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**The Advocate:**

<http://www.norwalkadvocate.com/news/local/scn-sa-nor.bumps3may09,0,1636270.story?coll=nor-news-local-headlines>

## **Plan to install traffic-slowing devices hits a bump**

By Brian Lockhart  
Staff Writer

May 9, 2004

NORWALK -- Next month, residents of 16 city streets will decide whether to approve installation of speed humps in their neighborhoods.

An additional 15 roads are being considered by the Department of Public Works for the traffic-slowing devices next year.

Since 2001, 15 streets have had humps installed at cost of more than \$300,000.

For many proponents, the humps, which are wider than traditional speed bumps, have been worth the time and money.

"I've never heard anybody have any complaints once they've been put in," said Laurel Lindstrom, chairwoman of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, formerly Advocates for Calm Traffic. "The ones who have them are thrilled."

The one-time cost of about \$3,000 for a speed hump is cheaper than repeatedly posting police speed traps on a road, Lindstrom said.

Mayor Alex Knopp and Richard Linnartz, who manages the speed-hump program for the Public Works Department, said they have not received any requests to remove the devices once installed.

"The feedback I've received from residents on the streets where they're located has been extremely positive," Knopp said. "The only questions that have been raised concern either aesthetic issues or people who do not want (a speed hump) in front of their house."

Police Chief Harry Rilling said speed humps are an effective tool in combating speeding in the city.

"It's not logistically possible for us to have radar and speed traps on every street where there's a problem," Rilling said.

Some members of the Norwalk Common Council, however, said they believe the city should re-evaluate the program to better qualify its success and justify the expense.

"We just can't continue spending \$100,000 a year on speed humps," said Bruce Kimmel, Democratic president of the Common Council.

Kimmel and other council members are concerned the humps are beginning to shift one residential

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neighborhood's traffic problems onto another, resulting in more speed-hump requests from neighboring streets.

"The process is not based on a plan, but on petitions and public sentiment," Kimmel said. "They slow traffic down, (but) a lot of motorists adjust routes. This is the real dilemma."

The Southwestern Regional Planning Agency developed a traffic-calming "toolbox" in 1998 that area municipalities such as Norwalk could implement.

Norwalk's use of speed humps began in about 2000 with a pilot program that saw them installed at the Roodner Court public-housing complex in South Norwalk and the Colonial Village public-housing complex in the central part of the city.

Since his election in 2001, Knopp has supported \$100,000 in his capital budget for traffic-calming measures, most of which is spent on speed humps.

Neighborhood requests to install speed humps are not easily approved in Norwalk, Linnartz said. DPW begins by examining the existing length and width of a roadway.

"A lot of roads in Norwalk don't have the proper alignment or curves or are too steep," Linnartz said.

DPW also performs traffic counts and seeks the approval of fire and police officials to address concerns about slowing down emergency response times.

If a street makes it through the review, Linnartz then mails letters to residents of the affected neighborhood, asking them to respond whether they are for or against the humps. At least two-thirds, or 66 percent, of the residents must back the installation of the speed humps.

Notices were recently mailed to residents of the current batch of roads under consideration -- Clinton, Delaware, Lenox, Magnolia, Melrose, and Oak Hill avenues; Crockett, First, Glasser, Rome and Silk streets; Devonshire and Dock roads; Old Trolley Way; and Sunlit Drive and Gregory Boulevard.

A public information session, hosted by the Common Council's Public Works Committee, has been scheduled for June 1 on these roads.

Though hailed by many in Norwalk, many national groups oppose the speed-hump trend in Connecticut and across the country.

Newington resident Sheldon Wishnick represents the Wisconsin-based National Motorists Association in Connecticut.

"Most of the traffic controls that are put in place are not rooted in scientific principles. They are rooted in expediency and politics," Wishnick said. "All you're doing is diverting traffic from one neighborhood to another neighborhood."

Knopp said he has seen plenty of research that proves speed humps have a significant impact on reducing pedestrian accidents, with a recent study in Oakland, Calif., proving a correlation between presence of speed humps and a reduction of injuries to children.

"Between 1995 and 2000, Oakland (installed) 1,600 speed humps in residential streets, (and) children in a block saw a 2.5 times reduction in their chances of being hit by a vehicle on their street," said Knopp.

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**May 4, 2004**

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**The Hour:**

**East Norwalk residents air their concerns**

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**May 2, 2004**

**The Hour:**

**District C forum scheduled for Monday night at library**

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**April 28, 2004**

**The Advocate:**

**Council names two to fill ZBA vacancies**

By John Nickerson  
Staff Writer

April 28, 2004

NORWALK -- The Common Council voted unanimously last night to appoint Zoning Commission Secretary Joseph Santo and East Norwalk Neighborhood Association board member Gordon Tully to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The appointments, recommended by Mayor Alex Knopp, were made after ZBA Chairman Timothy Plunkett and member Anne Greismer unexpectedly quit the board two weeks ago.

The five-member board meets twice a month to decide whether exceptions to city zoning regulations, called variances, will be granted to nonconforming building projects around the city.

Knopp said he hopes the appointments will keep the board from granting variances too easily without legal justification.

Plunkett and Greismer, both Republicans, charged that some members were being rude to them, as well as applicants and lawyers that came before the board.

The two said a disagreement over the legal reasons for issuing variances grew between junior and senior members over the past year.

Those differences of opinion, they added, resulted in the board rejecting variances it should have granted and upset the collegial atmosphere of the ZBA.

Newer members Kathleen Nagle and Anne Carbone disputed the rudeness allegations and charged they had been the objects of derisive comments over the past year. Where board decisions are concerned, Nagle and Carbone said they think variances have been too easy to get for the wrong reasons.

By naming Tully and Santo, Knopp skirted promoting any of the board's three alternates to full membership.

Knopp said he did this because he thought some of them may be promoted to other positions in the future.

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Knopp said he did this because he thought some of them may be promoted to other positions in the future.

Tully, a Democrat, will serve the six months left on Plunkett's five-year term. starting at the board's next scheduled meeting on May 6. He said he is happy to serve on the board even though its meetings often run very late.

"I'm ready to serve. I've been to several ZBA meetings and I know how they go on," said Tully, an architect who came to Norwalk from Arlington, Mass., seven years ago.

Santo, the city's most experienced zoning commissioner after 16 years on the board, is a former Republican state senator who served on the Common Council from 1981 to 1983.

Next week, Santo will begin serving six months left on Greismer's term. Santo's own three-year term on the Zoning Commission was set to expire at the end of June.

Knopp said the appointments will bring a wealth of knowledge that can help inform ZBA decisions.

"Part of my concern is to achieve better coordination between zoning regulations and Zoning Board of Appeals decisions. There has been a dispute over the years that the ZBA has granted variances too liberally. For some reason there appears to have been a fence artificially erected between the ZBA and the Zoning Commission," Knopp said. "Putting someone on the board with a lot of zoning experience will help inform that board's deliberations about the reasons why a zoning regulation may have been adopted in the first place."

Knopp said Tully's professional credentials and knowledge of architecture will be useful during board deliberations.

Tully, 68, is a solar-power expert who has designed numerous systems and solar homes.

He said he has a "front porch" philosophy instilled by his childhood in Omaha, Neb.

"I'm very interested in the New Urbanism, otherwise known as traditional neighborhood development," Tully said. "The whole philosophy has to do with clustering people so they can walk or bike to shops and hopefully have easy access to rapid transit. Generally, it's building a community that is people- oriented, as opposed to building a community that is automobile-oriented."

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**April 21, 2004**

**The Hour:**

**P&Z holds public workshop**

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President of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, Laurel Lindstrom, gives her presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission's Land Use Committee, including P&Z director Michael Greene, center, during the committee's workshop Tuesday night at the East Norwalk Library while East Norwalk Neighborhood Associate Gordon Tully looks on.  
Hour photo / Erik Trautmann

## East Norwalkers contribute ideas for master plan

By Amrita Dhindsa  
Hour Staff Writer

Residents living in the city's southeast quadrant stressed the importance of maintaining their quality of life in Norwalk and of preserving the character of their neighborhoods at a workshop held on updating the city's master plan.

Enhancing existing buildings architecturally, setting up an architectural advisory review board to look into new projects and zoning variances, and calm traffic in hot spots to prevent gridlocks in neighborhoods were suggested as items to be included in the city's Plan of Conservation and Development.

Nearly 20 residents including Mayor Alex Knopp, state Rep. Bob Duff, D-137th District, and 3rd Taxing District Commissioners Paul Coggin and David Brown, attended the meeting hosted by the East Norwalk Improvement Association in their library.

The southeast quadrant includes East Norwalk and the area north of Interstate 95.

Laurel Lindstrom, president of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, presented members of the Plan Review Committee with a comprehensive and in-depth study put together as a result of monthly meetings held with residents.

Suggestions included avoiding oversized developments, preserving the historical character of neighborhoods by implementing a citywide ordinance to make homeowners accountable for their properties and by retaining an architectural consultant to planning and zoning officials; prohibiting special permit uses and controlling nonconforming commercial uses; preserving parks and playgrounds, ponds, and wetlands; and encouraging public access to the harbor.

Coggin suggested implementing regulations on commercial trash receptacles and dumpsters; installing attractive fences around parks; coordinating enforcement of city ordinances; and coordinating development initiatives with the city, state and MTA.

The workshop on Tuesday was the first of four workshops scheduled to be held before the summer to get input

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from the public on major issues pertaining to their neighborhoods. Two public hearings will also be held before all suggestions are evaluated by the Planning Commission.

The plan will then be sent to the Common Council and Mayor Alex Knopp for their input and approval. Two additional public hearings will be held before the council and Knopp sign off on the plan.

Planning commission Chairman Walter O. Briggs anticipates the entire process to be completed by the end of this year. Revisions to the city's master plan are made every 10 years.

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