

**CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING COMMISSION
March 22, 2017**

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, acting as Chair; Doug Stern; Roderick Johnson; Mike Witherspoon; Richard Roina; Galen Wells; Joseph Passero

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Mike Wrinn

OTHERS: Atty. Liz Suchy; Mike Galante; Joe Fishinger

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll. Mr. Schulman noted that the Chair, Mr. Sumpster, was unable to attend so that he would be conducting the meeting. He asked that everyone silence their phones.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. #13-16SP - Main Norwalk, LLC – 272 - 280 Main Avenue – “The Village” – Proposed new ±103,000 square foot retail development – Continue hearing from March 15, 2017 for rebuttal only

Mr. Schulman noted that this was the rebuttal to the public comments on traffic for this application.

Atty. Suchy thanked everyone for their input into the project. She made a few, brief comments about the previous week’s meeting and then said that Mr. Galante would continue the presentation and would hand out an executive summary which would summarize his comments about the public’s input. She addressed the comments that the public raised about not knowing who the tenant would be. She noted that many projects did not have specific tenants. There was also a discussion about the size of the project and whether it was allowed. There was also a discussion about the number of accidents on this roadway. There was also a discussion about the types of trucks used to configure the southern entrance as well as a queuing analysis. She noted that the applicant had been receptive to all comments, etc. from the Zoning Commissioners, staff, and city departments. She said that the project meets all the requirements of the regulations.

Mr. Galante continued the presentation by handing out an Executive Summary of his comments, as well as a letter describing all comments raised and responses to Adler and Spears reports. He started with an overview of the project and noted that his company has been analyzing this property for 4 years, far longer than the traffic engineers who had recently been hired by neighborhood associations. He discussed the 3 step process of receiving a permit from the state. He explained since they are adding traffic to a road, they also have to mitigate the traffic which they are doing. He noted that the city’s traffic consultant has been in agreement with all of their work. He discussed some of the bullet points that he has set forth in his report. He also noted that the state was about to begin step 2 of the review process.

He explained the accident analysis and noted that the applicant was not allowed to make

public its analysis of why accidents increased. The state does not allow it. Steps 2-3 of the state process would last from 9-12 months and the city is involved with it. He also discussed the synchro model which is now updated. He discussed the mitigation plan. He then discussed the Spears comments. He noted that one comment was about site trip generation which the state and city had already signed off on.

Mr. Galante went over the points of the traffic plan that the Department of Transportation ("D.O.T.") agrees with. He then discussed pedestrian walkways and noted that the DOT had reviewed them. He also discussed the scoping meeting and his obligation to prepare the minutes for that meeting. There was a discussion about whether OSTA takes into account the neighbors' concerns especially about traffic being diverted to local streets. There was a discussion about tractor trailer trucks going over the curb. There was also a discussion as to why other projects, such as the proposed Mall, were not included in their traffic study. There was a discussion about a state study of the interchange from Route 7 to get onto the Merritt Parkway. Mr. Galante suggested that this could take traffic off of Main Avenue. There was a discussion about having a sign on the island which would prevent trucks from turning left onto Main Avenue.

Joe Fishinger, of NV5, continued the presentation by explaining that he had provided a response letter as well which the commissioners had recently received and not reviewed. He discussed their mitigation which is similar to the applicant's traffic study. He also said that the re-timing of the signals on Main Avenue should be done, whether this application passes or not. He said they do concur with the applicant's traffic study and that it will mitigate traffic impacts. There was a discussion as to a different type of project being built on the property if it wasn't this one.

There was a discussion as to who is responsible for the intersection signals after the project is completed. Mr. Galante noted that the applicant is responsible for 9 intersections and that included in the upgrade would be software that would detect traffic and adjust the timing. Ultimately the state is responsible for the intersections. There was a discussion about allowing trucks to go both north and south on Main Avenue. Mr. Galante said they had thought about it but realized the state would not allow them to do that.

Atty. Suchy concluded the presentation by noting that the application met all the requirements of the special permit regulations.

Mr. Roina then asked if it was possible to have signage for the tractor trailers that suggested that they should take I-95 and not get onto the Merritt Parkway.

IV. REPORT OF PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

a. Action on Item III. a.

Mr. Schulman said that in light of all the new materials they received that evening, he moved the application back to the Plan Review Committee which they all agreed upon. He then thanked the public for their input.

V. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

a. Update on fee schedule discussion

Mr. Kleppin said that he had reviewed additional cities, including New Haven and Bridgeport, because they were a similar size to Norwalk. He also discussed why the fees were

proposed as they were. The fees would be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis, going forward.

There was also a discussion about moving the next Plan Review meeting to Wednesday, April 12. The commissioners agreed.

There was also a discussion as to the resolutions for The Village application.

VI. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

There were no comments from the commissioners.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Passero made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Witherspoon seconded.

Louis Schulman; Doug Stern; Roderick Johnson; Mike Witherspoon; Richard Roina; Galen Wells; Joseph Passero

No one opposed.

No one abstained

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero