

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

125 East Avenue
P.O. Box 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856

TO: MEMBERS, PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
FROM: JOHN KYDES, CHAIRMAN
DATE: SEPTEMBER 2, 2020
RE: MEETING NOTICE

The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee of the Common Council will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 7:00pm. To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at www.norwalkct.org/meetings.



Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" will need to register in advance and use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.



Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Sabrina Church at schurch@norwalkct.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 17, 2020
7:00PM
AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC HEARING – Plan of Conservation and Development (Citywide Plan) amendment to accommodate the addition of the East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development Plan.

The East Norwalk TOD Plan information can be found at the following link: <https://www.norwalkct.org/1684/Plan-of-Conservation-Development>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

I. ADMINISTRATION

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the August 20, 2020 Special Meeting.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Plan of Conservation & Development/East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development Plan
 - 1. Forward to the Common Council for its consideration the approval of the amendments to the Norwalk Citywide Plan: 2019-2029, Plan of Conservation and Development, to incorporate the East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan and authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling to execute the amended Plan.

III. OLD BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

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CITY OF NORWALK - MAYORS OFFICE

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NORWALK CT 06856

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mhutchings

Ordered By

Rebecca

Phone: 2038547701

Fax:

EMail: RKovacs@norwalkct.org

Order Source

Phone

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LEGAL NOTICE

The Planning Committee of the Common Council will hold a **Virtual Public Hearing** to be held online on **Thursday, September 17, 2020** at **7:00 p.m.** for the following purposes:

Forward to the Common Council for its consideration the approval of the amendments to the Norwalk Citywide Plan: 2019-2029, Plan of Conservation and Development, to incorporate the East Norwalk Neighborhood TOD Plan and authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling to execute the amended Plan.

At this hearing interested persons may be heard and written communications submitted. A copy of the agenda and instructions on how to participate in this virtual meeting will be available on the City of Norwalk's website at: <https://www.norwalkct.org/1913/Meeting-Notices>. Plans and information are available at: <https://www.norwalkct.org/1684/Plan-of-Conservation-Development>

Dated at Norwalk, Connecticut, this 3rd day of September 2020.

ATTEST:

Donna L. King, City Clerk

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9/ 8/2020

Dear Planning and Zoning Commission Chairs and Commissioners;

Kindly consider the concerns of long time East Norwalk homeowners.

While I agree that East Norwalk could use improvements as any neighborhood does, our family believes the proposed changes will not improve but inevitably harm our area.

We moved to EN 20 plus years ago primarily because we loved the small, quaint beach neighborhood as do so many of our friends who live here. Adding large structures, primarily apartment complexes to our area is not what we envisioned.

Residential parking, (Osborne Ave. for example) traffic, (try getting to I95 from the beach in the morning) and schools, (need I point out what's lacking here?) are suffering already. This small neighborhood simply cannot support more congestion.

On a positive note, we do support the idea of making East Norwalk more walkable and pedestrian/visitor friendly.

For example instead of allowing the Wells Fargo property to be turned into an apartment complex and certainly not one with a tall structure couldn't we find a way to provide perks for it to be developed for public use? This property could be opened up and a plaza (let's name it after whomever pays for it) could be created where the public would have a beautiful view of the wildlife that resides there. A possible fountain with seating, cafes, and small shops would encourage visitors. Bike racks could lessen parking. It would be a perfect spot for a farmers market, small live music acts and craft shows. This would definitely bring revenue to the area.

There has also been many talks of St Thomas selling their education building property and how it could be replaced with a large retail/ apartment complex. Couldn't this space be "encouraged" by the city to be utilized as a teen or community center? East Norwalkers like the setback, low structure and the ample parking would support the various activities that could be held there.

Let's please think of ways to recreate and improve our spaces without demolishing only to build larger. Bigger isn't always better.

Our final thought is: Are we being heard? After attending the public meetings, asking questions, commenting and reaching out in emails it seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

We are saddened at what could potentially happen to our beloved neighborhood, our home. We are proud to be Norwalk residents and want to stay that way. Thank you for your time and we do hope to hear back from you.

Respectfully,

Terence and Jessie McGarty

Hello All;

I have lived in East Norwalk my entire life. I'm a senior citizen now.
I don't like this plan. It will add more traffic to my district.

When I watched the zoom meeting by the consultants it looked like they were talking about an area in Boston or Rhode Island, not Norwalk CT.

I like having the gas stations, laundermat, little stores/restaurants by the railroad. They are convenient for my lifestyle. If you take all of them away what will I have to do, go to Connecticut avenue for everything ?

By the way, we have a very nice area in Vets park where people walk there dogs, etc. Why do we need a promenade? Where is all the money going to come from?

This is my opinion as a tax payer. I don't mind improving things but this is too much.

Sincerely,

J. OBoy and family

Dear Sir.

I am sorry to be so late with this e-mail but my parents are elderly and I just buried my Dad. I retired to take care of my parents. No regrets.

I'll tell you what I do regret, voting for you. Sorry, but I am so disappointed in the town that you are leaving to my children and grandchildren. How dare you lie to me! You were going to make Norwalk better. In your correspondence to me on October 17, 2019, you spoke of Norwalk having that New England charm. Then why are you selling it off piece by piece? When you were Police Chief, I thought how good you were for our town. Tell me, when did you make a pack with the devil? You told me we were zoned for 5 story buildings. But "yesterday's" height of a story isn't what we are seeing today, is it?

Obviously, [I.am](#) upset. I put my faith in you. You have destroyed all confidence I ever had, I have lived here all my life and I always enjoyed the atmosphere and felt safe. Well, that's gone. You, they, are crowding our town. We cannot accommodate the people, the traffic. the children. the parking. But wait, you don't care. I understand because it won't effect you, besides, you think you are doing it to better Norwalk and for progress and that makes it OK. Developers ALWAYS have a "good" selling point. That's their job. What's yours?

I know we need progress but at what cost? What I don't understand is how someone who has made Norwalk their home for so long, can ignore it's people and the very heart of the town. We are going to turn into every other busy hub with its greedy, selfish people who don't even know their neighbors let alone help them. Our, (Norwalk's) personality has changed because of this. It is no longer unique and soon no longer the rainbow mixture it has proudly boasted. I WAS so proud of that.

Good bye,
Rose Marie Albertson

P.S. All these tall buildings are surrounding my peaceful, residential home: East Avenue, Nordens, Winfield Street and the Wells Fargo Bank; oh and how about the "casino plans" involving the mall?!!

Gentlemen,

My wife and I just listed to the ENNA meeting at which they shared information about the plan. This was our first chance to hear about the process and dig into the details. Let me start with a thanks. It looks like you all have done a good job of soliciting input and addressing those issues.

I would add two comments:

- 1) we should do all we can to incentivize home ownership. Research is pretty clear that high levels of residential ownership have a very positive impact on quality of life in the community. Adjusting tax incentives to encourage more condos or co-ops seems like a reasonable idea.
- 2) I personally would embrace neighborhood parking permits. We had those when we lived in Boston. Hard to adapt to when you first move into the neighborhood, but then it gets pretty straightforward.
- 3) very concerned about density and impact on broader community—schools and other services, for example. I am very supportive of some increase in density, if it is well managed.
- 4) Green space is critical. As you consider changes to zoning, please ensure minimums of green space in each development. Having traveled to Singapore a few times, it is amazing how creative green space can mitigate some of the impacts of greater density.

Best regards,

Russell Morris

8 Roland Ave, Norwalk, CT 06855

RU77355@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Kydes and Mr. Kleppin:

I'd like to amend my earlier email if I can. While I still stand by my original remarks, I'd add one thing that seems to be a glaring omission from the plan and the discussion around the plan: the impact of climate change. Given that East Norwalk is identified in numerous maps as being at increasingly a higher risk, shouldn't there be some talk about flood surge protections, emergency exits, higher building standards. The more I think about the plan and other conversations I am having, the more I am struck by the fact that the assumptions in the plan are that everything will be more of the same. I believe it might be worthwhile to take some time to review these assumptions and build a more resilient community that can face these challenges from a position of foresight.

Best regards,
Russell Morris
8 Roland Avenue
646-734-4149

Please vote no on current proposal for East Norwalk . So many plans we did not ask for ! We don't want overdevelopment and traffic congestion .

No to Wells Fargo condos

No to Seaview Promenade

Just widen roads , fix sidewalks and train station.

06855 is a village not a city center

Traffic is already a nightmare

Thank you

Jim & Geri Sutton

8 Raymond Terrace

35 years strong !

Hello Mr. Kydes,

As a millennial that has recently settled in Norwalk, I have really come to appreciate the charm of our city. In the 2 years I have lived here so far, I have been disappointed by the way that big developers are coming to take a hold on our city, putting up unaffordable cheaply built apartments. I am most recently concerned with the TOD rezoning plan.

1. The City is already experiencing a water shortage with the two reservoirs being polluted.
2. How can we possibly handle more congestion in east Norwalk? The traffic is already unbearable. And I do not for one second believe that millennials will live in east Norwalk without cars because I wouldn't ever live in this city without a car. How would you get to the doctor?? Or a grocery store?? Or your favorite gym? It's not like this is Nyc and there's great public transport (I wish!!).
3. Mill pond is beautiful the way it is and the wild life should be cherished. The last thing we need is construction and destruction of the little wild coastal habitats we have left here.
4. It's a lie that millennials don't want kids. There will be kids, if a millennial is choosing to live in the suburbs. There will be additional bodies attending the schools. And you better hope that my generation has kids, because otherwise, you may have a replacement rate issue. We need families to sustain norwalk as a viable city.

What I would like to see, as a millennial in this area is more care paid to environmental protection, especially our rare coastal species as well as more venues for entertainment and relaxation. Parks and gathering spaces. Places to make memories with loved ones. Things that are accessible and enjoyable to all. That's what makes a city a cool place to live.

All the best,

Lauren Mallet

Hi Steve,

Thanks to all of you for the thoughtful TOD presentation and discussion. The priorities of pedestrian-centric development and sustainable landscaping to manage stormwater were excellent. Below I've shared some information about including a commitment to 2030 energy, carbon and transportation emission goals which works well with the current recommendations in the TOD for green infrastructure networks and sustainable sites certification.

1. Background: To avoid catastrophic climate change, most top architecture and engineering firms in the US have committed to designing buildings that reduce energy/water consumption by 50% of current levels by 2030 at the latest. However, most small architecture and engineering firms have *not* signed on, and even with the firms that have, unless the client states that it is their goal as well to meet this target, it may not be achieved.

2. Why it is critical: Buildings are responsible for 40% of global carbon emissions; the emissions from new buildings constructed within the 2020-2030 decade will be make-or-break in terms of whether we meet global climate goals (and succeed in preventing flooding and other ecosystem disruptions in cities like Norwalk). **Thus to meet climate goals, it has been calculated that the minimum increase in building energy/water efficiency must be 50% by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050. Buildings constructed now that do not meet these standards will need to be retrofitted later to meet them, which will be costly.**

3. A solution: In order to ensure that developers, architects, and engineers provide buildings which improve significantly upon current energy/water efficiency performance, cities have been designating **2030 districts**. The program is a voluntary designation to define, communicate, and require these environmental goals within a district boundary. Info can be found here: <https://www.2030districts.org/>. Cities that have designated 2030 districts include New York City, Stamford, Ann Arbor, and Ithaca. Signing on to this has the added benefit of adding Norwalk to the map of cities leading the charge in sustainability. The reason cities officially designate districts is because it holds developers accountable, whereas simply recommending building efficiency does not.

4. Implications: Fundamentally, the steps are (1) reduce resource demand, and (2) switch to lower-carbon resources. Buildings can be designed with efficient heating and cooling systems such as radiant floors, passive solar thermal collectors, chilled beams, etc. as opposed to standard VAV systems. Energy analysis is conducted during the design phase to optimize insulation, glazing, passive ventilation. Low-carbon building materials are used such as FSC-certified timber, 95-100% recycled steel, carbon-sequestering concrete etc. **On-site renewables** are installed such as solar panels and geothermal heat pumps, both of which can be shared by multiple buildings. Further, **studies conducted by several municipalities, large and small, showed that to meet overall carbon emission reduction goals, buildings must be all-electric or at least ready to be converted to all-electric.** This is because it is physically impossible to reduce carbon emissions below a certain level **if an oil tank or gas line is installed (it will only have to be removed later).** That is why installing oil/gas infrastructure saves the developer money now and costs the city later; as a result, [cities have begun to ban natural gas.](#)

I would be happy to continue the conversation with you and the rest of the fantastic team who have been working hard on this TOD study. Please feel free to send questions or comments on any of the above. My background is structural engineering and environmental science, and would love to provide other feedback on the TOD proposal if there is still time. Is there a date by which additional feedback is requested? For reference on where my perspective comes from, I work at an Arch/Eng firm and my

most recent work has been for LGA airport terminal B, various university hospitals, O'Hare airport, overseas US embassy projects, and a couple net-zero energy homes.

Kind regards,

Devki

Devki Desai, PE LEED

devkides@gmail.com

Dear Members of the Planning Committee,

As a resident of East Norwalk for 27 years, on St. John Street, I would like to express my deep concerns and reservations about the proposed TOD plan.

I don't feel that it adequately addresses some of the most critical quality of life issues that we face on a daily basis, and indeed I fear this plan will exacerbate them further.

Perhaps the easiest way to present these issues is a listing, which follows below.

Traffic calming

Reroute truck traffic out of the St. John Street - Osborne Street loop. I am fearful that speeding, noise, and volume will lead to blight.

Addressing better sidewalks, especially at the East Avenue / St. John Street corner which have disappeared now that Dunkin Donuts and Mike's Deli combined have become a truck stop.

Addressing the heat index on East Avenue, and the connecting streets (Fort Point, Fitch, and Van Sant)
We desperately need more trees.

Can any further addition of apartments be delayed until after completion of the development on Rowan Street.

The reconstruction of the railroad bridge on East Avenue is a crucial first step prior to any further development south of the railroad tracks. What is the appeal of living near the train station when it is hazardous to walk there.

More density is not the solution. Better infrastructure and more aesthetic guidelines regarding Street facades and building heights that are in keeping with the existing should be given more emphasis.

Thank you for your consideration.

Patsy Rupp

Patsy Harker Rupp

To: Planning and Zoning Commissioners C/O Director - Steve Kleppin
Cc: Common Council C/O Commision Chair - Fran Dimeglio
Zoning Commision Chair – Louis Schulman
Council Planning Committee Chair – John Kydes

Subject: Postponement of Public Presentations and Hearings Virtually

To All, please consider postponing the imminent hearings and discussions concerning TOD Development Plans.

I have personally discussed this with many of our constituents, and we believe that postponing meetings until they can be safely presented in the public forum is essential for full understanding of all issues and transparency of all details associated with the plan.

I myself am not against some considered development, but not without careful consideration of the quality of life effect on taxpaying residents.

Few people believe that developers shouldn't make a profit, and that some areas of Norwalk should be considered for development. But not without positive impact on the community.

I am hopeful that the Common Council, and Associates will look at the TOD as an opportunity to make real quality progressive changes in Norwalk for the residents and their futures; not just focused on immediate potential tax revenue without seeing the bigger long reaching future of our wonderful city.

Remember why we live here, and don't forget to help us continue to want to stay.

Thank you for your consideration. Regards, James Mitchell – 3 Platt Street. East Norwalk, CT 06855

The August 24th online Planning Commission Public Hearing regarding the TOD District in East Norwalk was attended by a full house of East Norwalk residents, who, unabashedly, and overwhelmingly, expressed their total opposition to the projected overdevelopment of apartments/condos. Good sense prevailed with callers speaking openly and bluntly of City Hall not listening to their wishes and concerns., although Steve Kleppin, Director, P&Z, went to great lengths to rebut, even showing a chart of prior hearing processes leading up to this project. However, most of those meetings were Oversight Committee meetings, not widely publicized, and rarely attended by residents. He stated that the Oversight Commission was definitely on-board with this project, but failed to mention the one major dissenting member, the only one appointed to represent the resident's stakeholder group, ENNA. With the exception of three City Hall presentations last year, little advance publicity preceded the planning of such an important issue and one doubts that the scope, density and building height of the proposed buildings was the hottest item on those agendas.

The resident's main objection was the traffic impact of adding another few thousand people to an already overloaded grid. Parking, already in short supply, will be non-existent. What Mr. Kleppin did not share with the public is that his consultation with Emily Innes, Project Manager for Harriman (Project Designer), suggested they go back to the drawing board and determine what, exactly, the parking minimum is for these developments. He hasn't told us that yet. In the midst of the smoke and mirrors jargon this little fact could be very important to the density plans for these buildings. And the glossy amenities being constantly restated by Ms. Innes for these projects should be the price of entry of new development, not traded away as "gifts" from developers in exchange for building taller, more densely populated, structures.

Mr. Kleppin has described East Ave. again and again as the area within the TOD zone which purportedly needs a major "update" and is subsequently being stymied by the current 2.5 story requirement for that area. Perhaps this corridor needs some refurbishment, but would all the business owners and residents along this corridor benefit to a great degree if the building height is raised? Does every property owner on East Ave. wish to improve their property in this manner? If passed, the new projected story height of 3.5 will only lead to more special permit applications in the future for even higher stories. It would seem that a flat roof at 2.5 stories (such a bad idea according to Ms. Innes) could be attractive in a well-designed building. We all know that developers are just looking to squeeze more density from projects.

The East Norwalk TOD Zone is currently being touted as the "Village" area. Yet, the city's current plan is still to lower the roadbed under the E. Norwalk train bridge to accommodate large trucks. Since when did a "Village" have 40-ton trucks running through it? And, should the Norden Place Warehouse application be approved next month, we'll not only have huge tractor trailers coming off of I-95 and down East Ave., but turning up Fitch and Winfield to access Norden Place – so much for a "Village" Atmosphere!

There is a huge push by City Hall to get all this approved very quickly. Zoom is a great communication process but a City Hall Auditorium filled with concerned residents really makes a statement. What's the hurry? A project this large with considerations this vital should allow every resident affected to speak their mind. All residents in East Norwalk who may be technically challenged should be allowed their say in person and not confined to remarks online, where time constraints remain (though Chair, Planning Commission, Ms. DiMeglio, is very generous).

The Planning Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and serve at his pleasure. They will be provided with the facts of the project and expected to complete their due diligence without time constraints, consider all issues, be fully knowledgeable of the P&Z laws pertaining to this project and ***take into full consideration local resident issues and dissent.*** And, when Mr. Kleppin tells them repeatedly that TOD of this magnitude is justified here because of the MetroNorth Commuter Line, Commissioners should have the good sense to ask themselves if this plan would be implemented in Rowayton, where residents enjoy the protections of a “Village District” designation but are NOT being asked to tear down Rowayton Avenue around the RR Station and rebuild with more mixed-use development!

Residents need to continue to express their views on this plan in the form of letters & emails sent to Mr. Kleppin to forward to the Planning Commission and Planning Committee, and by observing Zoom meetings and commenting when allowed.

Joan Vitali

East Norwalk Resident

Alan L. Kibbe
One Singing Woods Road
Norwalk, CT 06850-1225
akibbe@att.net **H: 203 846-4182** **C: 203 952-5166**

14 September 2020

East Norwalk TOD Commentary

I've lived in Norwalk for 38 years. I have regularly driven through East Norwalk on my way to Calf Pasture Beach, Sprite Island, East Norwalk's restaurants, and The Shore and Country Club. I sit on the Norwalk Harbor Management Commission and the Shore and Country Club Board of Governors. The following are my thoughts and questions directed to the Planning Commission and Common Council with regard to the East Norwalk TOD.

A Transit Oriented District? Really? Covid may have changed that forever.

I understand the predicted benefits of a Transit Oriented District. However, Covid-19 has fundamentally changed the way we work. Tens of thousands of former commuters now work from home. Desk-based businesses have learned that they no longer must lease thousands of square feet of the most-expensive office space available to provide their workers a place to work. It's a win-win of sorts.

The question then becomes, what is the point of a TOD if vastly fewer workers commute to work? At the very least, TOD plans should be put on hold until we determine the future trend in commutation. I know dozens of former commuters with "big" jobs who now work from their front porch, Calf Pasture Beach, or their dining table. They don't expect to go back to full-time commutation...ever. I believe that the way people fundamentally live and work has been changed for good. That means big changes in what workers need for housing. This "new norm" offers a vastly-better quality of life, proximity to family, and stronger connections to community. The need will be for more at-home space instead of a small apartment by the train station. Covid has also transformed people's feelings about housing density and access to the outdoors. Perhaps a small-lot, small-house model will become the trend. I believe the demand for high-density apartment dwellings is diminishing rapidly. Let's be leaders rather than followers.

Please tap the brakes on TOD development for now so that we are not saddled with abandoned buildings.

Mixed use retail and residential development. Blah!

How much additional retail space does East Norwalk require? If there isn't demand for retail, why build it? Retail doesn't make a street lively and it requires extra parking.

I think mixed use development, dwellings above retail, is an obsolete concept unless there is specifically-demonstrated demand for the retail portion. Back in the day, a pharmacist might build a pharmacy location and include a personal apartment on the 2nd floor. No more. Those kinds of family businesses barely exist, having been replaced by national franchises. Americans have fundamentally changed how

they shop and Covid-19 has pushed that change along. We're not going back. One doesn't have to look beyond Norwalk to see scores of empty, ground-level retail spaces. Why require them in the first place unless there is a compelling need? If there's a great view, perhaps a restaurant space. East Norwalk currently has a complete empty strip center recently restored after a fire.

Ground level retail almost always lacks personality. Even with significant exterior tenant fit-ups, the Waypointe project's ground level is exceptionally dull. And several spaces are still vacant. Look at the new Bobby Q's compared to the Westport original. Donovan's in SONO is inviting because it looks interesting. It's eclectic. It's inviting. It's not just a picture window with tables inside. When profit is the only goal, the results will lack any personality because those details cost money. We are a community that wants quality and attention to detail to make our environment interesting.

This is a photograph of the Spinnaker development which I often pass in Milford which has stood for 20 years. The site overlooks a public marina and the Wepawaug River. The ground level retail space remains mostly empty with some of the retail space used as office space for businesses. There is no vitality to this development because there was already more than enough retail space nearby.



Broader Planning Questions

Why more residents?

Throughout the onslaught of new apartment construction, I have not understood the need to increase the number of citizens in Norwalk. Having more property to tax brings more real estate revenue to the City, but that cannot be considered "free" money. Tax revenue covers the cost of City government and the services it provides to its residents. Things like schools, teachers, police and fire protection, road repair, plowing, garbage collection, parks and beach maintenance, health services and sewage treatment fall into this category. Adding more residents adds more school children, increases the fire and police protection staff and equipment needs, adds more trash, creates more sewage, puts more

cars on the road, and puts more demands on our recreational resources. All of these items require additional tax revenue.

The only benefit to increasing our numbers that I can think of is adding more residents to Connecticut which increases income tax revenue for the state. I don't think that is a worthy reason to increase our population. Hartford has mismanaged state finances for decades and it would be unfair to diminish our quality of life in Norwalk to help bail out the state.

Norwalk offers a wide range of housing options of shapes and sizes at a wide range of costs. I have encouraged all kinds of friends and colleagues to move to Norwalk, and almost all have found a property within their means that meets their personal requirements and lifestyle needs.

If there's another reason to add people, I don't see it.

Why tax breaks?

During the run-up to the SONO Collection project, I asked a member of the Planning Commission about the need for full tax revenue, rather than a tax break, due to the need for additional police and fire protection with the addition of the City's largest public assembly space. I was told that the Commission was assured that no additional police or fire personnel or equipment would be required. There would be no increased costs to Norwalk whatsoever. I thought that was absurd. When the mall opened, I read that new fire equipment was needed because the equipment we owned would not fit into the mall's parking garage. Of course new equipment and personnel were required when that many square feet of public space are added! Tax breaks are merely an opportunity for our elected officials to invest taxpayer money in development projects without our consent. If the project is worth building in our high-demand area, there should be no need for taxpayer investment.

Necessary Resources. Water.

I hear the report from the Mayor's Water Quality Committee every month at the Harbor Management Committee meeting. The Committee has expressed concerns about the availability of water to support our community as it exists. Aquarion's proposal to divert a million gallons a day from the Cannondale aquifer to serve other parts of the county could have seriously reduced the flow in the Norwalk River. Fortunately, that project was taken off the table. I think that if one believes in climate change, then one should be concerned about water for our residents. Thousands of new toilets, showers, dishwashers, and people staying at home will create a significant increase in consumption. Where does more water come from? I think this is a serious question for the Planning Commission which must be addressed before large-scale development continues.

I have suggested that we give consideration to a desalination plant at the Manresa site to provide for Norwalk's future needs. The technology is used all over the planet on a vast scale. It is electrically intensive, however there is already a sub-station at the site and some water intake infrastructure. Perhaps we could sell water to Greenwich and Stamford!

Necessary Resources. Sewage Treatment.

Norwalk's treatment plant overflows regularly, closing swimming and shellfish beds. I realize that this is because of the interconnection of our sanitary sewers and street sewers. The question remains, how much more sewage can the plant process? Are there projects underway to separate the sanitary and

street sewers? It seems to me that adding tracts of new apartments as we are adjacent to the former US Surgical site and East Norwalk will contribute to more sewage. Let's not be in the position of having to create a new treatment plant "unexpectedly". Let's require the developers to provide additional capacity on on-site sewage treatment facilities.

Thanks for serving our community as you all do.

Dear common council,

I am writing to you as a concerned resident of East Norwalk. After reviewing the plans of the redevelopment I stand by as a supporter of the plans you have put fourth. I firmly believe that the standard of living in the area has decreased substantially within the last few years. There's an abundance of buildings and homes that look like they have been abandoned for years and more to come. As a comparison to the rest of the norwalk areas, i feel like east norwalk has been forgotten about. With the plans of adding more apartments , amenities , parks, and pedestrian friendly roadways this would be the long time needed and awaited light to make us glow again as a community.

Sincerely
Amy Bingle

Dear fellow citizens elect,

East Norwalk has been home to me ever since I was a child . I have lived in the area for nearly 40 years . It was once a beautiful area where your children can roam safe on their bicycles and at local parks . Unfortunately this is not the picture it paints today . Many roadways are outdated and do not fit the area as for the traffic needs . The majority of local mom and pop shops are struggling and if not closed . I feel the revitalization or the area would be a good thing for the community so our children can utilize the parks , amenities , and safer roadways so they can enjoy their childhood in a safer/cleaner environment . Abandoned homes and buildings that were once very busy with commerce now lay stagnant and nothing but an eye sore. I feel fellow norwalkers should embrace this plan as it will bring nothing but new life to the area The proposed plan is a go in my opinion .

Thank you
Nick Andro

Planning Committee & City Council & Zoning Staff

I am a lifelong resident of East Norwalk. I currently own 232 East Avenue, Station House Bar and Grille, 80 Seaview Avenue, Overtons and 82 Seaview Avenue, Harbor Lights Restaurant. More Importantly, I am a lifelong constituent of East Norwalk, residing at 17 Fitch Street. All three of my children attend Marvin School, my alma mater. It is safe to say my businesses, personal and family life have deep roots in East Norwalk.

I strongly believe the zoning and planning committee should approve the Transient Oriented Development proposed. The plan will pave the road for future improvements to East Norwalk, which are well overdue. The vision outlined in the TOD plan will help guide property owners to create a more cohesive and livable neighborhood. Currently, many of districts have multiple commercial uses jumbled randomly with residential housing without a unifying vision. The TOD plan incentivizes property owners to improve their lots within a city framework. I understand traffic is a legitimate concern for many of the residents, but I believe the gains from implementing this vision significantly outweigh any potential negative consequences. What is the alternative?

Vote in favor of the TOD plan. Thank you for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Chris Gavrielidis

I am writing to you to say I strongly disagree with the implementation of the TOD proposal. My husband and I moved here over six years ago from Brooklyn. As a CT native, I was thrilled to become part of this beautiful, historic town. Since moving here we have seen the congestion and gridlock on East Avenue grow each year. As it stands, we are unable to leave our street during rush hour in the morning and evening due to the heavy traffic. The proposed TOD plan has widening East Avenue to 4 lanes and raising the bridge as the solution to the horrific gridlock. How so? The bridge alone will take close to a decade. Where will all the traffic go once the construction starts to widen East Avenue? You are insuring people who live off of East Avenue years of inconvenience and frustration just trying to leave their homes!

I'm also concerned with the extension of the East Norwalk train platform. Has Metro North contacted the town to say they foresee a huge surge of outbound riders? Now, with most working from home and will be for quite a while there is no need to waste tax dollars on a platform that won't be used to the projections you insist on. Where are the numbers from Metro North to back up the need for this extension?

The apartments at the train station might add ridership years down the road but there is no research to my knowledge from Metro North (who know the numbers) projecting such a large turn out.

The Mill Pond complex is another proposal that makes no sense to the people who live in this community. How is adding even more people and even more traffic to an area that you want to do construction on for years going to help any congestion? WE DON'T WANT THIS!!!! Why aren't you listening to the taxpayers and people of this community? Why the rush to push this through during a pandemic? It seems to most the developers with big wallets have more of a say than the community you are paid to represent.

I beg of you to think of the people of East Norwalk and put the value of their lives and their families lives in the community over making a quick buck.

Sincerely,
Kelly and Allan Linder

Dear Mayor Rilling,

This is a follow up to a letter that I sent back in June. I have been attending online meetings since the beginning of presentations for the TOD project/ East Norwalk. I am a very concerned resident as I live within the confounds of this project. *I understand the need to progress, but I ask, please don't allow this area to be so congested with people and cars to the point that it's uninhabitable and therefore unattractive.* People that live here now already feel the heat with population growth and we don't want any more of it. Some general improvements like new sidewalks and parks are good but really, *what number* of apartments are tolerable for the East Norwalk area? How prepared are we to know what impact this will have on our area? I cannot stress enough, people and families want to stay comfortable and spared distress. Why would anyone want to come home to a borough of New York when *they* just came from one via the train. East Norwalk should remain a quiet, beautiful, comfortable and affordable suburb to live in. I hope that you would agree with this.

This also brings up another major and possibly *larger* concern - the 330000 square foot space stated to be a warehouse over at Norton's place. On top of ALL else this will be the biggest mistake made on East Norwalk and Norwalk residents. Please don't allow it!. This would mean countless tractor trailers driving through our streets daily. Noise, pollution, intense traffic and our people/our residence will no longer be able to get through to this side of town. This mistake will disrupt any new plans for East Norwalk . It would be ugly, it would be catastrophic to our city. The best solution for that property is to inform the owners to propose with the state for an i95 access road that directly leads to their property. Please keep excessive tractor trailers off our streets. Keep this project from taking full advantage of our people and city resources. There will be no end in sight for this and we all will be left suffering unless it gets taken care of.

Thanks for listening.

Joseph Licsek
Resident of Raymond Terrace

Hi,

I am outraged by the proposed plans and quite honestly I thought that with your background, being from New Canaan, you too would have a different perspective on developing East Norwalk.

The BoA site is too small of a property for 17 Units plus no one has 1.4 cars so cars will be parked All over the streets. The area right down the street From this parcel where I live is zoned 1-acre residential (AAA) and yet you are trying to rezone and put 17 units on less than 1 acre! Crazy!!!

In addition, East norwalk can NOT handle 1000 more residents, increasing our small little town of 8000 to 9000. Try putting that in westport Or New Canaan or Rowayton and see how far you would get, those towns wouldn't have even gotten public hearings because the plans wouldn't have even gotten that far. . We need to preserve East norwalk charm and not turn it into a bedroom community.

I lived here 30 years, moved from NYC to raise a family and still can't believe that these plans are even being considered.

Show us something, A plan, that is complimentary to our small village of 8,000, help us preserve our home values, make this area more attractive and sought after, Beautifies our village not the opposite.

Be our "friend" not our enemy, work with us to enhance not demolish

Happy to speak with you in more detail and to be part of the solution.

Kimberly Bastoni

I am writing to you to say I strongly disagree with the implementation of the TOD proposal. My husband and I moved here over six years ago from Brooklyn. As a CT native, I was thrilled to become part of this beautiful, historic town. Since moving here we have seen the congestion and gridlock on East Avenue grow each year. As it stands, we are unable to leave our street during rush hour in the morning and evening due to the heavy traffic. The proposed TOD plan has widening East Avenue to 4 lanes and raising the bridge as the solution to the horrific gridlock. How so? The bridge alone will take close to a decade. Where will all the traffic go once the construction starts to widen East Avenue? You are insuring people who live off of East Avenue years of inconvenience and frustration just trying to leave their homes!

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Sincerely,
Kelly and Allan Linder

To: Norwalk Common Council
From: Richard Bonenfant, Parkhill Ave.
RE: Planning Committee Public Hearing

I hope you are listening to the people of East Norwalk, and understand that the overwhelming majority of the residents are not in favor of cramming over a thousand apartment units, additional trucks and automobiles to clog the roadways, and demands on city services into their neighborhood.

At some Planning Commission meetings, it was presented that East Avenue will be improved to accommodate the traffic flow. What will that accomplish if the goal is to subsequently fill it up again with even more cars? How do you make the roads wider without taking property from the current owners along the route?

Parking will be a nightmare spilling over to side streets, and when you hear the term “Shared Parking” you should simply dismiss the concept as it is nothing but a sham to count the same space twice and thereby avoid any actual requirements.

It seems that the only people who want additional density are developers wishing to maximize their profits, and some merchants looking for the largest customer base regardless of the consequences imposed on the community.

This reminds me of all the time wasted by the residents who participated in the recent Master Plan exercises. Many people spoke against the high density plans for thousands of new apartments in Norwalk, but those comments never made it into the document.

Please consider the opinions of the people you were elected to represent and reject the Transit Orientated District Amendment.

Thank you,
Rich Bonenfant

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 20, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; Tom Keegan, Barbara Smyth, Lisa Shanahan, Darlene Young

OTHERS: Bryan Baker, Land Use Planner; Steve Kleppin, Planning and Zoning Director; Sabrina Church, Director of Business Development and Tourism; Council Member David Heuvelman, Mike Harden, Parking Authority Chair, Diane Lauricella, Diane Cece

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.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Kydes announced that the East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Public Hearing had been moved to September 10th.

Ms. Diane Lauricella greeted everyone and said that she would be speaking about two items, the Solar for All campaign and Sustainable CT.

She said that she was in favor of the Same for All campaign and has several friends involved with this program in other towns. This could reduce the carbon footprint and help the environment. This PosiGen program is only available to Eversource customers. She said that she would be working with PURA to change that so that all the Taxing Districts in Norwalk would be able to take advantage.

Ms. Lauricella said that she wanted to make sure that the public would be involved in the program. She said that it would be important to have knowledgeable neutral parties available to the public to help them understand.

Ms. Lauricella said that she was in favor of Sustainable CT and would be advocating for this. This should move into a public/private partnership and that the City takes a look at creating a more holistic approach to energy.

Ms. Diane Cece greeted everyone and said that she had heard Mr. Kydes announce that the public hearing for the East Norwalk TOD plan would be moved to September 10th. She said that she was representing the ENNA group.

She said that this was the one committee that would be advancing the TOD to the full Council. It is important to be aware of the magnitude of the plan and will impact all of the area of 06855.

Ms. Cece said that they had made it clear to Mr. Kleppin that they were requesting that the deadline be extended. She said that one of the Governor's orders does address the granting of extensions.

Ms. Cece said that they had suggested that the Public Hearing be moved to from the 3rd to the 10th. She noted that the Norwalk Public Schools had changed the opening of school to September 10th also. She asked Mr. Kydes if he would consider delaying the vote to send the TOD Plan to the first Council Meeting in October.

Ms. Cece pointed out that the TOD Plan will impact all the area, particularly the gateways.

Mr. Kydes thanked Ms. Cece for all the hard work that she had put in on this issue during the last two years.

I. ADMINISTRATION

a. Approval of the Minutes of the July 2, 2020 Regular Meeting.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 2, 2020 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 2, 2020 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. NEW BUSINESS

a. Solar for All Campaign

1. Advance to the Common Council for its consideration, the authorization of the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute an agreement with PosiGen and the Connecticut Green Bank for the Solar for All campaign and authorize their use of the Norwalk City logo on campaign related promotional materials.

**** MR. KEEGAN MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Kleppin said that Mr. Baker would be presenting the program and would be working on environmental issues for the Department.

Mr. Baker spoke about how this would help the City reach some of its goals for green operations. He said that The CT Green Bank allows home owners to install solar panels without credit checks and down payments.

Mr. Baker said that he had checked with Susan at PosiGen and was told that Bristol had the program up and running. He then outlined the details about how the program works and said they were trying to work with PURA to allow the two Taxing Districts to join the program. He added they would only install panels on buildings where they felt that the savings would be sufficient.

Mr. Kydes said they had looked at several solar companies. He asked how PosiGen was chosen. Mr. Baker said that they had gotten positive feedback on the company and Green Bank had chosen them.

Ms. Shanahan asked if there were other projects that the City could take advantage of and she suggested that the Norwalk Housing Authority be considered. Mr. Baker said that they were looking at single or two family homes, but he would check with the company representative.

The program runs for a period of about 5 months and the company checks in with the City staff and community leaders. After 5 months, the program will expire. The company will be using the City's website and social media, along with the City seal. He said that when people pay the Eversource bill, there is a portion of the bill that goes to the program. The staff will perform energy audits for applicants.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if the home owner would actually own the panels on their homes. Mr. Baker said that it was a 20 year lease and that the home owner would be paying about \$50 a month on the panels. PosiGen is responsible for the maintenance of the panels.

Ms. Young said she felt that this was a good project and while it would include low income families. However South Norwalk would be excluded and she felt that those families should have an opportunity to participate in the program.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH POSIGEN AND THE CONNECTICUT GREEN BANK FOR THE SOLAR FOR ALL CAMPAIGN AND AUTHORIZE THEIR USE OF THE NORWALK CITY LOGO ON CAMPAIGN RELATED PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. Sustainable CT

1. Discussion and update regarding Norwalk's Sustainable CT Submittal.

Mr. Baker said that the deadline for the Sustainable CT was August 25th. They had enough points for bronze certification at this time. As they continue to work on this in the future, they can qualify for more points and qualify for a higher level.

c. Plan of Conservation & Development/East Norwalk Transit Oriented Development Plan

1. Approve scheduling a public hearing at the September 3, 2020 Planning Committee Meeting to consider the proposed amendments to the Citywide Plan (POCD).

Mr. Kydes asked if the September 10th public hearing date would work for the Committee members. The Committee members agreed that September 10th would be acceptable.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO AMEND THE DATE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2020 PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CITYWIDE PLAN (POCD) TO SEPTEMBER 10, 2020.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM AS AMENDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Kleppin said that the consultant had a conflict on the 3rd, but would be available on the 10th. Mr. Kydes said that he would like to have a presentation at the meeting. Mr. Kleppin said that the presentation was about 45 minutes.

Mr. Kleppin said that he would prefer not to push this item past September because item has been under discussion for two years and that they have heard from the public.

Mr. Kleppin said that State deadline for completion was the end of October.

Mr. Keegan said that he had heard that there were many people asking to have this delayed and while it has been discussed over the past two years, but he was not involved. He said that he did not see asking the State for an extension as a bad thing. He would not be opposed to waiting.

Ms. Smyth asked if it was possible to get an extension. Mr. Kleppin said that they had already received an extension from the State and were at the limit now for the grant. He

said that he did not want to belabor the point, but the Committee had heard from the public. The Zoom meeting platform precludes people from shouting from the back of the room, so people can speak without interruption.

d. Norwalk Now

1. Advance to the Common Council for its consideration, the authorization of the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute a three party agreement with the Norwalk Parking Authority and Dorenborg Kallenbach Advertising to provide Citywide Marketing Communication Services in a sum not to exceed \$100,000 for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

Ms. Church said that the Norwalk Now contract which was the promotion for Norwalk small businesses with the goal of increasing the use of parking assets had expired. This service has expanded since its launch to other neighborhoods in the City rather than just South Norwalk. It is a free service for all business owners for marketing and promotional services.

An RFP was issued and interviews were held. Ms. Church said that they had included an amount of money to see what the agencies would come up with. She gave a brief summary of Dorenborg Kallenbach Advertising. The \$100,000 will come from the Parking Authority budget. This is a citywide initiative.

Mr. Keegan asked about the \$100,000. Ms. Church said that the City will not be allocating any funding, but the funding will be managed by staff, which is why the three party agreement is needed.

Ms. Young asked what would happen if the Council was not happy after the first year. Ms. Church said that if they were not happy with the Agency, the City would issue another RFP and a new consultant would be selected.

In response to a question about how the program will be supervised, Ms. Church said that the Parking Authority would receive a monthly report which can be shared to the Council as requested.

There is an RFP for a Special Events Coordinators that is currently in progress that is temporarily suspended because of COVID-19.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if the new consultant is aware of the issues surrounding COVID because so many things have changed. He was told there has been a major change in reaching out and all the consultants had considered it in their presentation. There will be more signage and print media.

Mr. Kydes asked when the campaign would kick off. Ms. Church said that they were still working on the 501(c)3 and LLC issue. In the beginning, there was a need for the LLC and the 501(c)3 issue because there was sponsorships involved but that is no longer needed or required. The campaign will continue to be managed with no lapse.

**** MR. KEEGAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A THREE PARTY AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK PARKING AUTHORITY AND DORENBURG KALLENBACH ADVERTISING TO PROVIDE CITYWIDE MARKETING COMMUNICATION SERVICES IN A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. OLD BUSINESS

There was no additional Old Business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services