

Draft
**CITY OF NORWALK
LAND USE COMMITTEE
July 18, 2017**

PRESENT: Frances DiMeglio; David Davidson; Brian Baxendale; Tamsen Langalis; George Tsiranides; Nora King

STAFF: Steve Kleppin

OTHERS: Tami Strauss; Atty Jackie Kaufman

I. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

a) Status report

Mr. Kleppin said that the contract should have been signed with Stan Tech and that the kick-off meeting would be August 14, 2017. He also noted that there are 3 different planning initiatives/studies. It included parking and the Transit Oriented Development plans. There were concerns about study fatigue and work being duplicated. He said that there was a solution to this which would be a brand. It would be similar to "Imagine Boston 2030." There would be a website and social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter as well as run through the Redevelopment Agency. Polls can be done which could be tabulated. The funds had been found in existing accounts. Tami Strauss said the website would also be a mobile app. This would be in conjunction with public meetings. The idea is to hear from different people in the community. Other municipalities have used it, including Boston. There was a discussion about how it would work with the city's website. There will be a lot of functionality and it would be overseen by Redevelopment. It is hoped that the studies will be consistent with one another and the same message being communicated. All three consultants will work beginning in August.

II. Redevelopment Plan Updates – Wall Street, West Avenue, and Washington Street

Mr. Kleppin said that there had not been a meeting for awhile. There has been some data collecting and they would meet again in September.

III. REFERRALS: Review & recommendation

a) Zoning Commission referral: #4-17R – NW MFP Norwalk Town Center II, LLC – Proposed amendments to Section 118-504 to revise Design District Development Park (DDDP) criteria for developments in Central Business Design District Subarea B and related technical amendments

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation by stating that there had been some emails from the developer about changing the project. Ms. King explained the changes from the original approval. Mr. Kleppin explained the amendment that was being set forth by the applicant. Some types of uses had not been included by the Zoning Commission. Ms. King said that the buildings were bulky which had not been the Zoning Commission's desire at the time. Mr. Kleppin reminded the commissioners that the bulkiness of the buildings was not the issue being addressed with this amendment. Ms. King also reminded them that the Zoning Commission had not wanted these certain types of businesses 4 years ago. She wanted to confirm that the new commissioners could see the original plans.

Ms. DiMeglio asked Atty Kaufman to explain why certain stores had pulled out of the project. She said that there was a loss of retail space and that there may be a gym. She also explained about the increase in density which had been approved in October 2016. She explained the through blocks and pedestrian paths. There was a discussion about the reasons for changing the approvals, one of which was to help their investors. There was also a discussion about what would happen if the amendment was denied. There was then a discussion about why The Container Store, The Nordstrom Rack had decided not to sign their leases. The commissioners then discussed L.A. Fitness as a tenant. There was also a discussion about the parking. Atty Kaufman said it was overparked. Mr. Davidson said that he believed that the parking was improperly designed. However, Atty Kaufman said that the proposed garage was the one that she had been referring to. Ms. King thought that the Planning Commission should no longer be giving in to the developer because Norwalk is a city that retail was attracted to. She believed it would be best to also see how Wall St. developed before making more changes. There was also a discussion about the historic building which the developer had tried to purchase but could not. There was a discussion about whether there was a need a gym like L.A. Fitness. Atty Kaufman thought that this was a good use but said that it would be a retail usage if this was not approved. Mr. Davidson said that he would like to request some language change which would include specific city licensing requirements. He also said that there should not be unlicensed spas in the city. It would be on the Planning Commission agenda later in the evening.

b) Zoning Commission referral: #6-17R – Zoning Commission - Proposed amendments to permit medical marijuana dispensaries and medical marijuana producers in certain zones

Ms. King said that she did not feel that she was ready to vote on this. The commissioners decided to discuss this item. She was concerned that the amendment would allow growing marijuana in the city. She thought they should be specific as to where they would be placed. There was a discussion about where the dispensaries could be located. Ms. DiMeglio said that she had done research on this topic and that no other towns were encouraging growing marijuana. There was also a discussion about the Zoning Commission seemed to be planning the city. Mr. Kleppin explained that the definitions were offered during the time that the city had placed a moratorium on this item. There was a discussion about how a dispensary was regulated as a

pharmacy. There was also a concern about the criminal element that would come to Norwalk for marijuana. Mr. Davidson made recommendations about a specific zone, B1, for dispensaries but did not want to approve a manufacturing/growing facility. He wanted to obtain more economic information about that. There was a discussion about whether the city would reap any economic benefit from this. It was moved to the Planning Commission agenda later in the evening.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero