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**PLANNING COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 3, 2020  
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; Thomas Keegan; Thomas Livingston;  
Lisa Shanahan; Barbara Smyth; George Tsiranides;  
Darlene Young (7:50 p.m.)

STAFF: Sabrina Church, Director of Business Development and Tourism;  
Steve Kleppin, Director of Planning and Zoning

OTHERS: David Heuvelman, Common Council member

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

## ROLL CALL

Mr. Kydes called the Roll as indicated above.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to participate.

### I. ADMINISTRATION

#### a. Approval of the Minutes of the November 5, 2020 Meeting

- \*\* **MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. KEEGAN; MR. KYDES; MR. LIVINGSTON; MS. SHANAHAN; MS. SMYTH; MR. TSIRANIDES)**

### II. NEW BUSINESS

#### a. Planning and Zoning Updates

1. Industrial Zones Study progress report and update.
2. Zoning regulation rewrite update.
3. Zoning permits and development project updates.

Mr. Kleppin provided an update on Planning and Zoning initiatives. He said he sent an e-mail to the Committee members giving them an update on what is going on in Planning and Zoning. He said the map provides a good guide. He noted that some projects can come off the list. Mr. Kleppin said the map is accessible to the public on the website. It is updated every quarter.

Mr. Kleppin said the Zoning Commission is busy; there are a lot of significant applications before the Zoning Commission. He said he is constantly fielding calls. In terms of permitting, they were very busy last year.

The TOD (Transit Oriented District) plan was passed this fall. The next step is to look at parking and the amenity calculator. A consultant was chosen to do that work. In addition, they are working a study of the City's industrial zone. Mr. Kleppin said they are reaching out through every channel they can think of to get input by using a survey. This will be an on-going dialogue.

The consultant will hold interviews with stakeholders over the next few weeks. They will then work on a broader public meeting.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Rich project on Water Street. Mr. Kleppin said they hope to be finished with some of the units soon and wrap up the project during the first quarter. Mr. Kydes asked about the project off of Willard Road. Mr. Kleppin shared his screen showing the project. Mr. Kydes noted that the building is very large. Ms. Smyth agreed. Mr. Kleppin explained there are 219 dwellings as well as a storage facility. He described the site.

Mr. Kydes asked about the East Norwalk TOD. Mr. Kleppin explained that once they get the Zoning consultant, they will do a review of the parking and amenities. Once that is done, the plan will go out for public comment.

Mr. Keegan asked about Norden Place. He asked if they could halt the discussion on the distribution center until they hear from the neighbors and stakeholders. Mr. Kleppin explained that a moratorium was put in place for contractor yards, but not for warehouse and distribution facilities. Any moratorium placed now would not apply, because an application was already filed.

Mr. Kleppin said the Zoning Commission is meeting on Monday at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Kleppin to send a link to the full Common Council. He said he plans to speak at that meeting.

Mr. Kleppin said the Planning Commission received a Bronze accreditation. He anticipates they will look at Silver accreditation and will identify initiatives.

Mr. Kleppin reported that one hearing was held on the application and a second is scheduled for next Wednesday. Hi staff and the Redevelopment Agency staff have been working with the architect for the project. Those changes will be revealed next week. He said he anticipates a vote at the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Kleppin said that everything that has been done to date is on the website. He will send the link to the full Common Council.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Spinnaker project in East Norwalk. Mr. Kleppin said the last conversation he had was that all of the commercial space has been leased. He said he spoke with the folks at BLT and they said their units are leasing very well.

Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Kleppin if he sees any concern with commercial real estate properties. Mr. Kleppin said a lot of tenants are adding employees, but consolidating space. Ms. Church said she is hearing that some businesses have moved to working from home, and others need more space.

Ms. Church said that when talking to some business owners, they saw all their employees come back to the office, when there was a power outage. She said that by the way the lease agreements are written, she does not believe they will see the effects until January. A lot of smaller firms are transitioning to work from home, but there is interest for satellite offices from New York City firms.

Mr. Kydes asked about occupancy percentages. Ms. Church explained it is hard to get in touch with anyone in the large buildings. They rely on real estate firms to provide that information for smaller buildings.

Ms. Smyth told Mr. Kleppin that the update was very helpful. She asked where constituents can find the map. Mr. Kleppin said they are re-doing the website to make it more user friendly.

Ms. Smyth asked about the status of the Main Avenue property. He said that BJ's plans to go forward; however, he has not heard anything recently. He noted that some other retail projects were looking at that site. Some indicated to him that they will know their plans for going forward in December.

Mr. Heuvelman told Mr. Kleppin he received the survey today and that he likes the format a lot.

Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Kleppin if he heard of any projects that were approved and then backed out due to Covid. Mr. Kleppin said he has not heard of any. The people he is talking to are optimistic.

### **III. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **a. Update on the Wall Street - West Avenue Enterprise Zone approval.**

Ms. Church reported that the last time the Enterprise Zone was in front of this Committee was six to eight months ago. She said the Ordinance was approved and the State replied that they are going to approve it, but they need additional information. She said they need Mylar maps and once they are received the State will sign off and it will be officially the Enterprise Zone.

Mr. Kydes asked Ms. Church if any developers reached out to show interest in the Enterprise Zone. Ms. Church said she received two inquiries from developers on a small scale. She said there is probably another one.

Ms. Church reviewed the approval process for the Enterprise Zone. She said the maps were completed this week and sent to the State. She said she expects to receive approval by mid January.

Ms. Shanahan asked Ms. Church if there was anything else needed from the Ordinance Committee. Ms. Church explained that they just need the maps and the Commissioner's signature.

Mr. Kydes asked Ms. Church about the SoNo Collection. She said it is doing great. They're following social distancing guidelines and really enforcing those guidelines. They may get a tent for outdoor dining for Pinstripes. Ms. Church said the major anchor tenants are doing well and they've adapted very well for the circumstances. She said the Yard House restaurant is moving forward. The restaurants are trying to utilize as much distance as possible and are using outdoor dining if feasible.

Mr. Kydes asked Ms. Church about the lease rate. Ms. Church said she will get back to him with that information.

Ms. Shanahan asked Ms. Church about outdoor dining regulations. Ms. Church said she is working with other departments on that. She said it involved six different departments plus the Mayor's Office.

Ms. Young joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Ms. Smyth asked Ms. Church about the tents for outdoor dining. Ms. Church explained that they have to follow specific ventilation requirements.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. YOUNG MOVED TO ADJOURN  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services