

West Norwalk Association June 2019 Board Meeting

Date: June 3, 2019

Board members in attendance: Isabelle Hargrove, Kristin Clemens, Anthony Carrano, Brian Forschino, Ken D'Arinzo, Ted Stepanoff, Rob Notley, Stephen Galyas

Guests in attendance: Brad McKinney

The meeting commenced at 7:38pm.

Old Business

Spring Cleanup

The board members in attendance discussed the results on the 2019 WNA Annual Spring Cleanup event, which took place in April. Overall, the board was dissatisfied with the number of persons that attended the event.

Isabelle expressed her concern about us holding the event on the same date as the citywide cleanup (this is the second year the WNA has held their event concurrent with the citywide cleanup). She believes that people who participate in our cleanup do not commonly perform other civic duties, so, naturally, they will gravitate toward the citywide cleanup over our cleanup.

Kristin also commented that there was less garbage alongside the West Norwalk roads this year than in previous years.

Ken asked the board if we should contact the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts next year and inquire about having scouts attend the cleanup for service hours. Anthony replied that he reached out to the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts this year, but they have many other outdoor activities for service hours; he did not reach out to the Girl Scouts.

Ted stated that the majority of the trash we collect is on residents' property, and asked if people should be reporting large amounts of trash on residents' properties to the city.

Isabelle suggested that next year, we host the event later in the spring than we did this year.

Stop Signs/Speed Enforcement on Weed Avenue

Kristin told the board members in attendance that she has noticed cops monitoring the stop signs on Weed Avenue at least one day each week.

Anthony has reached out to Terry Blake about speed enforcement in this area, as several West Norwalk residents have expressed concerns to the board via email about speeding drivers on these roads. Anthony is waiting for a response from Terry.

Ken informed the board that he spoke to Gay MacLeod a few weeks ago about this issue, and she told him that the traffic near Old Rock Lane has not been too bad since New Canaan implemented the “No Left Turn” traffic enforcement sign.

Blight Issues

Anthony told the board members in attendance that he received an email from a concerned West Norwalk resident in regards to a house on Weed Avenue that has a “junk yard” in their front yard. This house is set back from the road, so this “junk yard” does not immediately stand out to passers-by.

Anthony asked the board members if we can inquire about using a drone to get a clearer image of this supposed “junk yard.” Stephen informed the board that this may be illegal as it would be an infringement on another person’s privacy.

The board will keep an eye out for more emails from this concerned resident.

Spring Social

Anthony has been in communications with LaKota Oaks regarding the 2019 WNA Spring Social. LaKota Oaks asked for a head count of attendees, but Anthony told them that is almost impossible to determine how many people will attend the social due to busy summer schedules.

A LaKota Oaks employee sent Anthony a list of appetizer options and prices. The board was concerned about the cost of holding the Spring Social at LaKota Oaks, which would cost us between \$12.60 and \$16.35 per person, plus a cash bar of \$6 per drink (\$7 for mixed drinks).

Isabelle reminded the board that when we had our 2018 social event at the Oak Hills Restaurant, which was prior to the restaurant’s renovations, the owner charged the WNA and other attendees fair prices for food and drinks. The board discussed this, and decided that it would be best to hold our 2019 Spring Social at Oak Hills.

Isabelle will get in touch with the owner of the Oak Hills Restaurant and inform the board of the estimated cost of the event. She will check if the restaurant is available on June 21st for this event.

Autumn Newsletter

The board members in attendance discussed the costs and benefits of creating and mailing our annual Autumn Newsletter to all West Norwalk residents. Anthony is going to try to get enough content for a newsletter, and Stephen will create the newsletter once Anthony has received final versions of the newsletter’s contents.

Isabelle asked Anthony if we can get updates from LaKota Oaks and Oak Hills. Anthony will get in touch with them.

New Business

April Mailing

The board members in attendance discussed the effectiveness of the April mailing, and why mailing was so much more effective than other mailings such as the annual Autumn Newsletter. In addition, the board discussed the idea of sending out a “Dues Mailing” next year around the same time as this year’s mailing.

Brad suggested that instead of sending both a Dues Mailing and Autumn Newsletter, we send the Dues Mailing with updates on what the WNA has been up to on the back of the Dues Mailing.

In addition, Brad commented on the fact that we sent out the Dues Mailing to residents that had already paid their dues for 2019, and that several residents received two copies of the mailing. Anthony is going to discuss the “multiple copies” issue with the company we use to send our mailings. Next year, Stephen will provide Anthony with a list of all residents that have already paid their dues prior to the Dues Mailing, and he will coordinate with the company we use to send our mailings to ensure that these residents do not receive the Dues Mailing.

Isabelle asked Anthony where the mailing company retrieves the list of addresses in West Norwalk. Anthony will ask the mailing company and report what he finds out at next month’s meeting.

Kristin informed the board that she never received a copy of the Dues Mailing. Anthony will bring this up to the mailing company.

Brian asked if we can provide pre-printed mailing envelopes for this year’s Holiday Party and give them to residents as they take the dues payment forms. The board likes this idea.

This topic will be discussed further during future board meetings.

CNNA

Brad, an attendee of Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhoods Association (CNNA) meetings, brought to the attention of the board members in attendance that for several months, a CNNA member has been using their executive power to build barriers among CNNA local neighborhood association representatives and CNNA board members. According to Brad, many neighborhood associations do not send representatives to CNNA meetings because they do not agree with what the CNNA represents and do not like the way it is run. Brad brought this information to the attention of the WNA board members because, as one of the local neighborhood associations that has a representative at CNNA meetings, he wants us all to know about these issues and ask ourselves if this is a relationship that we want to have.

Isabelle and Ted, our board members that attend these meetings, have noticed this “tension” as well.

Ted commented that he believes the CNNA needs to pick one issue to focus on, rather than denounce everything that the city tries to improve.

Anthony reminded the meeting attendees that if a big issue was ever brought to the attention of WNA, we may need the support of the CNNA. When Anthony asked if important information is disseminated at the CNNA meetings, Brad responded that nothing of great importance has recently been discussed at these meetings.

Isabelle stated that CNNA representatives need to work together to mitigate this “tension.”

Ken and Brad are concerned that people who are aware of this “tension” may have their views of the WNA misconstrued. Rob commented that despite the “tensions” in the CNNA, the city employees and representatives that we communicate with certainly know how we feel about the issues discussed at CNNA, so we do not need to be worried about these representatives associating our beliefs with those of CNNA. Ted then asked why we need our CNNA connection if we have several important connections with city employees and representatives.

Brad suggested that the WNA send a letter to CNNA saying that they need to mitigate this “tension,” as we, an associated that is represented as these meetings, are concerned.

Isabelle will talk to the other representatives and board members at the next CNNA meeting and report to us what she finds out at our next board meeting.

“Alien Plants”

A West Norwalk resident reached out to us about “alien plants” that are extremely difficult to destroy and are becoming overpopulated in certain areas of West Norwalk. Anthony drove by the mentioned area and noticed that one neighbor was taming the plants, while the person across the street has not done so.

Isabelle mentioned that we should discuss this issue in our Autumn Newsletter.

Rob suggested that we research how to destroy this type of plant and send an email blast to all West Norwalk residents with this information. In addition, Ted suggested the email blast contain information about how to destroy common invasive plants.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.