

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MARCH 11, 2010**

PRESENT: James White, Chair; Jackie Lightfield; Michael Mushak; Larry Bentley; Andrea Light; Michael O'Reilly; Bob Hard

STAFF: Mike Greene; Mike Wrinn

OTHERS: Atty. Frank Zullo; Terry White; Pat O'Leary; Rob Vanick; Fred Averly; Jim Haynes; Jim Barker

Mr. White called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

I. SITE PLAN REVIEWS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS

a) #1-10SPR – Dr. Syed Reza – 346 Main Avenue – 38,000 sq ft medical & general office – Further review

Mr. Greene said that no further information had been received from the applicant.

b) #3-10CAM – Vona – 37 High St – Contractor's yard – Request to modify approvals to increase size of yard & add larger trucks – Further review

Mr. Wrinn said that the item was ready for public hearing. Mr. White reiterated that the neighbors were supportive of the proposal, as long as the contractor agreed to avoid large trucks.

c) #7-04SPR – Maritime Yards – 33 North Water St - Mixed use development - Request to modify plans to relocate cooling tower - Determination if minor change

Mr. Greene described the property in front of the Maritime Aquarium. The Committee agreed that this was a minor change.

d) #7-08SPR – 333 Wilson Av LLC (Wusthof) – 355 Wilson Av – 45,000 sq ft warehouse /distribution ctr – Request to modify sidewalk plans

Mr. Wrinn explained that the state would not issue a permit due to the sidewalk drop-off. He said that the idea of creating a crosswalk had been considered.

Ms. Lightfield pointed out that the area often had parked cars on both sides of the street and also that the school bus company did not have employee parking.

The Committee did not recommend public hearing at this time.

e) #6-95SPR – 295 Westport Ave – Modification of façade

Mr. Greene explained that the item involved a façade change to the building that had been a peoples Bank. The Committee reviewed photos of the planned change. Ms. Lightfield said that the plans did not look aesthetically pleasing. The Committee agreed that the item was a minor change.

II. SPECIAL PERMITS

a) #11-09SP – Silvermine Homes, LLC – 241 & 249 Silvermine Avenue – 11 unit conservation develop – Review of hearing

Mr. Wrinn said that the Committee was welcome to ask questions to staff, now that the public hearing was closed.

Ms. Lightfield said that the two main concerns were the interpretation of conservation easements and also the issue of encroachment. She discussed the septic systems in relation to the tree root systems. She also emphasized the notion of a reduction in the number of units at the development, since the applicant was not providing a lot of conservation area to justify the density of the project.

There was a discussion of possible ways to reconfigure the development with fewer units.

Mr. Hard addressed the idea of subterranean encroachment and whether that in itself impeded the use of open space. Ms. Lightfield said she questioned the precedent to be set by ignoring anything that was underground. She pointed out that the intent of the conservation development was to preserve open space, but that the use of an underground area of open space for a septic system had not been attempted before.

Mr. Mushak pointed out that units #4 and #5 separated the development from a large piece of open space and therefore should be considered as the two units to be removed. He reminded the Committee that it had the unique responsibility to look at the context of the site with its unique characteristics.

Mr. White pointed out that the reduction of the number of units would not necessarily involve the removal of units #4 and #5.

Ms. Lightfield asked if the Committee would be able to choose which units to remove. Mr. Greene said that the Committee would be responsible for choosing them. He added that staff could analyze realistic, sensible solutions.

The Committee agreed to review the item at its April meeting.

b) #14-09SP – Norwalk Hospital Association – 34 Maple St/Stevens St - Replace existing 430 space parking garage with new 628 space parking garage – Final review prior to public hearing

Mr. White addressed the issue of using levels 3 and above for parking during the construction period.

Atty. Frank Zullo described the meeting with the Parking Authority and with merchants in the adjacent properties.

Mr. Terry White discussed the lighting conditions in the garage and presented several renderings of the site improvements.

Mr. White asked about the trees on the site. Mr. Pat O'Leary said that a mixture of deciduous

and coniferous trees would replace those on the site and would provide year-round color.

Mr. Blank said that the garage could potentially be an eyesore and that the site would benefit from some plantings in front to reduce the scope of the parking area. Mr. O'Leary said that the applicant could accommodate the request by creating a larger landscape area and screening.

Mr. Rob Vanick discussed traffic and construction vehicles during the building period. He said that no trucks would be parked on the street and that a wheel wash would be used to minimize the amount of mud on the street. He confirmed the hours of construction as being from 7:00am to 3:30 pm.

Ms. Light asked about employee parking areas. Mr. Jim Haynes said that there would be assigned spaces for employees, who would use color-coded parking passes.

c) #1-10SP – G. Pappajohn – 38 Stuart Av – 16 unit multifamily development – Preliminary review

Mr. Wrinn said that staff had received revised plans that would be reviewed by the Committee next month.

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

Mr. Wrinn discussed the closing of a curb cut. He said that traffic count numbers had been tied in with those from the Citgo station up the street.

The Committee agreed that this was a minor change.

e) #2-10SP/#4-10CAM – Sea Streak LLC – Beach Rd/Cove Marina – Terminal for passenger ferry stop – Preliminary review

Mr. Wrinn explained that the proposal involved a high-speed ferry on which Norwalk would be a stop. Atty. Liz Suchy gave details about the ferry, stating that it would depart from Norwalk on Friday in the late afternoon and would return on Sunday nights. She said that 125 passengers could board in Norwalk.

Mr. White expressed concern about the high level of activity in the area on Friday evenings. Mr. Fred Averly discussed the temporary gas dock.

Mr. Jim Barker described his experience with ferry service and gave details about the proposed ferry.

Mr. Averly pointed out the potential economic advantages to the City. He described the ferry as having a low-impact on traffic, parking and noise.

Mr. Wrinn reiterated that the item needed a Special Permit and that it was a referral from the Harbor Commission.

f) #23-95SP – King Industries – Science Rd – Office & R&D facility – Request to modify plans & release of surety

The consideration of the item was put off until next month.

g) #1-10MV – J. Maitan – 131 New Canaan Av – Replacement auto repair tenant – Preliminary review

Mr. Wrinn gave background about the item, including a list of conditions set by the Zoning Board of Approvals. He said that staff recommended the same set of conditions. Mr. Blank asked about the curb cut, which was near an awkward intersection. Mr. Wrinn stated that DPW had approved the curb cut.

h) #10-92SP – Liberation Programs Inc – 4 Elmcrest Terrace - Request to modify mix of supportive & residential treatment

Mr. Greene said that the applicant was shifting the amount of long-term and short-term care at the facility.

The Committee agreed that this was a minor change

i) Lea Manor – Strawberry Hill Ave – Informal discussion

Mr. Greene gave background about the site, which was formerly a school and then elderly housing.

Atty. Zullo discussed the building's use, stating that it was an asset for the owners and for neighbors.

The applicant described the property, pointing out that because there were three acres to work with, the developer could give back some green areas. He discussed the use as an Alzheimer's treatment facility and addressed costs of the facility. He gave details about various amenities, such as the common spaces, the "Brain Gym," and the roof patio. He also pointed out that the reduced amount of pavement and the building height and volume complied with regulations.

III. REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF SURETY

a) #6-04SP – Stone Realty – 15-29 Oakwood Ave – 9,000 sq ft warehouse – Request for release of surety

Mr. Wrinn said that staff recommended the release of surety.

IV. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF APPROVAL TIME

Mr. Wrinn said that staff recommended the extension of approval time on items a) through d).

a) #2-03SP/#6-03CAM City of Norwalk - Calf Pasture Beach Road – Restaurant at Calf Pasture Beach – Request for one year extension of approval time

b) #2-08SPR/#2-08CAM - 95/7 Ventures LLC - 105-141 West Av/3-11 Reed St/1-41/62-64 Putnam Av – North of Reed St – ±605,000 square foot mixed use development (Phase 1) – Request for 1 yr extension of approval time

c) #3-08SPR/#3-08CAM - 95/7 Ventures LLC – 51-63 West Av/15-25 Putnam Av – South of Reed St - District 95/7 ±106,500 square foot mixed use development (Phase 1) - Request for 1 yr extension of approval time

d) #2-09SPR – Tilly – 25-29 Bouton St – 12 units – Request for 1 year extension of approval time

V. DEP/ARMY CORPS

a) 5 Cudlipp Street – Removal of derelict structure and install new dock

Mr. Wrinn described the residence and stated that the item was a referral.

b) 132 Water Street – Install floats for marine commercial use

Mr. Wrinn described the property and the south end of the Oyster House and stated that the item was a referral.

c) 30 Shorehaven Road – Existing dock – Modify to increase size of floating dock

Mr. Wrinn described the property and stated that the item was a referral.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Charlene Smith.