

**CITY OF NORWALK  
ZONING COMMISSION  
June 3, 2021**

- PRESENT:** Louis Schulman, Chair; Rod Johnson; Galen Wells; Nick Kantor; Mike Witherspoon and Josh Goldstein (arrived at 6:24 pm)
- STAFF:** Steve Kleppin (arrived after the meeting had begun); Bryan Baker; Michelle Andrzejewski
- OTHERS:** Matthew Edvardsen; Colin Grotheer; Mike Galanty; Vincent Hynes; Eric Raines; Atty Adam Blank; Mark Hopper; Ricardo Ceballos; Leonard D’Andrea; Matt Popp

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Baker called the roll. Mr. Schulman asked the commissioners to vote on the minutes at the beginning of the meeting but after realizing that there were not enough commissioners to vote on the minutes, he said they would vote on them as usual, at the end of the meeting. Mr. Schulman then discussed the rules for the public hearings.

**III. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**a. #2021-09 SP – Spinnaker Real Estate Partners LLC/Coastal Lofts LLC – 8, 10 and 18 Monroe St; 2 and 4 Chestnut St; 75 and 77 South Main St – Proposed multi-building, mixed-use project to include commercial office, retail, restaurant, residential (150 units) and off-street parking uses**

Mr. Schulman opened the public hearing. He said that it would be continued into the next meeting as there were team members missing at this meeting.

Matthew Edvardsen began the presentation with a description of the ownership of the property. He also described previous projects that the applicant had completed in Norwalk. The abutting neighbors had been notified and the certified, return receipt cards had been delivered to the Zoning Department. He gave a brief description of the parcels that are a part of the project. Two of the buildings have been determined to be historically significant. Included in the project would be affordable housing units. He noted that there had been challenges on the design. He then introduced the project team.

Colin Grotheer, the architect on the project, continued the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He showed them pictures of the current structures on the properties. He described the public space which would be across from Police headquarters. He noted that the landscaping plan had been changed and would be described in detail by Mr. Raines. He also described the lighting plan as well as the traffic plan in which there were ongoing talks. He showed them the floor plans for each individual floor, including parking levels and residential units. There would be a pool and bar amenity. Some units would have terraces. He also showed them the elevations for the buildings. He described the work to be done on the historical buildings. He described the shade structures which would be built out and used by the tenants. He then discussed the windows on the units. He also described the materials being used on the buildings as well as some ideas for signage. He then showed the location of the workforce housing units.

There was a discussion about the number of workforce housing units. Mr. Edvardsen described how they would help the residents currently in these buildings when demolition begins. There was also a discussion about outreach to the current commercial and residential tenants. There was then a discussion about reaching out to local councilpersons. It did not appear that the applicant had a plan to do so. They were asked to have a plan ready at the next Zoning Commission meeting in June. There was also a discussion about the addition of green infrastructure.

Mike Galanty, the traffic engineer, continued the presentation by describing how the study was done. The levels of service would remain the same. They would work with the city on street parking. He discussed Chestnut Street potentially becoming a one way street.

Vincent Hynes, the engineer on the project, continued the presentation by explaining which sign-offs the applicant has received from the city. He described the proposed streetscape. He also described meetings with local utilities. He then discussed storm water management as well as the green infrastructure proposed. There are some incentives for green infrastructure from some utility companies.

Eric Raines, the landscape architect, continued the presentation by showing them the proposed landscape plan, especially the entrance to the building. He noted that there would be some furniture for seating options. He described the use of ballards. There was a discussion about the maintenance of the area in the winter as well as whether the pavers were permeable, which would not be. Turf would be used because the applicant expected a lot of wear and tear. There was a discussion about street trees on Chestnut and Main Street.

There were no comments in support or against the application.

Mr. Kleppin spoke about the next steps for this application. The 3rd party consultant would have his report completed within the next few weeks so the public hearing would remain open until the next Zoning Commission meeting on June 23.

Mr. Edvardsen thanked the commissioners and would put together a plan for meeting with the neighbors. They would be open to suggestions from Zoning Department staff.

Mr. Schulman noted that the public hearing would remain open and hoped to conclude at the next Zoning Commission meeting.

#### **IV. REVIEW AND ACTION ON PENDING APPLICATIONS**

##### **a. Action on item III. a.**

Since the commissioners had not heard from all parties at the public hearing, it remained open and no action was taken.

#### **V. REVIEW AND ACTION ON NEW APPLICATIONS**

##### **a. #2021-16 R/SP – 132 Flax Hill, LLC – 132 Flax Hill Road – Proposed Building Zone Regulation text amendment to reduce the minimum lot size requirement for historic incentive developments in conjunction with a five (5) unit historic incentive development – Preliminary review**

Atty Adam Blank, the attorney for the applicant, began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He showed them a picture of the current property as well as the proposed structure. The property is on the historical inventory. He also noted that there is a text amendment as a part of the application. He showed them pictures of comparable structures in Norwalk. He described the driveway which would be shared with a neighboring property. They would create some additional green space. He discussed the waivers they were requesting. He described the parking spaces and that they would like 1 less space. He noted that they had received most of their sign-offs from CEAC.

Mark Hopper, the architect on the project, continued the presentation by showing the commissioners the proposed floor plans. The number of units has increased. There would be more sprinklers in order to eliminate fire escapes. He described the style of the building. He showed them the elevations and the materials to be used. The color palette would be a historical one.

Ricardo Ceballos, the engineer on the property, showed the commissioners photos of the current property. He explained the greenspace and proposed shared driveways. He explained the storm water management system.

There was a discussion about the reduction in the number of parking spaces required. There were also concerns about whether regulations were being waterdowned with this application and whether the city was giving too much consideration. Atty Blank and Kevney Moses addressed some of these concerns. Atty Blank noted that this was a smaller

development than other recent historical projects in the city. There was also a concern that there was a loss of a 3 bedroom unit. Mr. Moses noted that 3 bedroom units in his portfolio are less likely to be leased. Mr. Kleppin described staff's comments on this application.

**\*\* MR. JOHNSON MOVED: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Zoning Commission that application #2021-16 R/SP – 132 Flax Hill, LLC – 132 Flax Hill Road – Proposed Building Zone Regulation text amendment to reduce the minimum lot size requirement for historic incentive developments in conjunction with a five (5) unit historic incentive development should be referred to the Planning Commission and the Historical Commission be **APPROVED**.

**Ms. Wells seconded.**

**Rod Johnson; Galen Wells; Nick Kantor; Mike Witherspoon and Josh Goldstein approved.**

**Louis Schulman opposed.**

**No one abstained.**

**b. #2021-17 SP – FRAP, LLC – 40 Fullin Road – Proposed 40-unit elderly housing development – Preliminary review**

Atty Blank began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He explained the proposed project and introduced the project team. He then showed them the proposed renderings and noted that they were a similar senior housing project at 125 Richards Avenue. They are also waiting for the Conservation Commission's approval.

Leonard D'Andrea, the engineer on the project, continued the presentation by discussing the driveway. He noted that the site is fairly level. He discussed the storm water management as well as driveway slopes. There was a discussion about solar panels on the roofs.

Matt Popp, the landscape architect, continued the presentation by showing the commissioners the landscape plan. He noted the habitats on the site, including the wetlands area. He described the proposed plantings.

There was a discussion about the trees that would be cut down. Atty Blank noted that as of right, the applicant could bulldoze the trees if this was a subdivision application. There was also a discussion about outreach to neighbors. Zoning Department staff made comments as to the application. There was a discussion about next steps for the application.

**c. #2021-20 R/M – Zoning Commission – Building Zone Regulation Text Amendment to create the East Norwalk Village TOD Zone (EVTZ) and to allow dwelling units and artist live/work spaces within the Industrial #1 Zone within designated areas**

Zoning Commission

June 3, 2021  
Page 4 of 6

**on the map entitled “Designated I1 Properties for Residential Units in East Norwalk” by special permit in conjunction with a Building Zone Map Amendment to create the EVTZ – Preliminary review**

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation by noting that they had begun discussing this topic at previous meetings. He shared a map of the proposed zoning for the East Norwalk TOD area and discussed the geography of the area. It was to show them where changes would be made. He also discussed the bulk and height standards. He then discussed the special permit process as well as the design guidelines. He also noted the site plan approval process by being less restrictive. There was a discussion about the first floor for commercial tenants. He described street-activating uses and a point system for amenities.

There was a discussion about the amenity system point system. Mr. Kleppin did not think that other towns had it. There was also a discussion about adding one of the amenities to the regulations which would require one of them. There was a discussion about the problems of the area. It was also discussed as to adding it to the zoning regulations re-write. Mr. Kleppin said that this item would be on the next Zoning Commission agenda. If the commissioners had questions, they could send them to him.

**VI. DISCUSSION OF OTHER ITEMS**

**a. Status report on the Industrial zones study, zoning regulations rewrite and South Norwalk TOD study**

With regards to the status of the industrial zones study, Mr. Kleppin said that his staff were editing the draft which would then be sent back to the consultant. It would probably be sent back to the committee to review in July. He also noted that the Planning Committee of the Common Council had allocated funds for an additional study of the waterfront. Ms. Wells would also sit on this committee with Mr. Roina.

For the Zoning regulations re-write, Mr. Kleppin noted that most of the commissioners had scheduled a time to meet with the consultants. All department heads who interact with the Planning and Zoning staff would meet with the consultants. The public meetings would be in September. They were not sure if these meetings would be in person or on Zoom. Mr. Kleppin would send confirmations to the commissioners for their scheduled time.

For the South Norwalk TOD study, Mr. Kleppin said there was a draft that was shared with the committee. There would be further public engagement on the following Monday.

**b. Discussion of Housing Bills and combining the Planning & Zoning Commissions**

The bill on the state level had been signed. Mr. Kleppin noted that there could be problems with the parking standards under the new regulations. The city might be able to opt out of some of these provisions. Mr. Baker discussed provisions for the accessory apartments and that there would be revisions to the city's regulations. He would send a memo to the Zoning commissioners about it.

The ordinance committee had met about combining the Planning and Zoning Commissions. There was a concern about the workload. Mr. Schulman and Mr. Kleppin met with Tom Livingston to discuss the Capital Budget process.

**VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 19, 2021**

**\*\* MS. WELLS MOVED to approve the May 19, 2021 meeting minutes.  
Mr. Johnson seconded.  
Louis Schulman; Rod Johnson; Galen Wells; and Josh Goldstein approved.  
No one opposed.  
Nick Kantor and Mike Witherspoon abstained.**

**VIII. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR**

Mr. Kleppin had no other comments.

**IX. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

Mr. Schulman reminded the commissioners that they should be aware of what they say during the comments portion of the meeting, especially with regards to a proposed application. It could later become problematic especially if an applicant decides to take the city to court.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Goldstein made a Motion to Adjourn.  
Mr. Witherspoon seconded.  
Louis Schulman; Rod Johnson; Galen Wells; Nick Kantor; Mike Witherspoon and  
Josh Goldstein approved.  
No one opposed.  
No one abstained.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Diana Palmentiero

Zoning Commission

June 3, 2021  
Page 6 of 6