

**CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING COMMISSION
March 4, 2021**

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, Chair; Richard Roina; Galen Wells; Nick Kantor; Frank Mancini; Josh Goldstein; Michael Witherspoon (arrived after roll call)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin (left the meeting at 7 pm); Bryan Baker; Michelle Andrzejewski

OTHERS: Atty Adam Blank; Joseph Cugno; Matt Popp; Vanessa Valadares; Jeff Olszewski; Mike Mancuso

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 6:04 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. Mr. Schulman explained the rules of the public hearing.

III. REVIEW AND ACTION ON NEW APPLICATIONS

a. #2021-06 SPR – G & T Norwalk LLC – 93 Winfield Street – Site plan review for new 2 ½ story multifamily development with 11 dwelling units – Preliminary review

Mr. Schulman noted that the Zoning Commission did have the authority to approve this item since it was a site plan review application. The commissioners reviewed the difference between a site plan review and a special permit. Ms. Andrzejewski explained the differences as well. Mr. Kleppin noted that the special permit has more subjectivity to it's regulations. Site plan is more restrictive. Mr. Schulman noted that the application had previously denied this application.

Atty Blank began the presentation by further elaborating on the differences between site plan review and the special permit application process. He then noted that the applicant does believe they comply with the site plan review. He oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He then introduced the project team. They do not have all their CEAC approvals and would make it a condition of approval, if necessary. There are no curb cuts on Winfield Street. He then explained the proposed project. The units are large and on the luxury side. Each unit would have its own garage. He discussed the parking spaces. He showed them the renderings of the proposed development. There is also a landscape plan for the property. He noted that there would be a decrease in site related traffic. There would be a stormwater retention system which is an improvement from what is currently there. The

application conforms to the Zoning regulations. The photometric plan would be delivered later and would be a condition of approval. Comments from neighbors had been received through the Zoning Department. Some of them said that this should be a park or a single family home. Atty Blank said that this development is allowed. If neighbors had concerns, the regulations would have to be changed. He discussed other concerns of the neighbors. There were concerns about refuse pickup and how long the construction would last. Atty Blank said it could take 6-7 months from when the applicant received its approval.

Joseph Cugno, the architect on the project, noted that this project was less dense than it had been. There is more space between the buildings. The design was similar to the previous application. He then showed them the facades of the buildings, one of which was facing Howard Avenue. They will be premium units. There will be open areas in the middle. He then discussed the parking. The refuse would be hidden, based on neighbor's concerns. He then discussed the materials used.

There was a discussion of the heights of these buildings as compared to the single family houses in the area.

Matt Popp, the landscape architect, continued the presentation with a description of the landscape plan. He also mentioned which trees would be remaining. There was a discussion about what the applicant would do to buffer the property from the neighbors. There was also discussion about the arborvitaes.

Atty Blank asked the commissioners if they could vote on it this evening or have it on the next agenda. Mr. Schulman noted that the commissioners had no leeway to deny the application. However, since it was listed on the agenda as a preliminary review they should move it to the next meeting on March 17. He also asked the commissioners if they wanted to hold a public hearing. Ms. Wells would not support a public hearing but Mr. Goldstein would. Mr. Mancini and Mr. Witherspoon would not mind holding a public hearing.

**** MR. GOLDSTEIN MOVED: IN SUPPORT OF** a public hearing for #2021-06 SPR – G & T Norwalk LLC – 93 Winfield Street – Site plan review for new 2 ½ story multifamily development with 11 dwelling units.

Mr. Mancini seconded.

**Frank Mancini; Josh Goldstein; Michael Witherspoon approved.
Richard Roina; Nick Kantor; Louis Schulman; Galen Wells opposed.
No one abstained.**

The motion did not carry. Mr. Schulman then asked if the applicant could also accommodate neighbors, as much as possible.

b. #2021-07 SP – Department of Public Works – 288 Highland Avenue - Install new lights and athletic field conversion at Brien McMahon High School – Preliminary review

Vanessa Valadares began the presentation by introducing the project team.

Jeff Olszewski continued the presentation by explaining that the softball field is currently natural grass at Brien McMahon. He noted the boundaries of the school complex. He showed them the existing conditions at the property, including where the backstop is currently. He noted that the field would be expanded. He then discussed the different scenarios that they studied. There was a noise problem which they wanted to solve. They decided to change the orientation of the field to expand the size of it, for field hockey and softball. He also discussed the proposed lighting on the field.

There was a discussion about notification to neighbors. The Department of Public Works had done so for their application to the Zoning Board of Appeals as well as this meeting. Mr. Hughes explained that the lights would not be on after 9 pm and would turn off automatically. He could turn them off via his phone as well. Mike Mancuso further explained that the foul ball territory had to be lit. He explained that this was a challenge.

Mr. Schulman noted that this item would be on the Zoning Commission agenda on March 17. All the Zoning commissioners agreed. Ms. Valadares said that they were happy to provide more information, if necessary.

IV. DISCUSSION OF ZONING REGULATIONS REWRITE

Mr. Schulman said that the commissioners could discuss what they would like to see in the Zoning regulations rewrite.

Mr. Kleppin explained that the contract had been signed and then sent to the city's law department to be signed by the Mayor.

Mr. Schulman said that he would like to see green infrastructure in the new regulations and how it would be a requirement. There was a discussion about renewables and green spaces. There was also a discussion about affordable housing. There was then a discussion about an architectural review board. Mr. Schulman asked if the consultants could review the Zoning Commission's by-laws.

Mr. Baker noted that the three issues that the consultants would address are green infrastructure, affordable housing and parking. There was a discussion about how the infrastructure could support newer technologies such as self-driving vehicles. There was also a discussion about how citizens would access the new regulations. There was then a discussion about how to implement the new regulations and how the permit process could be streamlined.

Mr. Baker was asked to make a list of these discussion items to distribute among the commissioners.

V. DISCUSSION OF OTHER ITEMS

a. Industrial zones study status report

Mr. Baker said that the next meeting was next Wednesday. Mr. Roina said that he hoped the next meeting would be more productive.

b. South Norwalk TOD study status report

Mr. Witherspoon said there had been a meeting the previous week. It addressed issues such as parking and affordability. The consultants reached out to the community for their opinions. Mr. Schulman noted that there was a live questionnaire that people could do on their computers and phones. He thought the format was interesting and helpful.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 17, 2021

**** MR. ROINA MOVED to approve the February 17, 2021 meeting minutes.**

Mr. Mancini seconded.

Louis Schulman, Chair; Richard Roina; Galen Wells; Nick Kantor; Frank Mancini; Josh Goldstein; Michael Witherspoon approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

VII. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Since Mr. Kleppin had left the meeting early, there were no comments.

VIII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

There were no comments from commissioners.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mancini seconded.

Louis Schulman, Chair; Richard Roina; Galen Wells; Nick Kantor; Frank Mancini; Josh Goldstein; Michael Witherspoon approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero