



## ***Operations Committee - Board of Representatives***

John Zelinsky, Jr., Co-Chair    Joseph Coppola, Jr., Co-Chair

# **REPORT of Meeting & Public Hearing**

**Date:** Wednesday, June 23, 2010  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Democratic Caucus Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard

The Operations Committee met as indicated above. Present were Co-Chairs Zelinsky and Coppola and Committee Member Reps. Adams, Gabriele, Merritt, Raduazzo, Taylor and White; absent/excused was Committee Member Rep. Mallozzi. Also present were Ernie Orgera, Director of Operations; Lou Casolo, City Engineer; and Dan Colleluori, Solid Waste; Philip Damico and Ron Markey of the Parks Department; Gillian Ivory and James Santagorola members of the public.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Invitee (or designee)</b>
1. <a href="#">O28.006</a>	RESOLUTION; <u>for public hearing &amp; final adoption</u> , establishing a recycling tipping fee of \$15 per ton.	<b>ITEM APPROVED 8-0-0</b>

The public hearing was opened at 7:10 p.m.

One person spoke in support of the Resolution. He says it will reduce MSW in Stamford and this will result in positive revenue for the City.

The public hearing closed at 7:20 p.m.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Item was approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Coppola, Zelinsky, Adams, Gabriele, Merritt, Raduazzo, White and Taylor in favor).

2. O28.008	REVIEW; administration's planning related to staff reductions in the Engineering Department.	<b>REPORT MADE</b>
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Lou Casolo explained reinventing a department takes time but he has several ideas and plans. He states the department has lost 7 positions, about 40% of the department, plus 2 clerk of the works positions. He plans on initiating the following:

- Seeking 4 Clerk of the Works positions (requires Board of Reps approval)
- Ranking projects – Prioritizing projects by importance
- Looking at outside grants
- Income from construction projects in Stamford (Hospital – over \$500 Million and Southend \$400 million)

- WPCA for some potential Charge Backs
- Stimulus Funds
- Work close with Facilities by improving maintenance on present equipment to extend life
- Possible deferring of projects with Administration approval
- Delegate work throughout the Department

The Committee commended Mr. Casolo on handling and working through this tough situation.

A motion to suspend the rules to take up O28.009 was made and seconded, and approved by a vote of 8-0-0. (Reps. Coppola, Zelinsky, Adams, Gabriele, Merritt, Raduazzo, White and Taylor in favor).

### **Suspension of the Rules**

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|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <a href="#">O28.009</a> | SENSE OF THE BOARD RESOLUTION;<br>encouraging a reduction in the width of sidewalks<br>on Vine Road in order to preserve existing trees. | <b>ITEM APPROVED</b><br><b>5-0-3</b> |
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Mr. Zelinsky explained that he went to a public hearing involving Vine Road and sidewalks, and the public, in general, would prefer to save as many trees as possible, even if it means decreasing the width of the proposed 5-foot wide sidewalks. He called the Law Department to confirm whether the 5 feet width was required, and if so, if the Board had the authority to reduce it to 4 feet. This reduction will save 12 to 13 trees. Mr. Mullin of the Law Department responded with the following:

1. There is presently no width specification for public sidewalks contained within the Stamford Code of Ordinances. The 5-foot width requirement is embodied within the Engineering Department's sidewalk construction specifications sheet that I had provided you with.
2. A person who feels aggrieved by a decision of the Stamford Tree Warden has the right to take an appeal to the Superior Court similar in kind to an appeal taken via the civil citation hearing process embodied in Chapter 97 of the Stamford Code of Ordinances.
3. While the Board of Representatives cannot presently revise any existing ordinance regarding sidewalk width requirements, the Board could theoretically adopt a new ordinance containing one – as it already has with regard to required roadway width pursuant to Chapter 216 of the Code of Ordinances.

Mr. Damico from the Parks Department went to the public hearing and was upset at the fact that the public didn't think the City cared about their concerns. He agreed that the 5 feet was a tremendous amount of space and would rather narrow the width to 3.5 feet to save some trees.

Mr. Casolo said the City followed guidelines. The guidelines are not ADA or the Zoning regulations, but are safety standards. Reducing the widths of the sidewalks can still have an impact on the roots and curbs. He feels reducing sidewalk widths will be

substituting risk and potentially increased claims to the City vs. saving trees. He recommended keeping the 5 foot sidewalks.

Mr. Damico stated he is very aware of what may occur regarding liability to the City.

Rep. White would like to find a way to save all of the trees. He feels taking down the trees takes away the character of the neighborhoods. He thinks it is commendable to try and save 13 trees but would like to see a system or plan that the City can come up with that will save all trees. He also noted that new projects within the city did not use the 5 foot sidewalk guideline. Mr. Casolo wanted to clarify that every tree being removed was being replaced and the sidewalks currently there are already at 4 feet.

Rep. Taylor drove down Vine Road and feels the 5 feet would be overkill. She stated that the Urban Transitway project has very narrow sidewalks and the city needs a more cohesive approach regarding sidewalk guidelines. Rep White agreed regarding narrow roads in the urban transitway and added that they are only on one side of the road. Mr. Casolo stated the narrow sidewalks in the Urban Transitway project is because of the utility poles.

Rep. Raduazzo stated he loves trees too but was concerned with the possibility of liabilities against the City. He said the majority of the trees that make the street are on private property so it will not take away from the neighborhood. He asked if there is a happy medium.

Rep. Zelinsky stated that Mr. Casalo is following guidelines. He suggested different guidelines for residential areas verse commercial areas.

Rep. Coppola agrees with the reduction to 3.5 feet. He does not see it being a hazard or liability.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Item was approved by a vote of 5-0-3 (Reps. Coppola, Zelinsky, Gabriele, White and Taylor in favor; Reps. Adams, Merritt and Raduazzo abstained).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Coppola, Co-Chair