



**Town of West Hartford Department of Public
Works Public Hearing Minutes
Wednesday March 19, 2025 at 4:00 pm
West Hartford Town Hall, Room 400**

I. Meeting Opening – Call to Order

Director of Public Works John Phillips called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

II. Explanation of Hearing Guidelines

Director of Public Works, John Phillips outlined the structure of the hearing.

Director Phillips introduced Town Engineer Greg Sommers, who provided a presentation on the proposed removal of 36 trees along LaSalle Road and the intersection of South Main Street/Ellsworth Road. Mr. Sommers noted that the proposed removal of trees is due to the declining health and appearance of the trees in consideration, safety concerns related to falling limbs and/or uprooted sidewalk pavers, and in response to a comprehensive infrastructure improvement plan for West Hartford Center. Details of the infrastructure improvement can be found at www.westhartfordct.gov/WHCenter. Mr. Sommers explained that although 36 trees are proposed to be removed, the WH Center infrastructure improvement civil engineer Stantec provided a landscape plan that includes a variety of trees with five species that will help diversify the street landscape. He noted that the proposed plan provides for “Silva Cells” technology that allows below-grade root control systems that will allow trees to grow in 4x4 spaces while maximizing space below the sidewalk.

III. Comments from Interested Parties

Scott Boden, 26 West Hill Drive, submitted a letter to Director Phillips that was incorporated into the record. Mr. Boden expressed his strong opposition to the proposed removal of healthy, mature and thriving trees. Mr. Boden noted that the loss of trees would be a significant loss to the community, which benefits from charm in the center, reduction in urban heat, and air quality improvements by having the trees. Mr. Boden noted that it may be short-sighted to remove the mature trees and replace them with smaller trees and asked that the Town prioritize the maintenance of existing, healthy trees.

John Romer, 63 Greenhurst Road, expressed concern that the proposed removal of trees is in response to a desire by local restaurants to expand their dining footprint. He notes that he does not support removing trees for the benefit of the restaurants.

Evan Antaramicen, 48 Beverly Road, noted that while he was initially concerned that the Town would not replant trees, the Town Engineer's presentation provided some reassurance. Mr. Antaramicen expressed some outstanding concerns that removing existing trees and replacement with slower-growing trees would be extreme and detrimental to the street landscape and charm on LaSalle Road. He urged the Town to find a way to maintain some of the existing trees, if possible, and to hold additional public meetings to spread awareness of the proposed removal of trees.

Robert Garrey, 147 Milton Street, noted that he was surprised to see the proposed plan that includes certain large tree species. He stated that he appreciates the thought and inclusion of silva cells and trees that will tolerate street conditions, and he hopes that the Town will consider planting medium trees as opposed to saplings.

IV. Adjournment

Hearing no other member of the public who wished to speak, Mr. Philips closed the public hearing. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.