

West Norwalk Association October 2019 Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 7, 2019

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

Guests in Attendance: Lucy Dathan

The meeting commenced at 7:33pm.

Old Business

Treasurer's Report

No deposits or withdrawals have occurred since our previous board meeting.

Annual Meeting

The West Norwalk Association has confirmed the date and time of the 2019 Annual Meeting with Oak Hills Clubhouse Grille. This event will take place on October 24th and start at 7:00pm.

The board members and guests in attendance briefly discussed the types of food that should be served at this meeting. All attendees of tonight's meeting agreed that desserts will be served.

Anthony asked the attendees how the main forum should proceed at the meeting. Ken mentioned that he still has the blue and purple balls that were used at last year's Annual Meeting to determine the order in which candidates will speak. The board will use this method at this year's meeting unless another board member suggests a better idea prior to October 24th.

Anthony confirmed with the board members in attendance that mayoral and council candidates will have five minutes to speak and all others at large will have three minutes to speak. The board unanimously agreed.

Ken was concerned that the board has not considered the possibility of members of the Board of Education attending that may wish to speak. Anthony said that if this situation occurs, we will let them speak briefly.

Ted volunteered to run the forum at the 2019 Annual Meeting. All board members in attendance agreed with this decision. Anthony provided Ted with a list of people who will be speaking.

Anthony will give a speech at the beginning of the 2019 Annual Meeting. Stephen will send an email blast to the West Norwalk neighbors. Brian will bring 2020 Membership forms. Kristin will bring a cash box.

Holiday Party

Anthony has confirmed that the 2019 Holiday Party will take place on December 6th at the Oak Hills Clubhouse Grille. The event shall begin at 7:00pm.

Anthony will talk with the owner of the Clubhouse Grille in regards to food options and potential costs of the event. Once Anthony has this information, he will share it with the board members.

Several board members expressed concerns about a lack of holiday decorations at this venue in previous years. Other board members reminded everyone that the Clubhouse Grille restaurant has recently been renovated and may be more decorated this year than in prior years. This is a topic that will be discussed closer to December 6th.

Annual Newsletter

Anthony received a digital copy of the 2017 Annual Newsletter from the printer, and will continue to put the 2019 Annual Newsletter together.

New Business

September 2019 New Canaan Traffic Regulation Meeting

Following the September 2019 New Canaan Traffic Regulation Meeting at the New Canaan Police Department, Anthony met with two city officials, Tom and Jessica, and drove with them through the areas of concern to get a better understanding of potential ways to combat the increasing amount of traffic in West Norwalk during the morning work commute.

The board members in attendance admitted that the route that morning commuters were taking prior to the no-left-turn sign being installed in New Canaan was the optimal route. The city officials told Anthony that speed bumps cannot be installed on the roads that travel through the areas of concern, but they can install additional stop signs to increase the time it takes to travel these routes.

The board members in attendance agree that the best solution to this issue would be to install a no-right-on-red sign at the end of the southbound exit ramp from the Merritt Parkway that dumps traffic into West Norwalk and New Canaan. This sign would increase the time it takes to get off the exit ramp and onto the routes that travel through the areas of concern, and would hopefully persuade people to instead take a left out of the Merritt Parkway exit ramp. However, this sign cannot be installed without state approval because the road on which it would be installed is a state road.

Lucy informed the board members in attendance that, most of the time, there is positive cooperation between Norwalk and New Canaan officials, police officers, etc.

Brian said that at this meeting, the New Canaan board that was holding the meeting was receiving complaints from both Norwalk and New Canaan residents about the no-left-turn sign, but none of the New Canaan board members seemed to care about the complaints.

Ken stated that people at the meeting were complaining about cops rarely being stationed at the no-left-turn sign to enforce the rule.

Anthony believes that the West Norwalk Association and the City of Norwalk need to collaborate with New Canaan to try to keep traffic on the Merritt Parkway.

Lucy said that, if we want, she can put in a state request for the no-right-on-red sign for the Merritt Parkway exit ramp. She also said that there has not been a traffic study in this area. Brian thinks that we should do this sooner rather than later because the state may need to conduct a traffic study before they install such a sign at this location.

Brian expressed a concern that Norwalk appears to care as much about this issue as New Canaan, because the West Norwalk Association has attempted to work with the City of Norwalk to combat this issue via the installation of traffic counters and speed radars, yet neither has been seen to fruition.

Unfortunately, no one knows how many complaints about this no-left-turn sign have been reported to the City of Norwalk by Norwalk residents.

Ted informed the attendees that the first half of the CNNA forum that took place in September 2019 consisted of complaints from residents about the increase in traffic in Norwalk, with the no-left-turn sign being one of the most frequent complaints.

Ken mentioned that he has noticed a significant amount of traffic congestion on Fallow St. and West Norwalk Rd. during the morning commute hours.

Anthony reminded everyone that the increase in traffic throughout Norwalk is a result of the increasing number of new housing buildings being built across the town, as well as an increase in NCC attendees.

Anthony told the city officials that he met with (Tom and Jessica) that he thinks speed radars should be installed to stop people from speeding on these roads.

This topic will be included in Anthony's speech at the 2019 Annual Meeting.

CNNA Updates

Ted attended the September 2019 CNNA Forum. He reported that it was very well attended and that there were many complaints expressed by attendees with regards to traffic congestion in Norwalk.

Lucy was also in attendance and reported that several attendees were concerned about the effects that the South Norwalk mall will have on traffic congestion in South Norwalk. She mentioned that a traffic study was conducted in this area, and Ted added that the persons in charge of this project are required to perform another traffic study after the construction of the mall has completed.

Ted also reported that adaptive traffic lights, which vary their length depending on the traffic in the area, will be installed to minimize traffic congestion in this area.

New Members

The board members in attendance briefly discussed ways to grow the size of the West Norwalk Association board.

Lucy offered to put a WNA flyer on her website for us. Stephen will create the flyer and send it to her.

Brian asked if we should send monthly email blasts to West Norwalk neighbors about when and where our upcoming board meetings will take place, in hopes that more people will attend the meetings.

Anthony reminded us that people only come out if they have an issue. We tried Welcome Baskets a few years ago, but this had no effect on the number of people that attended our board meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26pm.