

**CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING COMMITTEE
December 1, 2016**

PRESENT: Joe Passero, acting as Chair; Nate Sumpter; Doug Stern; Lou Schulman; Mike Witherspoon; Galen Wright-Wells; Richard Roina

STAFF: Steven Kleppin; Mike Wrinn

OTHERS: Bob Bepko; Pete Romano; Vincent Penna; Mike Galante;

I. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BUILDING ZONE MAP

a) #1-16M – F. DiMeglio - 56 County St/Strawberry Hill Ave - Proposed Change to the Building Zone Map from A Residence in part & B Residence in part to entirely B Residence – Final review prior to public hearing

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by explaining the goal of the application which was to gain another lot. He noted that it would be on the Zoning Commission agenda later in the month.

II. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDING ZONE REGULATIONS/SP PERMITS/SITE PLANS

a) Discussion of medical marijuana regulations and information from Norwalk Hospital and other municipalities – Further review & discussion

Mr. Wrinn introduced the Norwalk Hospital representative, Bob Bepko, to speak about medical marijuana dispensaries around Connecticut.

Mr. Bepko gave a brief background of his experience and noted that he was not speaking either for or against the medical marijuana dispensaries. He explained that Norwalk Hospital had done some research about becoming a dispensary but because of their licenses they could not. He then explained that there were dispensaries in Milford and Bethel. He noted that medical marijuana is used for cancer as well as other diseases. Insurance does not cover it. He explained that APRNs will be able to write a prescription for it. The dispensaries that he has seen are all in professional buildings and there is always a pharmacist on the premises. The difference between the medical marijuana and what is bought “on the street” is that the medical marijuana is pure and not laced with anything else. There was then a discussion about the other dispensaries around the state. There does not seem to be a huge demand for it at this time. He discussed in further detail how the dispensaries were in office settings. There were some concerns, including robberies, because it is a cash business. There was a discussion about the Norwalk Chief of Police remarks that were found in the Zoning Committee’s report.

There was then a discussion as to the next steps of this matter. These next steps included whether they wanted to have one in Norwalk and if so, where it should go. There was a suggestion to go to towns where it was successful. Currently, patients in Norwalk had to drive to other towns to obtain the medical marijuana.

Mr. Sumpter then suggested that the commissioners should speak with someone from a dispensary as well as someone who manufactures the marijuana. There was also a discussion as to whether the commissioners would like to continue to develop regulations. There was also a discussion of the chain of custody for it. Mr. Besko said that he could bring someone from the Milford dispensary for the commissioners to speak with.

b) #8-16R/#12-16SP – V. Penna Sr. – 284 New Canaan Ave – Proposed amendments to Section 118-100 to revise the definition for Public utility supply or storage

facility and to Article 30 to amend special permit criteria for such uses when located in AAA Residence zones and special permit to reuse former Armory Building for a public utility storage facility owned by an independent entity – Final review prior to public hearing

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by introducing the application and explaining that there would not be many changes to the building that was currently on the property. He discussed the changes to the application from the previous meeting. He noted that the applicant was adding additional landscaping. They were also meeting with the First Selectmen from New Canaan. Their application would be before the Conservation Commission on December 13, 2016.

Pete Romano, the civil engineer on the project, then continued the presentation. He noted that the property would be used during off hours as well because Mr. Penna did emergency contracting work. He noted that this use was diminished from the previous use. He also mentioned that they were waiting for an approval from the Conservation Commission. He then oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He explained that this site has a larger building than their current building and would be able to house their snow plows. There was a discussion of noise abatement and white sound noises.

Mr. Penna then continued the presentation by noting that he had spoken with some of the neighbors when he went knocking on their doors. He noted that one of the owners was in Florida.

There was a discussion as to whether this was spot zoning.

Mr. Roina spoke in support of this application when he noted that he was neighbors with Mr. Penna's current site. He said they took good care of the property so he believed he would take good care of the new site as well.

Mike Galante continued the presentation with a summary of the traffic analysis and counts. He showed the commissioners on an aerial map where the counts were done. He noted that traffic from the site would happen before the morning peak rush hour. The afternoon rush hour peak would remain at the same levels because the traffic coming back to the site would arrive at different times. He noted that the armory had more traffic. There was a discussion of accident counts. The applicant would be on the Zoning Commission agenda in December.

c) #9-16R – Zoning Commission – Proposed amendment to Section 118-1110 Coastal Zone regarding vegetated buffers from the Coastal Jurisdiction Line for properties in the Coastal Zone – Further review

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by discussing the proposed language as well as it would go to a public hearing soon. He noted that this amendment was for coastal waters only.

d) Discussion of draft amendments and map changes associated with South Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Redevelopment Plan

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation by noting that there was not much new to report. There was a discussion of which agencies would be involved in drafting the amendments. The Zoning Department staff would provide the revised amendments to the commissioners when they received them.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero