

TW Zoom Hearing July 11, 2024 4p Opening Statement by Presiding Official

My name is Tom Failla. I am the Town of Weston Tree Warden. Today, I serve as the presiding officer over this hearing. This Public Hearing takes under the provisions of CGS Ch 451 Sect. 23-59 because I receive three written objections to the June 25, 2024 posting of tree removal notices in connection the Town Center and Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project LOTCIP L 157-001. The request for removal of trees impacted by the project came June 12, 2024, from the Town Administrator on behalf for the First Selectwomen and was done after careful review with the town's supervising project engineer. The project plans include:

1. Weston and School roads intersection widening and sidewalks requiring the removal of 21 dead or live municipal trees six inches or larger in diameter and many saplings and seedlings less than six inches in diameter.
2. A Sidewalk along the south side Lords Highway from Revson Field to Old Hyde requiring the removal of eight municipal trees larger than seven inches in diameter
3. A Sidewalk from Weston Road along the north side of Norfield Road requiring the removal of one tree 50 ft west of the west entrance to Town Hall.

A detailed list of the noticed trees has been available on the Tree Warden page since the notices were posted on the trees.

With me to assist with this hearing are: Nicholas Bamonte, from the town attorney's office, who will serve as parliamentarian to answer procedural questions, and Felippo Scandizzo, town land use administrator, who will help with the meeting technology and take minutes.

As the town's tree warden, I have statutory authority (CGS Ch 451 Sect. 23-59) over the care and control of municipal trees and shrubs. This includes assessing the wellness of trees on municipal property including those along town rights of way, near buildings and areas where vehicles and pedestrians gather or pass. I was first appointed the town's Tree Warden by the Board of Selectmen in July 2020 after serving as deputy tree warden since 2019 and obtaining tree warden certification through the state of Connecticut and state Tree Warden Association and completing a course of study in arboriculture.

The June 25 posting on the trees started a ten-day period in which the public could send written comments, which I have received and now posted on the Tree Warden page of the town website. Because written objections have been received, the law requires that I conduct a hearing. This administrative hearing scheduled for 4 p.m. July 11, 2024 on Zoom complies with Conn. Gen. Statutes 23-59. It was legally noticed July 8, 2024 on the Weston Town Clerk's bulletin board the Town of Weston website under Legal Notices and the Tree

Warden page and published in The Hour of Norwalk, CT. The notice was also emailed to interested parties and posted in each area where the trees are located. All documents related to this hearing have been posted on the Tree Warden page on the town website and are part of the record.

Before I take comments, here are the ground rules for the hearing:

First, this hearing is for members of the public to offer comments relative to the notice. You will be recognized by using the button to raise your hand. When your turn comes, please state your name and address. Please limit comments to three minutes. Please avoid repeating information. In the meantime, please mute your audio. If anyone wants to submit comments in writing, they may do so by sending them to treewarden@westonct.gov before this hearing closes

Second, the Tree Warden is here to listen fairly and impartially. I will not engage in a discussion about the reason for the notice of removal, which has already been established on the notices and in this opening statement.

Third, under the statute Sec. 23-59, the Tree Warden has three days from the close of this hearing to render a written decision. The decision will be informed by comments at this hearing and documents posted on the Tree Warden page.

The hearing is now open for public comment.

Closing comment: I believe we have heard all the comments. At this point, the public hearing is closed. No more information will be accepted. The tree warden will render a written decision within three days, which will be posted on the area of the trees and emailed to the Town of Administrator, First Selectwoman and interested parties. It will also be posted on the Town Clerk's bulletin board, the town web site under Legal Decisions and the Tree Warden Page. Sect. 23-59 states: "the party aggrieved by such decision may, within ten days, appeal therefrom to the superior court.