

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 5, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; Tom Keegan, Tom Livingston, Lisa Shanahan, Barbara Smyth, George Tsiranidis, Darlene Young (7:10 p.m.)

STAFF: Tammy Strauss, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Acting Executive Director, Steve Kleppin, Director of Planning and Zoning, Jessica Casey, Sabrina Church

Via telephone conferencing: Carter Shaw, The Harriman Group

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Kydes called the Public Participation portion of the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Roos said that she had participated in July and another time and was wondering what kind of input the community had with the plan. She said that East Norwalk has its own character, as does the various other areas of Norwalk like South Norwalk, Rowayton and West Norwalk.

Ms. Diane Cece, asked Mr. Kydes to introduce the new Committee members. Mr. Kydes explained that it was the next item on the agenda.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of Minutes

1. August 28, 2019 Special Meeting

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUGUST 28, 2019 SPECIAL MEETING**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUGUST 28, 2019 SPECIAL MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN**

FAVOR (KYDES, LIVINGSTON, AND TSIRANIDIS) AND THREE (3) ABSTENTIONS (SMYTH, SHANAHAN, AND KEEGAN).

2. September 5, 2019 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2019 PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING.**

**** ** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2019 PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (KYDES, LIVINGSTON, SMYTH, AND TSIRANIDIS) AND TWO (2) ABSTENTIONS (SHANAHAN, AND KEEGAN).**

Mr. Kleppin gave a brief overview of the history of the East Norwalk TOD Plan. He said that there had been work done in South Norwalk and other parts of Norwalk, but East Norwalk had been somewhat ignored. He said that they had been working on the study with members of the Council, the Redevelopment staff and various other individuals.

Ms. Young joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Carter Shaw from the Harriman Group then narrated a PowerPoint presentation via a conference call. Mr. Shaw then explained that the industry standard was a 1/2 mile unit. Mr. Kleppin confirmed this and noted that the State of Connecticut will only pay for work within that 1/2 mile radius. The PowerPoint report can be found at:

<http://tomorrow.norwalkct.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/20191114 Open-House-Boards.pdf>

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Kydes asked about the timeline. Mr. Kleppin said that the Oversight Committee had met recently to discuss feedback. Once the Oversight Committee concludes its work, it will go to the Planning Commission and they will hold two public hearings. Mr. Kleppin said that this plan will be presented as an amendment to the POCD and would likely be back on the Committee's agenda in March.

RECESS

Mr. Kydes announced a recess at 7:55 p.m. He reconvened at 8:05 p.m.

B. Review of Potential Economic Development Tools

1. Presentation by Jessica Casey/Sabrina Church

Mr. Kydes said that he and Ms. Casey had been discussing developing commerce in the Wall Street area. Ms. Casey said that they wanted to encourage development in various areas of Norwalk, such as Wall Street. This happens through the use of development

tools, some of which were the establishment of Enterprise Zones, investments, signage improvements and lighting improvements. Many of these tools were used in South Norwalk and the neighborhood is beginning to come together.

Ms. Casey said that the Wall Street/West Avenue area meets two of the three criteria. She explained that there was a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District. She explained that there were some who felt that the City was not receiving the taxes due. However, the City receives a base tax rate and there is an increase in the taxes over base during a period of years as the property value rises.

Mr. Kydes asked about the "as of right" issue. Ms. Church gave a brief overview and pointed out that the developer has to meet the unemployment rate of at least 200% of the state's average or the developer would not be able to access the advantage of being in an Enterprise Zone.

Ms. Casey then spoke about the TIF Districts new legislation which have only been in existence since 2016. She reviewed the details listed in the information packet with Committee. There was a brief discussion regarding the determination of "blight" and how it was applied to the Wall Street/West Avenue area. The focus is more targeted than an Enterprise Zone because the Enterprise Zone encompasses an entire census zone. The TIF revenue over the base tax revenue is directed back into the community for projects such as infrastructure or other issues for the life of the TIF, which could be up to 25 years. While the TIF requires more planning, there is more flexibility in terms of the use of the fund. The Wall Street/West Avenue would be added to the POCD through the amendment process. State statute requires the amendment be approved by the City legislative process.

Ms. Smyth left the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Mr. Livingston asked about how the funding would be set aside from the TIF revenue for infrastructure. Ms. Casey said that they might be able to use earmarks. Ms. Church said that the new regulation in the TIF can be directed towards small businesses. It would have to be included in the financial plan portion along with other neighborhood programming or development.

Ms. Smyth returned to the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Ms. Casey said that the City could use both the Enterprise Zone and the TIF District. An Enterprise Zone could be done in about a month, while the TIF would take a few months longer. While it is important to attract new businesses, it is also important to retain the existing businesses.

Mr. Kydes asked if Ms. Casey should proceed with implementing the tools. Mr. Livingston said that he would like more information about the zones. A brief discussion

followed. Mr. Kydes said that it would be helpful to have an idea of some of the projects that were coming on line in the City.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no additional old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS.

There was no new business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services