

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF COMMON COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** John Kydes, Chair; John Igneri, Travis Simms, Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco, Douglas Hempstead (7:03 p.m.); Faye Bowman ( 7:07 p.m.)

**STAFF:** Timothy Sheehan, Redevelopment Agency Director; Susan Sweitzer, Senior Development Project Manager

**OTHERS:** Bruce Kimmel, Council President

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called. A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no one from the public that wished to address the Committee at this time.

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

**A. Regular Meeting September 1, 2016.**

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2016.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2016 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**II. BUSINESS**

**A. PLANNING AND ZONING UPDATE.**

**1. Planning and Zoning Update with Michael Wrinn, Acting Planning and Zoning Director**

Mr. Wrinn came forward and said that there were a number of "soft" properties, such as the B.J.'s property, which was recently sold to a new developer.

*Mr. Douglas Hempstead joined the meeting at 7:03 p.m.*

The neighbors are still concerned about traffic, but the new proposed building is much more in line with the neighborhood.

Another property that just came on line was the former Factory Outlet building on East Avenue. Mr. Wrinn explained that currently the parking for the building is next to the railroad embankment, but there is a lease agreement that is about to expire and the building's parking will be moving to the rear lots and the parking along the railroad embankment will go to the East Norwalk Station.

*Ms. Faye Bowman joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.*

A discussion followed about the impact of the TOD plan on future development.

Mr. Wrinn then described some additional parcels that had recently come onto the market including parcels on Newtown Avenue; the old Grumman site, Meadow Street parcels, and some parcels on West Main Street.

Mr. Hempstead asked everyone how Norwalk can develop areas for reasonable retail start ups and avoid turning everything into residential neighborhoods. Mr. Sheehan pointed out that one issue was that the City needs to determine what industrial uses that they want to have in the City. Discussion followed about the new industrial and high tech uses.

Mr. Wrinn pointed out that while the location is important, there is also a marketing aspect. Mr. Sheehan added that there was also the owner's vision for the building. The reason that there has been more bars and restaurants in SoNo is because there is a greater return on investment on bars and restaurants rather than retail.

Mr. Kydes asked about High Street and the old VFW. Mr. Wrinn said that it would be turned into residential units.

Mr. Kimmel asked if it would be possible to use the Master Plan to deny a project. Mr. Wrinn said that it was possible. Mr. Sheehan said the land use regulations guide what can be done on the property and the Master Plan can be used to determine consistency.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Loehmann's property. Mr. Wrinn said that the project is still in the review stage by the developer.

Mr. Kydes asked about TransLux on Richards Avenue. Mr. Wrinn said that there had been some permits for expansion at the rear of the building, but not much else.

Mr. Kydes asked about the SoNo Hotel. A brief discussion followed about the details of that parcel.

**B. WEST AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**1. Advance DECD Grant of \$3M. To Common Council**

**2. Authorize Mayor to execute any and all documents associated with the DECD Grant.**

Ms. Sweitzer said that this is an additional \$3 million for infrastructure. The improvements already completed have been utilities improvements, such as an upgrade on the electric and the streetscape improvements. There will also be some side streets by Loehmann's and Orchard Street. Because the utilities improvements are done underground, they are not evident, but the entire area will benefit. She went on to describe the area where the improvements were done.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the parking lot at the YMCA. He pointed out that Norwalk Hospital is now Western Connecticut Hospital and the parking lot was supposed to revert back to the City if Norwalk Hospital no longer wants it. Mr. Sheehan said that he would review the legal issues.

**\*\* MS. O'TOOLE-GIANDURCO MOVED TO ADVANCE DECD GRANT OF \$3M. TO COMMON COUNCIL.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED TO AUTHORIZE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DECD GRANT.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Hempstead asked for a quick update on the mall. Mr. Sheehan said that Mr. Ireland had said that the development had foundation approval. They are still waiting on approval of the signage and site modifications. Mr. Hempstead asked what the viability of having two hotels so near each other was. Mr. Sheehan said that there had been some concerns expressed about the viability of having two hotels so close together.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the POKO development. Mr. Sheehan stated that developers who are not actually developing a project should not talk about other developments. Mr. Sheehan said that he had been in touch with Citibank and that his sense was that it would be going forward.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. SIMMS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services