

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
JANUARY 14, 2010**

PRESENT: James White, Chair; Jackie Lightfield; Andrea Light; Michael Mushak; Bob Keyes; Bob Hard; Michael O'Reilly; Adam Blank (8:00 pm)

STAFF: Mike Greene; Mike Wrinn; Frank Strauch

OTHERS: Atty. Liz Suchy; Fritz Morris; Maria Genovese; Atty. David Waters; Steve McAllister; Matt Popp; Gary McIntyre; Mark Smith; Atty. Frank Zullo; Pat O'Leary; Terry Wilson

I. SITE PLAN REVIEWS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS

- a) **#26-09CAM/#11-09SPR – Hillside Plaza, LLC – 14 & 16 North Main St (formerly Avrick's) – Restaurant, office, retail & residential change from retail - Further review**

Mr. Greene described the proposal to add restaurant, office, and residential uses to a building currently approved for retail. He said that there was no change in the parking requirement.

Atty. Liz Suchy said that the existing façade would be removed and returned to the appearance that the building had in its hay-day.

Mr. Fritz Morris addressed the changes to the façade and the parapet. He also discussed the impact of the blue LED in the alleyway.

Mr. Mushak suggested that the awning be extended to cover more of the walkway. Mr. Morris agreed to consider that change. He presented a materials board and discussed materials.

Ms. Lightfield stated that lighting should remain on during the day.

Mr. O'Reilly asked how many units the applicant would ideally like to have. Mr. Morris said that only the owner could answer that question.

The Committee agreed to waive the public hearing and to vote on the item next week.

- b) **#10-09SPR/#25-09CAM – Curran – 9 Leonard St – 6 unit multifamily development – Preliminary review**

Mr. Strauch showed a map indicating the existing four-family house. He said that the property was in the Central Business Design District and also that the proposal had been reduced from eight to six units. He addressed the issue of the S-curve on the road, but said that the traffic impact of the proposal was insignificant.

Ms. Maria Genovese described the existing building and the details of the proposal. She said that a new fire stair would be created, as the existing one was in very bad condition.

Mr. Strauch described the separation of the front and rear units.

Ms. Lightfield asked about the bay window and the crawl space. Ms. Genovese explained that the foundation created a hindrance to changes in that area.

Mr. Mushak asked about the Japanese maple tree on the property. Ms. Genovese confirmed that all the trees in the front would remain in place.

Ms. Lightfield asked if the integrity of the architecture would be preserved around the whole building. Ms. Genovese emphasized that the owner wanted the proposed building to be in keeping with the original architecture.

The Committee agreed to send the item public hearing in February.

- c) **#4-07SPR – 80 Fair St LLC – 80 Fair St – 59 units/self storage facility – Request to modify plans by replacing 2 units with office/community room – Determination if minor change**

Mr. Wrinn provided a summary of the proposal.

Atty. David Waters explained that the building had originally been built as a not-for-profit building and that new financing required internal changes.

Ms. Lightfield asked if the reduction in the number of units would have an impact on the affordable housing requirement. Atty. Waters said no.

The Committee agreed that the item was a minor change.

- d) **#7-09SPR – Norwalk Community Health Center – 120 Connecticut Ave – 24,000 sq ft of medical office – Unauthorized modification to site plan - Determination if minor change**

Mr. Strauch gave background about the property and indicated before and after photographs of the over-pruned trees. He said that the canopy had been reduced considerably.

Mr. White said that he saw no malice in the change.

Mr. Mushak stated that the work was a serious assault on the trees. He distributed a document entitled “STOP Topping Trees” and outlined the industry standards concerning trees.

Mr. White suggested that a condition be added, stating that the trees would be replaced if they died.

Ms. Lightfield said that the Committee would accept the item as a minor change, if the condition were added.

II. SPECIAL PERMITS

- a) **#11-09SP – Silvermine Homes, LLC – 241 & 249 Silvermine Avenue – 11 unit conservation development - Final review prior to public hearing**

Mr. Strauch indicated the area on a map. He said that Conservation had had a public hearing on the item and was continuing it until February 9th.

Atty. Suchy showed the site plan and gave details about the proposal. She said that 50% of the land was part of a conservation easement.

Mr. Steve McAllister discussed the septic system and drainage and described the leeching fields, adding that DPW had approved the drainage.

Ms. Lightfield asked why the lot was not on city sewer. Atty. Suchy said that the sewer line was a mile to the south of the property. She added that the system had been approved by the Health Department and by the 1st Taxing District’s water department.

Mr. Hard asked about the effluvial fill on the property. Mr. McAllister addressed the issue.

Mr. Matthew Popp discussed the conservation easement and also the removal of non-native species on the site.

Ms. Lightfield asked what would be done on the property, if it were not for the conservation easement. Mr. Strauch indicated a seven-lot subdivision plan.

Mr. Mushak asked about increases in the roof surface and the impervious pavement area. Mr. Greene explained that the applicant could do a calculation.

Mr. Mushak asked if the storm water could somehow be kept on the site, since the river was pristine in the area. Mr. McAllister pointed out that the catch basins had filters on them.

Mr. Mushak asked about the size of the homes. Mr. McIntyre described them as 2600 to 2800 square feet.

Ms. Lightfield stated that the Committee had already heard the traffic report.

Atty. Suchy requested that the public hearing be held in February. The Committee agreed.

b) #12-09SP – Royal Auto – 112 Main Street – Auto interiors & boat covers (manufacturing) - Final review prior to public hearing

Mr. Wrinn described the proposal.

The Committee had no further questions.

c) #X-09SP – Shell/7-11 – Broad St/Main Avenue – Conversion of service bays & car wash to convenience store – Determination if minor change

Mr. Wrinn described the proposal to convert the carwash to convenience store space. He addressed the curb cuts and the customer count.

Mr. Mark Smith described the property, explaining that the three gas pumps and the underground storage tanks would remain. He added that the owner wanted to keep the curb cuts in order to facilitate deliveries to the site. Mr. Smith discussed the traffic study, stating that while it was not site-specific, it did address the relative comparison of the two uses.

Ms. Lightfield pointed out the deficiency of such a study on a busy thoroughfare.

Mr. Blank asked about vehicle traffic around the whole building. Mr. O'Reilly asked if more cars would be actually parking at the site due to the retail use.

Mr. Smith gave details about the expectations of traffic at the site.

Ms. Light asked about the frequency of deliveries. The proprietor said that a tanker made deliveries every third day for 20 to 30 minutes. He added that he owned another station in the area and emphasized how the proposed store would help to beautify the area.

Mr. Mushak addressed parking and traffic flow concerns in the area.

Ms. Lightfield reiterated that a site-specific traffic study was a necessity for property on this road.

d) #14-09SP – Norwalk Hospital Association – 34 Maple St/Stevens St - Replace existing 427 space parking garage with new 628 space parking garage – Preliminary review

Mr. Greene summarized the proposal.

Atty. Frank Zullo discussed the construction period and the matter of how to manage the parking when 435 would not be available due to construction. He explained that valet parking would pick up 224 spaces and also that an arrangement with the Parking Authority would provide 200 more spaces to rent.

Ms. Lightfield requested that a study be provided with regard to the economic impact on the merchants. She asked the applicant to reiterate why the parking garage was being built.

Atty. Zullo explained that the new garage would help meet parking needs based on the new pavilion at the hospital.

Ms. Lightfield asked how a traffic study could be done on a garage that served a facility whose uses were not yet known. Atty. Zullo clarified that a management plan had been made regarding traffic during construction and that the applicant was only looking at how the garage serviced the hospital itself.

Mr. O'Reilly asked how many patients were expected for outpatient services. Ms. Lightfield added that the number was entirely dependent on what was in the new building.

Mr. Pat O'Leary addressed the need for a garage due to the age and condition of the existing one. He discussed health care needs and demographics, stating that there would be a change in use and a change in the overall parking demand.

Ms. Lightfield pointed out the distinction between the building itself and the services provided therein.

Mr. Gary McIntyre discussed the cost of the proposal. Ms. Light asked if the financing were in place. Mr. McIntyre said that the Board of Trustees had approved it, based on the funds available.

Mr. Mushak addressed the notion of a healing garden space and a green roof. Mr. McIntyre addressed greenery at the site and the overall experience of the area.

Mr. O'Leary added that the footprint would be reduced and that there would be a nominal increase in the impervious area due to the access ways. He discussed the supplementing of landscaping.

Mr. Blank asked about the width of the access way. Mr. O'Leary discussed the minimum width with regard to the turn radius of trucks using the entrance.

Mr. Greene suggested that the applicant consider alternate materials for the less frequently used access way.

Mr. O'Leary discussed the offset peak hours of the hospital with comparison to those on the adjacent streets.

Mr. Terry Wilson discussed the architecture of the proposal, emphasizing that the parking deck would be both safe and functional. He explained that the new garage would allow people to circulate without crossing over the exposed, busy area. He said that the ramp was a critical component, as far as enhancing safety, circulation and use of space. He added that there would be elevator access on all levels. Mr. Wilson addressed tree removal at the site. He stated that signage shown had already been approved on the hospital campus.

Ms. Light asked about the glass area on the plan. Mr. Wilson said that it was part of the future pavilion, not part of the parking garage plan.

Mr. Blank asked about removal of the smaller adjacent lot and adding green space there.

Mr. Mushak discussed valet parking and asked about bike access for staff and visitors. He said that the proposal would improve the visitor experience and emphasized the opportunity for a green space and healing garden.

Atty. Zullo pointed out that the Whittingham Cancer Center had a healing garden.

There was a discussion of the parking attendant booth and the system of payment.

III. REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF SURETY

- a) **#2-06SPR/#24-06CAM – F.M. Bonaddio Construction – 30 Sheehan Ave – Contractor's yard – Release of surety**

Mr. Strauch stated that there were issues with non-compliance with the site plan.

- b) **#13-05SP – 130 Main St Development LLC – 130 Main St – 19 residential units – Release of surety**

Mr. Wrinn said that everything was in compliance at the site.

IV. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF APPROVAL TIME

- a) **#1-07SPR – 34 Oakwood Ave Associates – 22 Oakwood Ave – 11 unit multifamily development – Request for one year extension of approval time (3rd request)**

Mr. Strauch said that the ownership had changed hands. He described the property.

V. REVOCATION OF PERMITS

- a) **#1-09MV/#13-09CAM - Hollywood Restorations – 115 Woodward Ave – Auto body repair – Status report**

Mr. Strauch said that the owner had no license to operate and that the permit was being revoked. He added that the owner had not attended meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Charlene Smith.