

**CITY OF NORWALK
LAND USE COMMITTEE
October 17, 2017**

PRESENT: Nora King, acting as Chair; David Davidson; Brian Baxendale; Tamsen Langalis; George Tsiranides; Frances DiMeglio; Mike Mushak

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Mike Wrinn

OTHERS: Alan Lo; Atty Liz Suchy; Frank Prial of Beyer Blinder and Belle, Dr. Brian Davis, PhD – Executive Director of the Maritime Aquarium

The meeting began at 7:04 p.m. Ms. DiMeglio awarded a plaque to Walter McLaughlin for his 25 years of service on the Planning Commission.

I. REFERRALS: Review and recommendation

a) Capital Appropriation – Building Management – In the amount of \$509,000 for City Hall Roof Replacement Project Phase II (Acct. #C0439)

Alan Lo began the presentation to explain when the roof repairs began. He explained that most of the monies have been spent by replacing the dome on the roof. He also explained that there would be solar panels on the roof. The contract would be signed shortly. More monies had been requested in the past Capital Budget season since it was needed. Capital Funding accounts will be closed in order to find other funds for the repairs. There was a clarification of the funding that was requested. There was a discussion about the cupola which is made of wood. The painting is one reason that it has to be done more frequently. Some parts have been replaced since they are expensive to maintain.

b) 8-24 Review - Building Management for the Maritime Aquarium – Proposed improvement plan in order to meet the State’s needs for the Walk Bridge replacement project

Alan Lo introduced the team from the Maritime Aquarium who made the presentation to the commissioners.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation by explaining how the Aquarium was being pro-active to maintain their facilities. They did not want these renovations to impact the neighborhood or visitors to the Aquarium. She explained the components of the Aquarium. She also explained that they were hoping to move this forward quickly before the plans for the Walk Bridge were finalized.

Mr. Prial explained the site plans which showed which parts of the buildings were being moved and renovated. The IMAX would no longer be an IMAX but rather a 4D theater. The lobby was being renovated as well. There would be two openings for patrons. He also explained how they would be building areas to help protect the animals including the seals. He explained how much they were allowed to build and how much they were going to build. There was a discussion about acoustics and noise control. There was a discussion about the area that would be taken for the Walk Bridge project. He said that it would be a Phase 2 which would determine what would happen to that area. Mr. Mushok said that he would advocate for public access to the river. He thought it might be helpful to have the Norwalk River Trail go through the property to connect it. He also suggested there should be an electronic sign on the front of the building which showed fish swimming inside. There was a discussion about the reduction in the number of seats in the IMAX/4D theater. There was also a discussion about the funding which negotiations were still ongoing. Mr. Davidson expressed concerns about the city funding the project which he thought the funding should come from the state. Dr. Davis said that he did not expect the city to pay for the Aquarium. Mr. Kleppin reminded the commissioners that they were not voting on the funding, they were voting on the plan and that it was consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development ("POCD"). Atty Such noted that if the Walk Bridge project doesn't happen, then this project would not happen.

c) Zoning Commission referral: #9-17R - Proposed amendments to Section 118-1220 regarding the use of municipal parking lots in Norwalk Center and South Norwalk due to expire December 31, 2017

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation explained that this amendment has been a regulation since the 1990s. It was renewed every 2 years. This allows businesses to not have to go the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance. There was a discussion about the maps that were used. There was a discussion about a parking study that was being done by the city. However, it would take it up to 1 year.

d) Zoning Commission referral: #10-17R - Proposed amendments to "opt out" of temporary health care structures required by Public Act #17-155

There was a discussion about a bill that was passed in the state of Connecticut which was effective on October 1, 2017. Mr. Kleppin explained how it could affect the city's regulations and suggested that they think about opting out of it. There was a discussion as to whether it had been requested by a resident in the city. Mr. Mushok suggested that there be a regulation for rentals which would then be enforced. Since there were already many problems with inspecting apartments, there were concerns.

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

Ms. King explained what happened at the meeting, earlier that morning. She explained that many citizens wanted to see more walkability of the city, bike lanes, and a train into the Wall Street area, increasing bus service and the Yankee Doodle garage.

III. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

a) Status report

Mr. Kleppin noted when the next meeting would be and where it would be held. It would be posted throughout the city. The website for the POCD as well as the Redevelopment Plans was almost ready to go live. He also explained that there was a good response to their survey at an Open House at the Department of Public Works (DPW")

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero