

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 3, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; Douglas Hempstead, John Igneri, Tom Livingston, Eloisa Melendez, Barbara Smyth, George Tsiranides

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Tim Sheehan, Redevelopment Director; Tammy Strauss, Community Development Planning Director

OTHERS: Steve Kleppin, Planning and Zoning Director

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one present from the public that wished to comment at this time.

CALL TO ORDER.

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

I. ADMINISTRATION.

A. Approval of Minutes

1. December 6, 2018

**** MR. IGNERI MOVED THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 6, 2018.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 6, 2018
AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. WALL STREET/WEST AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN.

1. Review of Wall Street-West Avenue Redevelopment Plan.

Ms. Strauss said that there would be a presentation now because next month she would be requesting the Committee to vote on the plan. However, as the CDBG funding applications will also be on the agenda at that time, Ms. Strauss felt it would be best to narrate the presentation at this meeting.

Ms. Strauss then narrated a PowerPoint presentation and covered the key points and existing conditions, the goals and policies, and implementation.

Mr. Livingston asked about the strategies that would be used. Ms. Strauss said that they were working on anti-displacement policies that would relocate the residents in the area.

Mr. Sheehan said that the ways in which affordable units would remain in the same area became part of the developer's plans. There were about 1,500 units that were affordable and these would ultimately be made available in the area.

Ms. Strauss then reviewed the proposed use for 370 West Avenue, the former YMCA site, which will be developed by the Norwalk Hospital as part of their complex. She also gave an overview of the West Avenue parcel adjoining Merwin Street. She then continued to review the various other parcels involved in the proposed area.

There was a discussion that the Pulse Point might be better served by being relocated to the South Norwalk Train Station, which would have the main transit location.

The Redevelopment Agency is recommending the consideration of micro units, which are less than 400 sq. ft. These are attractive to singles who are over income for the 8-30G but not able to qualify for affordable housing.

Ms. Smyth said that she had been in a micro unit but added that it is important to have a well established urban life for the occupants.

Mr. Kydes asked why there would need to be special zoning. Ms. Strauss said that the minimum size for residential units have to be 500 feet, and the micro units would be 400 sq. ft. Mr. Kleppin said that it would be a different residential density because the parking requirements will increase.

Mr. Hempstead asked if there had been any type of tax revenue analysis done. Ms. Strauss said that there had not. Mr. Sheehan said that there was a per unit tax. He reminded everyone that the units were taxed on a per square foot formula. Discussion followed.

Ms. Strauss said that she did not believe that they would see too many in Norwalk and they were estimating that it would only be about 100 units. She then said that they were looking at historic buildings for micro units. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hempstead asked what would prevent these from being turned into a hotel or an AirBnB. Mr. Kleppin said that this was a tricky issue and had to do with the terms of the lease. Ms. Strauss said that they would be drafting language for this.

Ms. Strauss then went on to review the Parks and Open Space and Waterfront Improvements aspects of the Plan. Ms. Strauss said that Mr. Kleppin would be working on uniting the waterfront with the residents. Mr. Kleppin said that the planning area was large, but the zoning area was not large.

Mr. Hempstead asked about brownfield sites. Ms. Strauss said that there was one identified EPA classified brownfield. Others may have lead paint or have contaminated ground. There are other sites that may be within a flood area. She said that there were no plans for acquisition.

Mr. Kydes asked what the goal was for this type of planning. Mr. Kleppin said that the industrial zone regulations had conflicts and it needs a more in depth look.

Ms. Strauss then spoke about having Innovative Districts as a Planning Concept, Implementation of Norwalk Connectivity Master Plan. She said that the City should be focusing on attracting industries that would be compatible with already existing companies, like King Industries, Yale New Haven Health and Devine Brothers.

Mr. Kydes asked about putting angled parking on Wall Street. Ms. Strauss said that it had not been discussed, but it would provide more street parking, and it is safer and is consistent with the Plan.

Ms. Strauss then reviewed the Design Guidelines in the Plan. The Redevelopment Agency has jurisdiction over Site Design, which includes sidewalks, building access, Landscaping, Open Space and Signage. The guidelines also apply to infrastructure projects. The Building/Architectural Design guidelines apply to building mass, facades and roofs. The height of the building is addressed in Zoning, but what the building looks like is part of Redevelopment. Site Design applies to the primary corridors, including the commercial corridors and the secondary connecting corridors.

She concluded her report by reviewing the plan timeline, which includes the Planning Commission potentially approving the draft in December, a Redevelopment Agency Public Hearing, approval by the Common Council, and final approval by the Redevelopment Agency in March.

Mr. Kydes asked about the role of the Agency in the approval process. Ms. Strauss explained that the Agency gives final approval of the Plan. Mr. Sheehan said that the statute requires the legislative body to give approval prior to the Agency's final approval.

Mr. Sheehan asked Ms. Strauss to update the Committee on the Planning Commission's review.

Ms. Strauss said that the Planning Commission determined that the Plan was consistent with the POCD. She explained that they had received a Certificate of Consistency for the new plan and the draft.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the implementation. Ms. Strauss replied that the implementation matrix is in the plan itself.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the status on the information that he had requested at the previous meeting. Ms. Strauss said that CERC was still working on gathering the information for him.

Ms. Strauss then gave a brief overview of what was being presented to the Zoning Commission. This involved the current 10 zoning districts and would combine 3 zoning districts in one: CDBA, CDBB and CDBDC, which are the central districts. By combining them, it broadens the uses throughout the district, such as light manufacturing and changes the ground floor activation to more available uses from required retail. She went on to give the details including the reduction of parking requirements, provided incentives for space use by artists and micro units. She said that if the presentation was approved, there would be a public hearing scheduled on February 25th and gave a brief description of the following approvals that would be needed.

Mr. Hempstead asked if any non-compliant parcels would become compliant. Mr. Kleppin said that he would have to check. Ms. Strauss said that while they had removed uses, there were no existing uses that would become non-compliant.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Norwalk
Planning Committee of the Common Council
Regular Meeting
January 3, 2019