

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
AUGUST 13, 2009**

PRESENT: James White, Chair; Andrea Light; Karen Spencer; Bob Keyes; Larry Bentley;
John Tobin; Michael Mushak; Bob Hard

STAFF: Mike Greene; Mike Wrinn; Adam Carsen

OTHERS: Atty. Barry Hawkins; Dave Coffin; Atty. John Hoffman; Gary DeWolfe; Atty. Liz Suchy; Ray Sullivan; Bruce Beinfeld; Kate Throckmorton; Kim Morque; Clay Fowler; Rick Redniss; Brian Stobbie; Andy LaSala

I. SITE PLAN REVIEWS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS

a) #7-09SPR – Norwalk Community Health Center – 120 CT Ave – 24,000 sq ft of medical office – Preliminary review

Mr. Greene described the property, stating that it had once been a furniture store. He said that the Health Center was expanding and wanted this site, which had 121 parking spaces.

Atty. Barry Hawkins explained that the Health Center aimed to offer direct primary care for those who could not afford it otherwise. He emphasized that the Health Center served the 06854 zip code and would actually need permission from the federal government to move out of the zip code. Atty. Hawkins added that the Health Center could not serve the community any longer in its current space. He said that it should be serving 15,000 people and that the new location would allow the Health Center to double the number of patients served by many of its areas, such as pediatrics.

Atty. Hawkins reiterated that the expansion was made possible by stimulus funding. He explained that the Health Center had searched extensively for a location in this zip code with a suitable structure, parking, and overall size. He added that patients had been notified of the expansion and were very happy about it. He also stated that the new location would be well-served by buses and was also very close to Norwalk Hospital, with which the Health Center had a good, cooperative relationship.

Atty. Hawkins explained that because the building needed very little exterior work, funds could be used largely for energy-efficiency work. He described the canopy top and the color scheme. He discussed how the new facility would allow the Health Center to add programming needs. He also addressed the parking and transportation needs of patients, pointing out that most patients could take a bus or walk to the new facility.

Ms. Light asked if patients were Norwalk residents. Atty. Hawkins said yes.

Ms. Spencer asked which areas of Norwalk most patients were from. Atty. Hawkins said mostly South Norwalk and some East Norwalk.

Ms. Spencer asked about a diagram of the bus routes serving the facility. Mr. Greene said that one would be provided.

Mr. Mushak asked about the need for patients to transfer buses, pointing out that there was no direct bus from some areas. He asked if Transit would consider adjusting the bus routes, if the site was heavily used. Atty. Hawkins said that Larry Cross could address those concerns.

Mr. White asked how long the fit up would take. Mr. Coffin said it would take four to six months.

Mr. Bentley pointed out the significance of the fact that the facility was one of only 25 facilities to be awarded stimulus funds.

Mr. Mushak addressed the issue of construction on Route 1 near I-95.

Atty. Hawkins discussed bus tokens and taxi vouchers.

Mr. White said that an upgrade to the South Norwalk Train Station would help transportation in the area.

Ms. Light said that there was a sanitary sewer system on the other side of town and asked if a similar one would be in use on this side of town. Mr. Coffin described the system.

Atty. Hawkins emphasized that there would be more permeable surface at the new facility, thereby generating a net reduction of storm water entering the system.

b) #X-09 SPR – Staples Plaza - 420 Westport Avenue – Retail Shopping center façade improvement

Mr. Carsen presented renderings of the property and stated that signs were not being approved currently. He said that the item involved a minor change.

c) #9-04CAM – Friedman – 9 Shorehaven Road – Single family residence – Request for extension of approval time

Mr. Wrinn said that this was the fifth time an extension had been requested for the property. He confirmed that the property complied with all regulations.

Atty. John Hoffman said that he had notification that taxes had been paid in full.

d) #XX -09 SPR – Nitkin Group – 488 Main Avenue – Office Building façade improvement

Mr. Wrinn described the property opposite the Merritt 7 buildings, pointing out that the aggregate panel was popping off and that screening was needed on the site.

Mr. Gary DeWolfe presented samples and gave background concerning the property. He said that the aggregate was falling off the building and damaging vehicles. He added that the north elevation had old and that the applicant wanted to remove the finish and change its color. Mr. DeWolfe presented that new color, pointing out that it was more a panel than a plaster. He also said that the existing bronze windows would remain, but would be improved. He added that the self-cleaning style panel would prevent mold growth.

Mr. White asked about the removal of the screening on the lower level. Mr. DeWolfe said that the wood was rotting and that tenants actually considered the screening to be excessive. Mr. Wrinn said that staff had no problem with screening it appropriately.

Mr. Mushak asked about the guard rail. Mr. DeWolfe explained that the grade itself would prevent a vehicle from rolling forward. There was a discussion of options concerning the guard rail. Mr. Wrinn said that the Building department would be consulted.

II. SPECIAL PERMITS

a) #15-08SP/#16-08SP - AG Phase I – Summer St – Modification to plans to change from wood siding to vinyl siding

Atty. Suchy discussed the background of the item, emphasizing that the goal was to reduce the project costs.

Mr. Ray Sullivan said that the intent was to maintain the same lines, but to adjust materials. He said that the applicant was willing to make the compromise, even though the first choice would have been wood siding. He

pointed out that the vinyl material had improved significantly and that its maintenance was much less costly.

Mr. Andy LaSala stated that the modification was not actually a compromise, as the new vinyl material was structurally the same as wood.

Mr. Sullivan confirmed that the intended start date of construction would be September or October.

b) #14-07SP – 8 Merritt Pl, LLC – 8 Merritt Pl – Contractor's storage yard – Remove part of railroad leased area from property

Mr. Wrinn indicated the leased area on a map. He confirmed that the applicant had the ability to acquire the leased area.

III. MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE

a) #1-09MV/#13-09CAM - Hollywood Restorations – 115 Woodward Ave – Auto body repair – Further review

Mr. Carsen said that the applicant had not appeared for the July public hearing and that another public hearing was set for September.

IV. REVOCATION OF PERMITS

a) #2-06SPR/#24-06CAM - Guinta – 30 Sheehan Ave – Proposed contractor's storage yard – Status report

Mr. Carsen discussed the applicant's compliance with plans, adding that staff wanted to continue monitoring the situation.

b) #2-07SP – Stuart Avenue Townhouses, LLC - 42-46 Stuart Ave – 12 unit multifamily residential – Status report

Mr. Carsen said that staff was concerned with the applicant's compliance and wanted to continue to monitor the situation.

Mr. Bentley pointed out that the area looked much better than it had.

Ms. Light asked about DPW's role in terms of sidewalks and the street itself.

Mr. Wrinn said that the concern about whom was being notified had been cleared up last week.

c) #3-09SPR/#30-08CAM - Jackson – 10 Goldstein Place – Contractor's storage yard - Status report

Mr. Carsen said that there had been a violation, because the applicant had not followed through with permits. He said that the item would go to public hearing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Charlene Smith.