

West Norwalk Association March 2019 Board Meeting

Date: March 11, 2019

Board Members in Attendance: Brian Forschino, Ted Stepanoff, Stephen Galyas, Rob Notley, Anthony Carrano, Ken D'Arinzo, Isabelle Hargrove

Guests in Attendance: Bill Mitchell, Anna Holbrook, Julie Bostwick, Steve Gardner, Irina Marquis, Jennifer Hartmann, Isabel Molina, Leigh Christopher-Morris, Paul Cantor, Rich Roller, Yvonne LoPaur, Lucy Dathan, Deane Evans, Ron Paladino, Pia Gille O'Connell, Harry Rilling, Sergeant Kruger

The meeting commenced at 7:32pm.

Old Business

New Canaan Traffic Regulation

A significant number of guests, consisting of both West Norwalk and New Canaan residents, attended our board meeting to discuss the New Canaan Traffic Regulation change that has been in effect since the end of February 2019. The West Norwalk Association board members provided the guests with an overview of what we know regarding this issue, as well as what was discussed at the New Canaan Police Department community meeting (pertaining to this issue) on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 and who we have been in touch with regarding this issue. Comments that were made by the guests were the following:

- Irina Marquis has noticed an increase in traffic since September 2018; prior to this, she did not frequently experience cars driving on her road. Since then, it has become increasingly difficult to get out of her driveway during the times of rush-hour traffic (occasionally, she must wait for more than 10 cars to pass by her house before she can safely leave her driveway). Since the no-left-turn regulation was put into effect on the corner of Marvin Ridge Road and Nursery Road, northbound traffic has increased. She believes that this traffic will further increase with the installation of tolls on Connecticut parkways/highways (as proposed by Governor Malloy). She asked if it would be possible to make these roads "local traffic only" to eliminate the issue of Waze sending morning commuters down these roads.
- Sergeant Kruger informed the residents that there is not much the police department can do about the "Waze" issue. The Norwalk Police Department plans to step up patrols near Weed Avenue, Fillow Street, and Nursery Road. The Department of Public Works has been notified of these traffic changes.
- Anthony Carrano asked Sergeant Kruger if he has heard about similar traffic issues from nearby police departments. Sergeant Kruger said he has not heard of similar traffic issues. Sergeant Kruger also said that Norwalk police officers have pulled over four people for speeding in this area. The police department is trying to get officers into this area several times per week.

- Another guest commented that the traffic flow is at its most congested around 8:00am.
- Several other guests reported an increase in traffic near Little Fox Lane, Fox Run Road, Betmarlea Road, and Weed Avenue.
- In general, the guests and WNA board members agree that Waze is the biggest cause of this problem. Since the no-turn sign was installed, residents have noticed an increase in traffic coming down Weed Avenue at high speeds, as well as an increase in cars traveling up Route 123 to Old Norwalk Road. Clearly, the traffic patterns are changing. To decrease the traffic flowing down residential roads, neighbors have been reporting accidents on said roads, causing Waze to re-direct the traffic to other areas. However, this is only a temporary solution, as one's Waze credibility decreases as other Waze users mark these accidents as being incorrect reports.
- Several neighbors asked if it would be possible to install a "local traffic only" sign at the intersection of Route 123 and Nursery Road. Mayor Rilling responded by saying that it is very unlikely that this would be put into effect.
- Anthony Carrano [read from a traffic study](#) conducted by Frederick P. Clark Associates for the city of New Canaan regarding this traffic issue. According to the study, the best of course of action that the town of New Canaan could take was to take no action.
- Several guests openly discussed potential traffic/road modifications that may lessen the negative effects of these traffic regulation changes, such as:
 - Speed bumps (Mayor Harry Rilling said this would be very difficult to implement)
 - Raised crosswalks? (Mayor Harry Rilling said that there are limitations to where these can be used)
- Another guest informed the meeting attendees that towns in other states have faced similar traffic congestion problems that have resulted from mobile navigation applications such as Waze, and encouraged the attendees to conduct research on the steps that the other towns took to mitigate the issue; through this research, a solution may arise for the towns of Norwalk and New Canaan.
- The Norwalk Police Department is working to have traffic counters installed in Norwalk so the town of Norwalk can analyze the effects of New Canaan's traffic regulation changes, and so the Norwalk Police Department can provide the New Canaan Police Department with additional data that can be used to determine the effectiveness of the new traffic signs.

The West Norwalk Association will continue to monitor this issue and inform West Norwalk residents and meeting attendees of updates as we learn more about the steps that both the towns of Norwalk and New Canaan are taking to determine a more effective, permanent solution to this traffic issue.

[LaKota Oaks Paddle Tennis Courts](#)

Last week, Anthony Carrano met with LaKota Oaks executives to discuss the idea of installing the paddle ball courts (which will be primarily used by the Tokeneke paddle ball club) on the large field alongside the main building that borders Little Fox Lane, as this would move the courts further away from residents living on Huckleberry Lane and minimize the noise and light pollution that results from these courts. The LaKota Oaks executives agreed with Anthony that this is a good idea; however, in addition to the paddle ball courts, they want to build an 80-room addition off the back of the main building (toward Little Fox Lane) and install an indoor/outdoor pool alongside the paddle courts. Anthony informed the LaKota Oaks executives that their neighbors will not support a hospitality variance, which is what they need to make these changes. The WNA board agrees with Anthony and is concerned with LaKota Oaks' new plan.

Rob Notley stated that we need to talk to the Little Fox residents about these potential additions at LaKota Oaks.

Isabelle Hargrove commented that the inherent problem of the situation – the zoning of the property – is not being addressed, and that LaKota Oaks is going to continue to have the same issues that they currently face unless they come up with a better solution.

Anthony Carrano suggested that, if LaKota Oaks really wants a hospitality variance, they should inquire about making sure that the variance only exists under the current ownership of the property.

Brian Forschino reminded the WNA board that six months ago, LaKota Oaks said that they were not going to ask for a hospitality variance; now, they are asking for the variance.

Lucy Dathan informed the WNA board that she is knowledgeable of this sport and that LaKota Oaks would need to sell many memberships to make money from the paddle courts.

Isabelle suggested that if LaKota Oaks wants to grow, we should demand more easement to decrease the amount of usable land. Anthony commented that there is no other available on which LaKota Oaks can build.

Anthony will continue to be in touch with LaKota Oaks and report any changes at the WNA April 2019 Board Meeting.

New Business

Treasurer's Report

As of tonight's meeting, there have been no transactions regarding our account.

CNNA Executive Committee

The Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhood Associations will be accepting nomination for their executive committee, and Isabelle Hargrove nominated herself to be the WNA representative on the CNNA Executive Committee. The WNA board members in attendance approved of this vote.

Spring Social

Anthony stated that would prefer us holding our Spring Social event on a Thursday evening; he believes that we will not have as many attendees if we hold the social on a Sunday afternoon.

Rob Notley said that if we hold the event on a Thursday evening, it will be harder for people who work late during the week to attend the event, and that we may get a different crowd if we hold the event on a Sunday afternoon.

Lucy Dathan commented that more families with kids will come on a weekend afternoon, and that we should consider reaching out to Fox Run Elementary School and inquiring if they will send information about the event to parents whose kids attend the school. Could we send anything through Fox Run? Isabelle Hargrove agreed with this idea.

Ken recommended that we consider holding the event on a Friday or Saturday night. The WNA board members in attendance agreed with this idea.

Anthony Carrano will be in touch with LaKota Oaks regarding the possibility of us holding our event on their premises on a Friday evening, and will report back with their response at next month's board meeting.

Spring Cleanup

The WNA board members in attendance agreed that we should hold our Spring Cleanup in conjunction with the city-wide cleanup day on April 27, 2019. We will send information out to the neighbors in the coming days about this event.

Oak Hills Verizon Cell Tower

Ron Paladino informed the board members in attendance that Oak Hills is looking at leasing space for Verizon to put up a cell tower.

Lucy Dathan said that New Canaan residents recently dealt with a similar issue. According to her research, these cell towers will be considered out of date within the next five years once 5G, a new and improved cellular technology, is released. There is a constant hum that can be heard while in close proximity to these cell towers due to generator electricity.

Oak Hills will receive several hundred thousands of dollars per year to lease this area.

Tom Livingston informed the attendees that Oak Hills would need state approval to do this. He will find out more information about this plan, and one of the WNA board members will reach out to Paul Cantor for more information.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm.