk borders. The Board also discussed raising the scholarship to \$1,500 depending on our cash position. No decision was made and the Board agreed to discuss further at the next meeting.

Five Mile River - Ken, Bob, Stephen are meeting with Mayor Harry Rilling next week to discuss the Five Mile River issues. The Group is trying to get residents from Darien and New Canaan to join the cause as well.

Norwalk Community College Pedestrian Bridge - Joe Fusigno is a teacher at the College and spoke to the Board about the lack of transparency with West Norwalk residents. The Board discussed its concern with the design of the bridge and the concern with the current design of the bridge being the "Gateway" to the entrance of West Norwalk. The current proposal includes seating and congregation areas. It is not simply a walking bridge. The Board also discussed concerns with whether students will use the Bridge and whether it will truly help with traffic. The Board does not see students crossing Richards Avenue as a significant traffic problem. The Board sees the parking situation at the college as a bigger problem. There is also a problem with students driving into and out of the college.

College parking is about equal on both sides of Richards Avenue and most of the classrooms are in the West Campus. It could be argued that if 1/2 of the students are already on the second floor, the bridge might reduce the foot traffic across the street by about 1/2 which could result in a safer environment.

Mr. Fusigno asked the WNA for a statement, in writing, regarding our position on the building of a bridge. We would like to understand the process for construction of the bridge and where it currently stands in the process. The Board needs to get additional facts. Mr. Fusigno believes the project is a done deal. This was confirmed by John Igneri.

Norwalk Common Councilmen Tom Livingston and John Igneri joined the meeting. The bridge cannot go over Richards Avenue without the permission of the City of Norwalk. Mr. Igneri has also spoken with Senator Duff to voice concerns over the building of the bridge. Once the State has their plans, there will

need to be a public hearing this month. The State has told Mr. Igneri and Mr. Livingston that they do intend to have a public meeting. A legal Notice will also need to be put in the newspaper. Once a public hearing is announced, Mr. Igneri and Mr. Livingston intend to set up a meeting with Dr. Levinson to discuss the plans. A bridge will not be able to be built without a "Yes" vote from the Norwalk Common Council. Mr. Igneri does not believe a permit is required to build the bridge but planned to confirm this with City Hall. He was confident that no permit would be needed to build anything on the College property.

Isabelle asked if Mr. Igneri or Mr. Livingston could find out what type of permits would be needed for the College to build the Bridge. The Board thought that if construction would require use of Richards Avenue, the City should have a voice.

Mr. Livingston believes fighting the safety point would be very difficult. He believes the WNA should focus on the "preserving the character of a neighborhood" point. Isabelle noted that there is nothing in any of the City of Norwalk regulations or zoning laws that require this expect for the size of signs. Mr. Igneri believes that we will see changes to the City zoning rules over the next few years.

Mr. Fusigno indicated that all State bonding has been held off until January. Mr. Livingston spoke to Senator Duff who indicated that the Bridge Project (as well as the other two phases) has not been bonded.

Mr. Fusigno told the Board that the bridge is part of a three part plan which includes expansion of the Theater and expansion of the Cafeteria. The City of Norwalk has no say into anything done on either the East or West campus. The College is State of Connecticut property even though Richards Avenue is a town road. Dr. Levinson has called the plan "a done deal".

95/7 Mall Update - Mr. Igneri confirmed that the mall project is moving forward. There have been tweaks to the plans but it is unclear which changes will go through. Current plan is for opening Fall 2018. Permit costs for the mall will be \$5M.

Anthony closed the meeting at 8:35 pm.