

AGENDA

Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee (OHPNAC)

Meeting Tuesday, July 9, 2019, 7:00 PM

2nd Floor Lounge, Norwalk, CT City Hall

Call to Order

Attendance

Approval of previous minutes: June 4, 2019.

Goals of the committee: Review of accomplishments & future priorities

- More precisely defining the boundaries of the “no-build” areas to be preserved; more securely protecting those areas as permanent open space. *Elsa & Larry have coordinates.*
- Find funding or partners to implement the planting plans for the Fountain Garden and Great Lawn areas, especially increasing native plants, pollinators, wildlife habitat. *Supporters of Oak Hills Park 501(c)3 update.*
- Maintain the trails and continue improving them (accessibility, control of invasives). *Elsa has discussed with Anthony Carrano (Eagle Scout project 2018-19). Photos of trail stairs on steep areas.*
- Kiosk, trail map, interpretive signs, plaques to identify trees, wildlife.
- Educational opportunities, especially for young people.
- Marketing, Budget, Time Frame: *separate email list for nature & restaurant. Elsa has reached out to Boy Scout and Girl Scout contacts through Sheila Notley.*
- Encouraging sustainable land use practices in Oak Hills Park. *OHPNAC thanks Jim Schell and Anthony Hylton for Pollinator Pathway participation and ongoing maintenance.*

Reports

- Supporters of Oak Hills Park 501(c)3 is alive and well. *Thanks to Audrey, Lisa, Marie, and Larry & Sharyn and others for their contributions. We have an interest-bearing checking account at Norwalk Bank & Trust (Connecticut Community Bank) <https://www.ccbankonline.com/>. The 501(c)3 officers will meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6 PM (prior to OHPA monthly meeting). Suggestions to revisit possibilities for grant funding. Suggestions for a “friend raiser” wine & cheese party and/or a family movie night on the Great Lawn, collaborating with OHPA.*

Accounting: General, Nature Center, Golf Course, and Tennis categories.

- Nature photos/artwork in restaurant entry space. *OK by restaurant mgr. Joe Montalto, OHPA Chair Bill Waters, and OHPA vote (2/19 meeting). Audrey working with fabricator. Funding via Supporters of OHP 501(c)3. Awaiting lighting fixture (Ed Ruiz).*
- Events:
 - CT Forest & Parks Assn. Trails Day 2019 (<https://www.ctwoodlands.org/ct-trails-weekend>) took place Saturday, June 1, 3-5 PM. Thanks to all who publicized and acted as ambassadors/hosts that day!
 - Birdwatching walk was led by Chris Bosak Saturday, May 4, 8 AM. Thanks to Chris for the list of the birds we saw and heard, and to Audrey & Mark for posting it on our website.
 - Scout troops were unable to attend Trails Day because they already had activities on

June 1. Consider a Scouts event this summer: trail cleanup, geo-positioning activity, pollinator lesson? Joe Montalto has proposed a restaurant cooking class for scouts.

- Housing kids visited; arrange this again this summer? *Elsa has contacted Housing.*
- For more ideas, see other organizations, e.g. Norwalk Land Trust, Norwalk River Valley Trail Assn., Norwalk River Watershed Assn., Pollinator Pathway.
- Fountain Garden and Great Lawn status: *Thanks to Lisa and the others for planting the Fountain Garden Pollinator Pathway test area in the east side bed next to the fountain. Elsa has tested Burnout weed killer on gravel areas and found it effective, although preferred method is torch burning.*
- Design and placement of identification plaques, ground-mounted interpretive signs. *Elsa attended Norwalk Tree Alliance meeting 6/27 and informed them we still want to do this.*
- Kiosk: Here is the one at Farm Creek as an example:



- Trail map updated by Audrey Cozzarin.
- We need to keep Oak Hills Park website updated. See <http://www.oakhillsgc.com/rest/nature-advisory-committe> and <http://www.oakhillsgc.com/rest/oak-hills-park-walking-trail-map>
- Norwalk city website (Rec & Parks) has a link to OHP website.
- Plant Identification tags/signs and raising money for them. *Pine Island Cemetery has informative signs of the type we might want. Tree Advisory Committee has design for tree ID tags and would come help us identify trees to tag.*
- McNeil Design Collaborative annotated map and survey need review (help from Alexis Cherichetti?) to provide exact coordinates of boundaries between nature areas & golf areas. *We could propose a “geo-positioning” activity to scout troops.*
- Educational outreach, emphasis on appreciating and protecting nature.

Old Business

- Health Dept. brochure & map in progress. Contact will be Theresa Argondezzi until a replacement for Kaitlin Latham is hired. <https://www.norwalkct.org/1640/Walking-Maps>
- Articles for website about nature with tips for environmentally friendly practices. *OPHA Chairman Carl Dickens is working with Jim Schell and Ed Ruiz to draft a section for OHP website about environment / sustainable practices.*
- Privately funded benches by arborist Larry Brown, and/or “not-so-rustic bench” idea by Ilana L. Appleby, Rustic Design Elements (tabled)
- Letter of intent to mayor and Common Council committee chair re “old leaf dump” and “niblick” parcels, approved unanimously as “park land” by full Common Council Oct 13, 2015 (tabled)

New Business

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Next meeting date: Tuesday, August 6, in OHP old admin building. NOTE our September meeting (9/3) will also be in OHP old admin building, but beginning with October (10/1) we will reserve a room in City Hall because of the need for heat.

Adjournment