

**CITY OF NORWALK  
ZONING COMMISSION  
June 20, 2018**

**PRESENT:** Nathan Sumpter, Chairman; Louis Schulman, Vice Chairman; Michael Witherspoon, Secretary; Rod Johnson; Richard Roina; Joe Passero; Frank Mancini

**STAFF:** Steve Kleppin; Mike Wrinn

**OTHERS:** Joe Grasso; Alan Lo; Tom Hamilton; Mike Galante; Patricia Gill; Alan Webber; Brandon Hatfield;

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

**III. DISCUSSION/ACTION ON PENDING APPLICATIONS**

- a. #24-95 SPR/CAM – Crystal LLC (Grasso) – 310 Wilson Ave – Request to modify approved site plan by revising lot lines – Determine if minor change – Report and recommended action**

Joe Grasso began the presentation by showing the commissioners the site plan of the proposed lot lines as well as the current tracts. There was also a discussion of the details of the wall and the time frame to completion. He showed them a diagram of what it would look like and explained that boulder that was currently on the property would be used to build it.

He showed them the panels that would be used on the top of the boulder part of the wall. It is similar to the wall that City Carting has. It was good for sound attenuation so he agreed to use the same one. He noted the dimensions of the wall.

He said it would be completed within 6 months of the excavation permit. One of the concerns was that there were still violations on the property. The Zoning Department staff had seen another violation that day when they went to inspect. The windows and doors of the car restoring business were open in violation of the conditions of the resolution. Mr. Schulman said that he would not be voting in favor. He noted that Mr. Grasso had said he would hire someone to handle these violations. Mr. Grasso noted that the business was in violation of the lease because he was violating Zoning regulations. He would consider evicting this tenant. There was a discussion about the ventilation systems and whether they worked.

The commissioners discussed how to handle this matter. Mr. Passero said that it is hard to control tenants but that Mr. Grasso said he would be willing to evict the tenant. There was a discussion about whether it was more economically feasible for Mr. Grasso to comply with the regulations rather than continuing to come before the Zoning Commission. There was a discussion about the violations on the property in connection with the tenant. Mr. Sumpter reminded them that the applicant could not continually clean up the violations the day that Mr. Grasso comes before the Zoning Commission and then have ongoing violations. There was a review of the staff's pictures of their inspection of the facility

**Mr. Schulman moved that this application would be held over until July 12, 2018**

**Mr. Johnson seconded.**

**Nathan Sumpter, Chair; Louis Schulman; Michael Witherspoon; Rod Johnson voted in favor.**

**Joe Passero and Richard Roina opposed.**

**Frank Mancini abstained.**

#### **IV. RECEIPT/REVIEW AND ACTION ON NEW APPLICATIONS**

##### **a. #3-18SP – City of Norwalk Public Schools – 21 Hunters Lane – Proposed additions to Ponus Ridge Middle School (STEM K-8) – Report and recommended action**

Alan Lo began the presentation by introducing Tom Hamilton, the Finance Director of the Norwalk Board Education. Mr. Hamilton then distributed the Strategic Operating Plan and a presentation of the Capital Plan which included enrollment. He began with the Strategic Operating Plan, which was a 3 year plan. It provides their visions, goals, strategies and detailed implementation steps, among other things.

He discussed the goals of the Board of Education to be the most successful city school system in Connecticut. He also discussed the various goals, some of which were fully developed and some that were going to be developed. He noted that the current school model was developed in the past and they were trying to develop a model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He also noted that Norwalk is growing in their group in the state. Their graduation rate has surpassed the statewide graduation rate. He then discussed the capital projects. He noted the reasons that the Ponus Ridge project is going forward. One reason is that they are overenrolled and there is a capacity problem. Mr. Hamilton explained that focusing on Ponus first would allow them to place Jefferson students there after it is renovated and they had to then renovate Jefferson. There was a discussion about the additional students that needed seats at Ponus.

Mr. Galante then said that these students were accounted for in the traffic study. The objective was to remove the portables. There was also a discussion of the Nathaniel Ely School which would be K-8. There was a discussion about the demography which was currently over 100% and would go down to 90% with the new construction. There was also a discussion about the use of the gym and whether it would be enough at this school. Mr. Lo said that some of the all-purpose rooms would be used. Mr. Hamilton explained the education specifications that were brought to Hartford. Mr. Lo said that the hours that the students would be in the gym had not been figured out yet. There was also a discussion about the cafeteria which had been set up to feed a lot less children. Mr. Lo said that it was being enlarged. He also said that kindergarten typically eats in their classrooms. The public hearing would be on July 12, 2018.

##### **b. #4-18SP/#4-18SPR/#8-18CAM - 68 & 70 South Main St - Silver Nutmeg, LLC and Sonoson, LLC – Proposed transit oriented development to renovate buildings with various uses for a total of 7,060 sf office, 916 sf retail and 11 residential units – Report and recommended action**

Patricia Gill, the architect on the project, began the presentation by introducing the owner, Bob Barton and Dean Martin, the engineer on the project. She showed them pictures of the current buildings and then showed the renderings of what they would look like. She showed them an old picture of 70 South Main Street. She noted that windows would be replaced to be uniform to be similar to the original building. The first floor retail would remain but part of it would be recreation as required by zoning regulations. The second floor would be offices. The third and fourth floors would be residential. Some would be duplex units. She then discussed the back of the building. There was a bump out which were currently stairs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. It would be enlarged to have the stairs go from the top to the bottom.

There was a discussion about handicap accessibility. She explained because of its elevation and that it was pre-existing, non-conforming it did not have to be handicap accessible. There was a discussion of the parking. The first floor was commercial but there was concern about how the parking would work for the commercial vs. residential. Mr. Kleppin noted that they had problems with parking in the past. There was a concern about not having enough parking. However, since it is near the South Norwalk train station, there was the hope that people would use the train more. This was the intent of the Transit Oriented Development (“TOD”). The owner was on the waiting list for the Havilland Parking garage which would then go to residents. A public hearing is required for this application and it would be on the Zoning Commission agenda on July 12, 2018.

##### **c. #3-18R – Zoning Commission – Proposed amendment to Section 118-100 Definitions**

**regarding definition of family and related technical amendments – Report and recommended action**

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation by discussing his memo. He explained definitions of rooming houses, family, etc. He thought these would address concerns raised by the public. The public hearing would be at the beginning of August. It had been discussed with Corporation Counsel which drafted some of the language.

**d. #10-16SP – Metropolitan Realty Assoc., LLC - 1 Bates Court – Multifamily development with 40 dwelling units – Discussion of proposed revisions to landscaping plan - Report and recommended action**

Mr. Wrinn introduced the application which he noted had been approved a year ago. Allan Weber introduced the project team. He then explained that he would like to modify 2 of the conditions in the original resolution. One was about the trash receptacle that there seemed to be some confusion about which way the receptacle was oriented. Brandon Hatfield, the civil engineer on the project, continued the presentation with a brief review of the property. He discussed the parking and oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on a site plan. He then showed them an enlarged view of the stone wall on the property, owned by Metro-North. He then noted where the applicant would place the sound barrier. He also discussed the plantings that would be in the small area. He did not think they would survive. They could also not plant trees because they did not think they could be maintained.

There was concern that the wall was imposing for the trains going by. There was a discussion about where the building was and how far it was from the stone wall. There was also a discussion about eliminating some parking to allow for moving the sound barrier and having landscaping. Mr. Wrinn explained how these became conditions of the resolution.

Mr. Johnson asked for an elevation to show the buildings and their heights so they could see what it looked like before making a decision. Another issue was whether they could plant large vegetation. Mr. Hatfield explained a meeting with a representative of Metro-North. Mr. Sumpter asked for it in writing. Mr. Hatfield showed the commissioners an aerial photo which included the white buildings that were higher than their fence would be. He noted that there are utility buildings that train passengers were already looking at. Mr. Schulman asked how they could break up the mass of the fence, either with different colors or materials. There was a further discussion about Mr. Johnson's suggestion for a diagram of what this specific area would look like. They would return on July 12, 2018

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 7, 2018**

**\*\* MR. ROINA MOVED** to approve the June 7, 2018 Zoning Commission minutes, as amended.

**Mr. Schulman seconded.**

**Nathan Sumpter; Louis Schulman; Rod Johnson; Richard Roina; Joe Passero; Frank Mancini voted in favor.**

**No one opposed.**

**Michael Witherspoon abstained.**

**VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR**

Mr. Kleppin discussed the public workshops for the POCD. He also discussed the Redevelopment Plan for the Wall St. area which will have zoning changes and a preview of the plan. A member of their staff would report on it.

In September there would be a presentation by NEMO for Zoning commissioners as well as the other commissions in the city of Norwalk and from other towns. It would be in the community room at City Hall.

## **VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

There was a discussion about the wall in the last application. There had been concern a few years ago about the look of the wall and how it looked from Metro-North.

There was a discussion about the public school application for Ponus Ridge and what was the purview of the Zoning Commission.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Sumpter made a Motion to Adjourn.**

**Mr. Witherspoon seconded.**

**Nathan Sumpter; Louis Schulman; Michael Witherspoon; Rod Johnson; Richard Roina; Joe Passero; Frank Mancini voted in favor.**

**No one opposed.**

**No one abstained.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero