

**CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING COMMISSION – SPECIAL MEETING
October 1, 2020**

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, Chair; Michael Witherspoon; Josh Goldstein; Galen Wells; Frank Mancini; Nicholas Kantor

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

OTHERS: Robert Moss; Atty Adam Blank; Atty Carolyn Cavolo; Craig Benerofe; Eric Lindquist; Grant Wright; Craig Yannes; Craig Flaherty

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll.

III. REVIEW AND ACTION ON PENDING APPLICATIONS

a. #9-11SPR/#14-11CAM – Washington Prime – 1 North Water St (Ironworks) - Request for modification of approved site plan to install permanent awning – Report & recommended action

Mr. Schulman noted that they had heard this application at the previous Zoning Commission meeting. Mr. Moss explained that he worked with several restaurant associations. He also said that the governor had given the go ahead for the state to move into Phase 3 which allowed more people inside restaurants within certain parameters. He showed them the plans for the outside space which had a canopy and enclosures. With this increase he would leave the capacity inside at 50% as long as they also had the outside capacity. It would have heaters and blowers and that it would make it safe for customers. The outside enclosed space is on Mr. Moss' property. There was a discussion about the ventilation and the temperature in the outside space. There was also a discussion about the length of time for this project. There was a discussion about how the barriers will work with the Department of Public Works (DPW) as the weather starts to get colder.

**** MR. GOLDSTEIN MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Zoning Commission that the request for modification of approved site plan to install permanent awning be **APPROVED.**

Mr. Mancini seconded.

Louis Schulman; Michael Witherspoon; Josh Goldstein; Galen Wells; Frank Mancini; Nicholas Kantor approved.

No one opposed.
No one abstained.

Mr. Moss thanked the commissioners and noted that he could also be a connection between the restaurants in the area and the state, if they needed it.

There was a further discussion about how the Zoning Commission could help other restaurants as Washington Prime had been. They decided that as long as applicants had approvals from the necessary city agencies, they could approve the applications quickly.

IV. REVIEW AND ACTION ON NEW APPLICATIONS

a. #5-13CAM – 280 Wilson Ave – Request for extension of CAM approval for construction of a SFR – Report & recommended action

Mr. Blank began the presentation with a brief overview of the original approval. He then oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He explained the project as well as why it had not been built since it was approved in 2013. Mr. Blank said they were asking for a two year extension and explained why it was needed. There were no questions from the commissioners.

**** MS. WELLS MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Zoning Commission that the request for a two year extension for application #5-13CAM, submitted by B. Beinfield, for the construction of a new single family dwelling at 280 Wilson Avenue, as shown on a survey by William W. Seymour and Associates, Darien, CT, entitled "Topographic & Zoning Location Survey Prepared for Bruce Beinfield 280 Wilson Avenue, Norwalk, CT, Scale 1"=30', dated March 6, 2013, be **APPROVED**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the new deadline for obtaining a building permit is March 28, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be Friday, October 9, 2020.

Mr. Witherspoon seconded.
Louis Schulman; Michael Witherspoon; Josh Goldstein; Galen Wells; Frank Mancini; Nicholas Kantor approved.
No one opposed.

No one abstained.

b. #6-20SP - Norden Place KB LLC – 10 Norden Place – Special permit for proposed new 330,000 sq ft warehouse and wholesale distribution use located in an existing building (to replace former Norden Systems aka Unit A) and related site improvements - Further review

Atty Carolyn Cavolo, the attorney representing Norden Place, introduced the project team. She gave a brief overview of the process of the application and that they had been

responding to comments from various city agencies and have received approvals from some of them. There has been neighborhood outreach. She then shared a presentation with the commissioners. She oriented them as to the location of the property on an aerial map as well as showed them the site plan. She noted that the east portion of the building was the subject of the application. She explained the current uses and what is allowed on the site. She then discussed the proposed uses.

Craig Benerofe described the operations and tenants that would be in the building. He also explained what would not be an included use. There would be big spaces but not a lot of people in those spaces. There could be up to 100 employees. He noted that the businesses would be mainly B2B ones. It would not be like FedEx.

Eric Lindquist, the engineer on the project, gave a brief overview of the drainage and landscaping on the site. He discussed the driveway consolidation as well as the change to the islands so that large trucks could come onto the site. He then discussed the impacts to drainage. There was a discussion about water recharging. He also noted that the requests from the Zoning Department had been made to the site plans.

Grant Wright, the architect on the project, continued the presentation with pictures of the current site and building. He showed them a drawing of the warehouse/distribution center. He showed them various renderings of the proposed building which included loading docks and noted at changing the signage for the businesses that would be located in it.

Craig Yannes, the traffic engineer on the project, continued the presentation by explaining how he had conducted the traffic study. He showed them the proposed trip generation and said the site was a low traffic generator considering the size of the site. Another table reflected what the traffic generation could be under different uses. There was a discussion about the neighbors' concerns of the amount of traffic coming to the site. Mr. Yannes showed them the truck access routes. They are working with the Zoning Department staff and neighbors to address their concerns.

Mr. Kleppin reminded the public that there would not be comment allowed since this was not a public hearing.

Atty Cavolo described the types of businesses and employee base in the building. The applicant would have an onsite presence. She also described the garbage pickup but no security. There would be security cameras. She said they were working with staff on office hours. There was then a discussion about trucks arriving off hours. It was noted that sometimes employees do come into a building during off hours. There was concern from the neighbors at the noise level that would come from the building. The noise study was still being done. Atty CAvolo then summarized her presentation and noted that it conformed to the POCD.

There was a discussion about the city doing their own traffic study which could extend the one done by the applicant. Mr. Kleppin noted that the Zoning Commission could ask the applicant to expand the study area. There was also a discussion of the size of the trucks. There was also a discussion about how many employees would be in the facility as well as the parking for them. There was a further discussion about the truck routes that had been discussed earlier. There was also a discussion about solar panels on the roof. There would be a peer review for traffic in the coming weeks.

They then discussed possible dates for the public hearing.

c. #9-20SP – TB Norwalk Apartments LLC – 467 West Ave, 17 Butler St & 3 Quincy St (The Pinnacle) - New mixed-use development with 393 dwellings units and 14,340 sf of commercial space in two six-story buildings – Preliminary review

Craig Flaherty, representing the applicant, introduced the project team. He then oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He said that Toll Brothers would continue to invest in the area. He explained the application process with the city, including the Historical Commission. He gave a brief overview of the application. He described the number of units. There had been a previous approval on this site. He showed them renderings from that 2017 approval and now what they were proposing. He noted that some of the businesses that had been proposed for the 2017 approval would not be viable in this 2020 application. They had new ideas for different retailers especially since many would go bankrupt in 2020. There are new trends for retail especially with more people shopping online.

Mr. Flaherty described the 2 buildings and the through traffic between them. There was a discussion about retail spaces and whether they would be successful. Mr. Flaherty noted that there had been changes to the zoning regulations since 2017. There had been changes to the sidewalk widths. The application had assumed that there would be restaurants in the development. There was a discussion about the impacts to neighbors. He showed them diagrams of what heights could be built and what the applicant was proposing. He noted that the special permit would be better for the neighborhood. He then showed them renderings of the buildings that were proposed.

There was a discussion about the reduction of the retail space from 100,000 to 14,000. Apartments could bring more revenue. Mr. Schulman suggested adding a bit more retail including a place for lunch for people that might be in Mathews Park.

There were then questions from the commissioners including about parking and pavers. There were also concerns about larger retail. There was also a discussion about activating the street and making enhancements.

There was then a discussion about next steps on this project. The Zoning Department's review consultant was busy with other large projects but Mr. Kleppin said he would discuss his schedule with him.

V. EAST NORWALK TOD: Status report

Mr. Kleppin gave a brief status and noted that the Common Council wanted the green amenities to be requirements instead. He has had discussions with the consultant about this. The Planning Commission would have an adoption hearing on October 6.

VI. INDUSTRIAL ZONES: Status report

Mr. Kleppin said that the committee was determining who in the community should be interviewed for the report. The committee would have another meeting in a few weeks.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 16, 2020

**** MR. KANTOR MOVED to approve the September 16, 2020 Special meeting minutes.**

Mr. Mancini seconded.

Louis Schulman; Michael Witherspoon; Josh Goldstein; Galen Wells; Frank Mancini; Nicholas Kantor approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

VIII. REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Election of officers

Mr. Witherspoon said the committee had met and would meet again to discuss the nomination of officers. They would have a slate at the next meeting.

IX. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin said that the commissioners would receive an email regarding the RFPs from three companies for the Zoning regulations project. Mr. Kleppin asked if any of the commissioners wanted hard copies so he would have it delivered to them. He noted that they would need a special meeting for interviews.

X. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

There was a discussion about water conservation and how large developments would affect the reservoirs especially since there was a drought at the moment. There was also a discussion about the large developments that would affect the capacity at the public schools.

Mr. Schulman noted that Ms. Thomas had asked what to do while she is running for a public office this year. He said that they could manage without her voice for a few meetings. Other commissioners had missed meetings due to medical reasons so this was a similar instance.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kantor made a Motion to Adjourn.

Ms. Wells seconded.

Louis Schulman; Michael Witherspoon; Josh Goldstein; Galen Wells; Frank Mancini; Nicholas Kantor approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero