

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 6, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair, Tom Livingston, George Tsiranides, Barbara Smyth, Eloisa Melendez, Douglas Hempstead (7:02 p.m.)

ABSENT: John Igneri

OTHERS: Timothy Sheehan, Redevelopment Director; Tammy Strauss, Community Development Director; Sabrina Church, Community Development Planner; Sarah Ficenec, Connecticut Economic Resource Center

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

There was no one from the public present at this time.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL.

Mr. Kydes called the roll. A quorum was present.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of Minutes

1. November 1, 2018.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 2018 MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (LIVINGSTON, TSIRANIDES, AND SMYTH) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MELENDEZ).**

B. Approval of Schedule of Meetings for 2019

1. Approve schedule of meetings for calendar year 2019.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2019.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. WALL STREET-WEST AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN.

A. Review of Wall Street-West Avenue Redevelopment Plan including CERC Market feasibility Study.

Ms. Sarah Ficenec, from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) came forward and gave a brief overview of CERC, which is a private /public partnership group and conducts data research.

Mr. Hempstead joined the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Ms. Ficenec then proceeded to narrate a PowerPoint presentation. A print copy of the informational slides was distributed to the Committee members. The Wall Street-West Avenue area is very well positioned to meet the goals of the Neighborhood Plan.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the fact that the City has a tighter housing market. Ms. Ficenec said the fact that the housing market is tight restricts people from moving around. She added that the housing was expensive and while this is good for those who own, it makes it harder for people to move in.

The next chart contained charts projecting the age group demographic for the years between 2015-2028.

Mr. Hempstead asked if it was possible to get an income breakout for the various age groups. Ms. Ficenec said that she would request that that information be sent.

Regarding the Housing Analysis with the Changing Household Numbers, Mr. Hempstead asked about the fact that half of the young (ages 15-34) renter household in Norwalk have roommates. He pointed out that 15 year olds would not be living independent of their families. Ms. Ficenec said that there were some individuals who were emancipated.

Ms. Melendez pointed out that most people have graduated by age 22 and they have a variety of financial situations such as earning viable salaries but paying off student loans, others actually having their own units due to their income, and finally, others who are living at home and saving with the intention of purchasing a home.

Discussion followed about the need for micro units that would be affordable for the young groups so that they are able to remain in the area. Mr. Sheehan said that right now the market is very tight and this is a good thing. Having explosive growth in housing would not be a good thing.

Mr. Hempstead asked if 2016 was the base line for calculating the number of housing units available. Mr. Sheehan said that it was.

Mr. Kydes asked how the public input was gathered. Ms. Strauss said that they used the Development Plan meetings for collecting the data.

Mr. Hempstead asked why gambling was included in the industries listed. Ms. Ficene said that the Industry Analysis had set categories and items like My Three Sons, or the Field House or the various gyms would be covered in this category.

Mr. Hempstead asked if an analysis had been done about how many jobs are filled by employees that actually work in Norwalk. Ms. Ficene said that there would be data available that would indicate who lives and works in Norwalk. Mr. Hempstead asked how to attract employees to live in Norwalk. Mr. Sheehan pointed out that a company like King Industries could hire a chemical engineer, but even with the higher level salary, the new employee cannot afford to live in Norwalk.

Mr. Kydes asked what the mall would do. Ms. Ficene said that the category for General Merchandise showed that the biggest need would be supplied by the mall.

Ms. Ficene then gave an overview of the five proposed redevelopment sites.

Mr. Sheehan said that one of things that would be a challenge were the residential units that were behind the main arteries, which often are workforce housing. However, it would be important to attract home ownership in these areas.

Mr. Livingston asked if there was one particular industry that should be encouraged. Ms. Ficene said that health care is a major industry.

Mr. Hempstead asked what business category the City should be working on bringing in that would allow young adults to be employed by the company and afford to live in Norwalk. Ms. Ficene said that the overall picture has to be considered and that there were companies that were looking to move to Connecticut. There are job skills that the State needs. Ms. Ficene said that it would be the job of the Economic Development team to determine.

Mr. Sheehan said that what the area has to offer is space for light manufacturing. This can be integrated which the older type of manufacturing could not. Ms. Ficene cautioned everyone that while communities want a health care cluster, it is not feasible for every community. Ms. Strauss said that the City has the hospital, Yale New Haven, King Industries, and the waterfront. The waterfront is under-utilized and there can be other spin off businesses such as small development labs doing complementary research that would want to be close to King Industries or the health care services.

Mr. Hempstead said that he would like to know what kind of focus the schools should be taking. Ms. Ficene noted that there was an engineering shortage.

Mr. Kydes said that this plan would come back to the Committee in February. Ms. Strauss said that she would like to give a presentation on the results of the public hearing and other input in January. This was acceptable to all.

III. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

A. Approve scheduling the February 1, 2019 Planning Committee meeting for 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Church said that this was the last year for prioritizing the goals for the CDBG. There will be a sheet with the binders that summarize the goals and indicate which applications would meet these goals. The presentations will be on February 7th.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE SCHEDULING THE FEBRUARY 7TH MEETING FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Approve scheduling a public hearing on the draft AAP during the Planning Committee meeting on April 4, 2019.

**** MS. MELENDEZ MOVED TO APPROVE SCHEDULING A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE DRAFT AAP DURING THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING ON APRIL 4, 2019.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MS. MELENDEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services