



Inland Wetlands & Natural Resources Department

TOWN HALL * PO BOX 150 * 1019 MAIN ST. * BRANFORD, CT 06405
203-315-0675 * FAX 203-889-3172 * inlandwetlands@branford-ct.gov

Testimony of Diana Ross
Tree Warden Town of Branford
February 19, 2016

In support of Bill #5150 – AN ACT CONCERNING TREE WARDENS' NOTICES ON TREES AND SHRUBS PRIOR TO REMOVAL, TREE REMOVAL ALONG STATE HIGHWAY AND CLEAN-UP BY PUBLIC UTILITY CORPORATIONS FOLLOWING CERTAIN TREE REMOVAL

Attn: Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, co-chairs and members of the Committee on Environment

The proposed language provides subtle but critical clarifications for tree wardens.

1. Section 23-59 - The proposed language "post [thereon] on each tree, shrub, or group of shrubs that the tree warden determines may have aesthetic or environmental importance a suitable notice..." reflects a more practical means for posting shrubs than the current language which requires individually posting each shrub, and it gives the tree warden additional discretion not to post, if in the opinion of the tree warden the shrubs "do not have aesthetic or environmental importance". **I support this change because it provides for reasonable shrub posting.**
2. Section 23-65(f) - Current Section 23-59 requires posting for prunings and removals "initiated" by a tree warden; "Whenever, in the opinion of the tree warden, the public safety demands the removal or pruning of any tree or shrub under the warden's control, the tree warden may cause such tree or shrub to be removed...the tree warden shall, at least ten days before such removal or pruning, post thereon a suitable notice...". (underlining added for emphasis)
 - a. The proposed language clarifies that posting is also required when the tree warden "permits" removal and pruning: "Any person ... who desires the cutting or removal...of any tree or shrub...may apply in writing to the town tree warden, ... Before granting or denying such permit, [such authority may] the town tree warden shall make a posting on each tree, shrub or group of shrubs for which such a permit is sought, in accordance with section 23-59, as amended by this act, and shall hold a public hearing..." **I support the proposed language requiring posting prior to issuance of a permit.**
 - b. However, I am not entirely supportive of the requirement that posting be required prior to "denying such permit". I do not believe this is appropriate for denial of permits to private property owners who, for example, request a permit to remove a tree for aesthetic reasons or because they don't want to clean up leaves. This practice might likely encourage neighborhood conflicts, while providing little benefit to anyone. **In my opinion posting should not apply in these situations.**

However, it is critical that trees be properly maintained for protection of utility service to all residents, who should be allowed the opportunity to give input. **Therefore, I support, the requirement for posting prior to "denying such permit" but for utility companies only.**

3. Relative to Section 3, perhaps the DOT could be required to propose alternatives to clear cutting that might include, for example replacing with shrubs or small trees, which would provide similar environmental and aesthetic benefits, while serving as a buffer between cars driving off the highway and trees.

My testimony is based on my personal experience relative to my responsibilities as tree warden. It should not be interpreted as the opinion of "The Town of Branford". Thank you for consideration of this written testimony.

Diana Ross

Tree Warden and Inland Wetlands Environmental Director
Town of Branford