

CITY OF NORWALK
TRAFFIC AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
September 21, 2020

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via e-mail 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 Michael Yeosock at myeosock@norwalkct.org to provide written comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Harry Rilling, Commissioner Kelly Straniti; Commissioner Fran Collier-Clemmons

STAFF: Chief Thomas Kulhawik; Deputy Chief Susan Zecca; Deputy Chief James Walsh; Kathryn Hebert, Director, TMP; Michael Yeosock, Asst. Director, TMP; Fred Eshraghi, TMP Traffic Engineer

OTHERS: Attorney Elizabeth Suchy; Neil Olinski; Malone & McBroom; Diane Cece; East Norwalk Neighborhood Association

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Diane Cece- East Norwalk Neighborhood Association

Ms. Cece stated that this is a special permit application for 10 Norden Place to change an industrial use to be under the designation of warehousing and distribution which will mean a lot of in and out traffic. The applicant and their Attorney made a presentation to the Board of Directors of the ENNA at the end of August and walked through the proposed plan and they have a number of concerns regarding the traffic. The nature of their business will be primarily trucks and will mostly be tractor trailers from 62' to 67', and OSTA only looked at the state roads and did not look at Strawberry Hill Avenue or East Avenue because they are not state roads and were not aware that Strawberry Hill Avenue is the recommended truck route for this application. Additionally, there are three public schools on that road in addition to a private pre-school and it is also the safe routes to school that was paid for with tax dollars.

The secondary recommended route that they have is I-95 exit 16 onto East Avenue and the volume of trucks is estimated based on the ITE modeling at 198 tractor trailers per day, and are still not sure if the operations will be seven days a week and what the hours will be. She said the volume of trucks is going to be dangerous as well as cause potential grid lock in East Norwalk. If this gets approved by the Zoning Commission they are looking to be operational by the first quarter of 2021, which is around the same time as the East Avenue project goes out to bid as well as in conjunction with the epicenter of the Walk Bridge work. While the Traffic Authority has no authority to act just based on volume, the ENNA is requesting to act on their behalf and provide a professional opinion back to the Zoning Commission who is reviewing this application, and the applicant is going back for the second peer review on October 1, 2020, and the ENNA has been told to expect that it will be possible for it to go to a public hearing as soon as the end of October or beginning of November. In addition to the tractor trailer traffic they are concerned with speed because the nature of the businesses is time dependent of the drivers and because the state did not look at any of the local roads they did not consider movability, and their suggestion is to wait for the cue of cars at the intersection to clear before they make the turn but that intersection seldom clears. The other concern is the I-95 interchange and they don't understand why OSTA did not look at East Avenue as a state road which is impacted by I-95. The 198 tractor trailer per day is in addition to vehicular traffic that they estimate based on workers and other activity which is estimated at 376 trips per day.

Mayor Rilling said he has not seen the report yet and asked if they had actually said there will be a 198 tractor trailers per day. Ms. Cece said "yes" and the only modeling they were able to do is based on warehousing and weren't able to do modeling with ITE that included a distribution center.

Mayor Rilling said this is something the commission will have to watch closely and asked Mr. Yeosock if the Traffic Authority can ask for an independent traffic study independent on the one that was done that only looked at state roads. Mr. Yeosock said the Traffic Authority can look at the

safety, signage and markings but he does not think the Traffic Authority can look at the environmental or quality of life issues, but that the traffic study can be looked at more closely for safety. Mayor Rilling said it appears the plan is going to impact traffic on local roads and suggested that the Traffic Authority look at that more closely and what the Traffic Authority's authority would be relative to what the findings are. Mr. Yeosock said he will check with the Corporation Council's office. Mayor Rilling said the Traffic Authority would like to have an answer sooner rather than later and he believes they do have the authority to request a traffic study and asked Mr. Yeosock to check with the Corporation Councils office to see if the Traffic Authority can request the traffic study or if they can recommend one to the Zoning Commission.

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY MEETING OF MONDAY, JULY 21, 2020.

****COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2020 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. APPROVE THE NO PARKING REGULATIONS FOR HEATHER LANE AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSED DRAWING TITLED HEATHER LANE.

Mr. Yeosock said staff took the suggestions that were made by the Traffic Authority at an earlier meeting to alternate the parking on Heather Lane. He said they have reached out to the neighborhood and most were okay with the alternate parking, but there were two residents that thought there would not be enough on street parking, and there were others that were looking at the one way option but staff does not recommend pursuing that at this time because of the difficulties getting out of the intersection onto Strawberry Hill Avenue and that may increase the accidents and congestion around the schools. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked how long this will be studied to see if it is appropriate or if an additional change will be needed to that street. Mr. Yeosock recommend two to three months to see how it is working and re-poll the residents in January.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE NO PARKING REGULATIONS FOR HEATHER LANE AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSED DRAWING TITLED HEATHER LANE WITH THE CONDITION THAT AT THE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY MEETING IN JANUARY A REPORT IS GIVEN BY STAFF ON HOW WELL IT IS WORKING OR IF AN ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL WILL BE NEEDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. APPROVE THE NO PARKING REGULATIONS FOR VOLLMER AVENUE AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSED DRAWING TITLED VOLLMER AVENUE

Mr. Eshraghi said that they have received a lot of requests and staff did a field visit to the location at different times of the day and are recommending to remove the on street parking on the north side of the street. He said that letters have been sent to the residents and they had requested an additional site visit and when he was there he had met with the residents and agreed that they would be losing three feet of width of the road and it is getting so narrow, so it was changed to no parking on both sides of the street between numbers 14 and 18 to make it safe for the residents to be able to get out of their driveway. Mayor Rilling asked if there is adequate on property parking for the residents. Mr. Eshraghi said most of the houses have driveways and the residents he has spoken with are okay with the plan.

**** COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE NO PARKING REGULATIONS FOR VOLLMER AVENUE AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSED DRAWING TITLED VOLLMER AVENUE**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. APPROVE THE PARKING REGULATIONS FOR WASHINGTON STREET AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSED OVERALL STRIPING PLAN FOR WASHINGTON STREET.

Mr. Yeosock said that staff has reduced the parking from 15 additional parking spaces to 13 parking spaces and there is 500' before the lanes merge and is a safe maneuverer and will add parking onto Washington Street. He said the plan will be temporary because next year there is a grant to improve the street scape and add crosswalks on Washington Street. Mayor Rilling asked if this plan is just to add additional parking. Mr. Yeosock said "yes" to add back some of the parking spaces that were taken for the other side of Washington Street for the outdoor dining.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said that her concern is the safety of the persons going to the Post Office and that the cars come down the street fast at times so the extra lane is needed to get out of the car safety. She also said she does not see a lot of people utilizing the five parking spaces beyond the Post Office.

Mayor Rilling said when people are going to the restaurants he sees them parking at The Webster Lot, Haviland Deck and the North Water Street lot so he is still not sure that the commission is comfortable with this at this point.

Commissioner Straniti said one of her big concerns is the stacking at the intersection coming down from Fairfield Avenue and she thought that the commission had requested to reduce the number of parking spaces to ten.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said that she does not see the need for the parking spaces because of the non-use of the parking spaces that are already there, and the spaces in front of the Post Office are available at night for the restaurant patrons.

Mr. Eshraghi added that the connectivity for Washington Street is very important for the future and he thinks it is a positive plan.

Commissioner Straniti said she agrees the connectivity is important and that she is still in favor of the concept just with less parking spaces.

Commissioner Collier- Clemmons asked if it is possible to reduce the number of proposed parking spaces just the five parking spaces near North Main Street and eliminate the eight parking spaces in front of the Post Office. Mr. Yeosock said that staff will look at that and report back to the commission.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO TABLE THE PARKING REGULATIONS FOR WASHINGTON STREET AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSED OVERALL STRIPING PLAN FOR WASHINGTON STREET.**

5. APPROVE THE NO PARKING RESTRICTIONS FOR WEST CEDAR STREET AS PROPOSED IN THE TRAFFIC STUDY FOR COLONIAL VILLAGE EXPANSION PROJECT

Attorney Suchy provided an overview of the project and said the Housing Authority is planning to expand the housing stock that it offers at Colonial Village with a new project providing 18 structures which would be 69 units of new housing. The application was submitted to the Zoning Commission and through that process was forwarded to Mr. Yeosock for his review and through his review and analysis it was decided that it might be beneficial to the neighborhood and roadway conditions on West Cedar Street to eliminate some parking on the north side of West Cedar Street.

Mr. Olinski provided an overview of the traffic analysis and said initially they had recommended that on street parking be removed for approximately 20' to 40' of the proposed driveway on the north side of West Cedar Street. Mr. Yeosock had reviewed the study and he suggested on street parking for a greater stretch of West Cedar Street from 40' east of the driveway to Scribner Avenue which is approximately 15 parking spaces and that they are not opposed to that at all. Attorney Suchy added that there is a portion of West Cedar Street on the north side that no parking is posted today so an additional 15 parking spaces would be removed or posted as no parking through the suggestion of Mr. Yeosock if this commission deems that appropriate.

Mayor Rilling asked when the parking will be removed. Attorney Suchy said if they get through the approval process by the end of 2020 it is her understanding the construction would not commence until the end of 2021 so the parking would not be removed immediately.

Mayor Rilling said he does see a lot of cars on the right hand side of West Cedar Street which is dangerous, but he know the residents there rely on that parking because they have limited parking available to them elsewhere. Mayor Rilling asked if the residents have been contacted to make them aware of this. Attorney Suchy said she can't speak for the Housing Authority on what they have shared with their residents, but the proposed development accommodates the requirement of parking spaces for those new dwellings. She said she thinks the 15 parking spaces that currently exist on West Cedar Street that are proposed to be removed are being proposed due to sight line issues and concerns about being able to negotiate entry and exit from the new driveway for the new development.

Mayor Rilling suggested that the Traffic Department and the Housing Authority notify the residents of Colonial Village as a courtesy and add the item back on the Traffic Authority agenda for the October or November meeting. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if the workers for the business on the south side of West Cedar Street that are using those parking spaces will also be notified. Mayor Rilling said

“yes” and that everyone should be notified in that area. Attorney Suchy said that property owners in that vicinity that have businesses are obligated to provide their own off street parking, so if they are not providing their own parking onsite they are not supposed to be relying on what is available on street for parking. She said they have all been notified of the application and will also be notified of a public hearing in which she believes will be scheduled for October, and requested that the Traffic Authority include this item on their October agenda. In the meantime they will find out the status from the Housing Authority regarding the notification of their residents but she believes they have already notified them but she is not sure to the extent that the on street parking will be eliminated

**** COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO TABLE THE NO PARKING RESTRICTIONS FOR WEST CEDAR STREET AS PROPOSED IN THE TRAFFIC STUDY FOR COLONIAL VILLAGE EXPANSION PROJECT UNTIL THE OCTOBER MEETING.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSSION/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. REQUEST FROM ENNA REGARDING 10 NORDEN PLACE APPLICATION

This was discussed under public participation.

2. NORWALK TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

Mr. Yeosock said in this year’s capital budget there are funds available to update the Transportation Master Plan and one of the things they will be looking at is residential parking programs.

Ms. Hebert said that the RFQ has been developed and has been sent to the Redevelopment Agency, Planning & Zoning, DPW and the Transit District for their comments and staff will be working with the Purchasing Department to put the documents together. Mayor Rilling requested that when the RFP’s are received back to share them with the Traffic Authority.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd

