

**CITY OF NORWALK
LAND USE COMMITTEE
August 16, 2016**

PRESENT: Frances DiMeglio, Chair; Walter McLaughlin; David Davidson; William Dunne; Torgny Astrom; Steven Ferguson; Nora King; George Tsiranides

STAFF: Mike Wrinn

OTHERS: Mike Moccaie; Alan Lo; Alan Webber; Kevin Daly; Mike DiScala; Tim Sheehan; Bruce Chimento; Tim Sheehan;

Before the meeting, Mr. Astrom appointed members to the Subdivision and Land Use Committees.

I. REFERRALS: Review and recommendation

a) Special Appropriation – Recreation and Parks Department - \$200,000 for Veterans Park Launch Ramps & Visitor Dock - project #3687 (Account # C0367)

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by noting that, although they had requested funds from the Capital Budget for this project, they were short funding.

Mike Moccaie continued the presentation by giving the commissioners background about the project. They had bid for the full project in the fall. Then they re-bid the project but they were still a shortfall of \$200,000. He was concerned that the bid would go higher if they waited any longer. There was not much additional funding from other projects that they could use. There was a discussion about only doing the launch ramps and whether the contractor had enough experience. Mr. Moccaie said that the contractor was not sure why the bids were higher. The work would start at the end of September and go on through the winter.

b) 8-24 Review – Land Use & Building Management Committee of the Common Council – Quit Claim the Carver Center building to the Carver Foundation and amend existing land use agreement

Mr. Wrinn introduced Alan Lo and what the project was about. Mr. Lo explained the background of the project. He said that after the building was constructed the Carver Center maintained it. The building has been leased and this is what causes a problem when the Foundation needs funding. The Carver Foundation takes care of the building, including landscaping and maintenance. The Common Council wants to own the land. There was a discussion as to why the Carver Foundation was looking to have this change at this time. Mr. Lo explained that they wanted to renovate the building. Mr.

Davidson wondered why all the terms of the lease weren't incorporated into the Master Lease. Mr. Lo said that the city's legal department was looking into it.

c) 8-24 Review – Land Use & Building Management and Public Works Committees of the Common Council – Street Abandonment under section 95-35 of the City Code of a portion of Bates Court and d) 8-24 Review - Land Use & Bug Management and Public Works Committees of the Common Council – sale and disposition of City owned property at 1 Bates Court”

Mr. Wrinn asked whether these two applications could be heard as one. The committee agreed. He began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He explained that the applicant would like to acquire a piece of property which was in disarray but could not be built upon. There was a sliver of land that would remain the city's right of way because of the utilities on it. They would not be able to construct more units on the property that they were trying to acquire. It would go to the Common Council. There was a discussion about supporting documentation for the appraisal. The commissioners were reminded that their job was to decide whether it was necessary to the city's planning, not the cost of the property. There was a discussion as to why the use was residential, not commercial. Mr. Webber noted that the property that they were hoping to purchase looked like it was part of their property. There was a rock ledge on it which could not be developed. Mr. DiScala thought that by constructing residential on the property, they were helping the transit oriented development since it was close to the train station. Mr. Sheehan thought it was a good project and fit the needs of the transit oriented development.

e) 8-24 Review – Department of Public Works – Flood relief project - storm drainage improvements at Fodor Farm, Aviation Court, and Soundview Avenue

Mr. Chimento began the presentation by discussing the items that they had asked for in the Capital Budget to improve the drainage in the area. He explained which streets are having problems.

f) Zoning Commission referral - #6-16R - Norwalk Land Development LLC - Proposed amendments to Article 121 regarding Mixed use retail shopping center signs in Reed Putnam Design District Subarea A - *For distribution only; action at September meeting*

Mr. Wrinn said that the commissioners would be handed a sign packet for review. He then explained the different signs that they were requesting which were unique to this property. He also explained how the sign manuals were similar to the Norwalk Hospital and Waypointe sign manuals, just on a much larger scale. The commissioners had a few questions for the applicant which Mr. Wrinn would send to them. There was a discussion of the number of murals as well as the changeable copy signs and the amount of time they would be blinking. There was also a discussion about the types of retail that would be leasing in the mall.

g) Redevelopment Agency referral - Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Redevelopment Plan – Revised Draft July 2016

Tim Sheehan, Director of the Redevelopment Agency, began the presentation by trying to determine what type of presentation to make to the commissioners. Mr. Wrinn noted that the commissioners had received a copy of their Power Point presentation in their packets that evening. He described how the South Norwalk train station would be the core of the TOD Redevelopment Plan. He reminded the commissioners that they would have to review the Plan in connection with the Plan of Conservation and Development (“POCD”).

Emily Ennis continued the presentation by giving the history of the Redevelopment Plan as well as summarizing the approval process. She explained the proposed standards that they were recommending which were lower than what was currently in the regulations. She then showed them a map which set forth 2 areas that they were proposing, the TOD area around the train station and the Lexington Avenue neighborhood. They were recommending this second neighborhood become a village district after conversations with the public. She discussed the guidelines for both of these proposed village districts. She also discussed the public/private areas. The plans would have to work in conjunction with the POCD and believe they have met certain criteria from it. There was a discussion as to why certain areas were not included in the TOD because they were more residential. Historical facades could be improved but not the entire neighborhood. There was a discussion of other towns along the Metro-North corridor that had also approved TOD plans. There was a discussion as to where or whether some of these businesses can affordably move to other locations in the city. There was also a discussion of the schools on Chestnut St. and how they would be impacted by the developments to be constructed. It was noted that these would be mixed use and not all commercial. There was then a discussion of the current zoning in the area as well as the proposed zoning. Mr. Sheehan noted that the Master Plan for the Webster Street lot was being updated and would have to go through an approval process. There was a discussion of de facto affordable housing. There was then a discussion of what the challenges were for the TOD plan. Mr. Davidson said that he would suggest a condition to the resolution for this referral so as to not erode the affordability of workforce housing.

A member of the public asked the committee not to send this matter on to the Planning Commission without a public hearing but he was told that he was not allowed to speak at this meeting.

The meeting ended at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero

Land Use Committee
August 16, 2016
Page 3 of 3