

**CITY OF NORWALK  
ZONING COMMITTEE  
JUNE 11, 2009**

**PRESENT:** Jackie Lightfield, Chair; James White; Karen Spencer; John Tobin; Larry Bentley; Robert Keyes; Michael Mushak

**STAFF:** Mike Greene; Mike Wrinn; Frank Strauch

**OTHERS:** Atty. David Waters; Atty. Liz Suchy; Bruce Beinfield; Mike Galante; Matthew Popp

**I. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDING REGULATIONS & SPECIAL PERMITS**

- a) #6-09R/#6-09SP – Norwalk Emergency Shelter, Inc. – 2 Merritt Pl/Chestnut St - Proposed amendments to Industrial #1 zone to permit a transient residence facility by special permit and special permit for a transient residence facility with 106 beds, 9 family units & 9 efficiency apartments and related facilities– Final review prior to public hearing

Ms. Lightfield discussed questions submitted by Mr. Adam Blank regarding security guards and density.

Atty. David Waters discussed neighborhood concerns with regard to adding another shelter in South Norwalk.

Mr. Tobin stated his opposition to the proposal.

Atty. Waters reminded the Committee that if the item were not approved, the current shelter would still remain in place.

Mr. Tobin stated that the possibility of the shelter should be shared by all areas of Norwalk.

Atty. Waters discussed hours of operation and security.

There was a discussion of the standards of a Special Permit.

Mr. Bentley emphasized that consideration needed to be given to how the City of Norwalk as a whole would respond to the item.

Atty. Waters stated that he would hand-deliver information about the proposal to the Superintendent of Schools.

- b) #7-09R/#7-09SP - Norden Place, LLC - 8 Norden Place - Proposed amendments to Section 118-711 to permit multifamily and single family housing by special permit in Restricted Industrial zone and special permit for 240 multifamily units, 4 single family residences (25 units to be designated as workforce housing units) and related recreation facilities- Preliminary review

Mr. Greene discussed the application briefly.

Atty. Liz Suchy described the site, stating that access to Hiawatha Lane would not be affected and that only a nature path would connect to that road.

Mr. Keyes asked why there was no access into Westport, considering that traffic in East Norwalk is a significant issue.

Mr. Mike Galante discussed traffic impact, stating that the level of service would change from B to C in certain areas and that there would be a reasonable delay.

Mr. Keyes asked if the applicant had considered splitting up the multifamily units and getting egress through Westport. The applicant explained that the goal was to condense the units and that only a walking trail was planned through to Hiawatha Lane.

Mr. Bruce Beinfield addressed the issue of the paved area and the preserved area, pointing out that this was more ecologically progressive. He also gave an overview of the architecture.

Mr. Matthew Popp discussed the proposed landscaping and lighting.

Ms. Lightfield asked if there was a plan to eliminate invasive species in the area. Mr. Popp detailed the landscape plans.

Mr. Greene reported that Mr. Blank had asked about any area of the site in which the Landscape Plan was not in order. Mr. Greene also made reference to Mr. Blank's concern with Industrial land being given up for Residential land. He also acknowledged the trade-off involved in creating Affordable Housing on Industrial land.

c) #8-09R – Norwalk Board of Education – Proposed amendments to Article 121 regarding signs at public high schools in residential zones-Preliminary review

Mr. Wrinn explained that the proposal involved modification of the regulations to allow changeable copy signs at Norwalk High School.

Atty. Liz Suchy discussed restrictions on times and frequency of sign changes.

Mr. White asked why the high school needed changeable copy signage. Atty. Suchy said that it would create a clean, crisp method of conveying information.

Ms. Spencer asked about a 12-second standard for sign changes. Atty. Suchy said that was the current standard but that it would not be applied here. She added that illumination would be regulated manually.

Mr. White requested a condition that no outside advertising be allowed on the sign.

Mr. Wrinn said that the concern was with how to restrict such signage in a residential zone.

Mr. White emphasized the importance of reaching a consensus with regard to changeable copy signs.

Mr. Greene added that allowing the signage could act as a gateway to other schools and churches seeking such signs in a residential area. He also said that if highly restricted and unique, the signage could be a green solution to paper and plastic signs. He stated that Corporation Counsel should be consulted with regard to impact.

Atty. Suchy stated that a meeting with neighbors would be held on June 29.

d) #5-09R - Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to increase fee for Village District applications to \$1,500

Mr. Greene said that the Planning Commission had approved the increase, adding that the fee had not been increased in a long time.

e) Zoning Commission – Cedar Street/Fairfield Avenue -Proposed Golden Hill Village District – Status report

Mr. Greene discussed the proposed Village District briefly.

f) Comments of Commissioners

Mr. Bentley expressed concern with the number of affordable housing units that had been approved but never constructed. There was a discussion of rental stock and the 10% figure for affordable housing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Charlene Smith

