

CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
April 14, 2011

PRESENT: James White, Chair; Emily Wilson; Mike Mushak; Joseph Santo; Adam Blank; David McCarthy; Robert Hard; Robert Keyes

STAFF: Mike Greene; Adam Carsen

OTHERS: Atty. Liz Suchy; Lance Zimmerman; Ron Kellogg; Lynne Ward; Joe Balskas; Phil Mendence; Atty. Al Vasco; Michael Stein; Atty. Frank Zullo; Joe Phelan; Stanley Seligson; Doug Adams; Craig Flaherty

James White called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

I. COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS

a) #6-11CAM – Cornaccia – 49 1/2 Rowayton Ave – New single family residence with attached boathouse/garage – Preliminary review

Mr. Carsen presented the application. Atty. Suchy presented background of the lot and property. The structure is non-conforming and on an odd shaped lot. The applicant applied to have the boathouse removed and erect a new structure on the property. Lance Zimmerman, as the architect of the building, discussed the plans for the new structure. There would be a small apartment on the second floor of the structure. The lower level would store a boat in the winter and cars in the summer when the boat is in the water. They were still waiting for comments back from various agencies. They did go before the Zoning Board of Appeals previously to obtain the variances they needed. Mr. McCarthy asked what the height of the building would be. Mr. Zimmerman said it would be 25 ft. and that this was stipulated by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Carsen informed the board that typically with a single family residence, the board can waive a public hearing. However, in this instance, the staff had received a letter from a neighbor requesting a public hearing. A woman in attendance at the meeting also submitted three more requests for a public hearing. The Plan Review committee agreed to hold a public hearing which was to be held on May 18, 2011.

b) #11-08CAM – MacGregor Design - 65 Rowayton Ave – Modification to approved plan to reconfigure planting islands – Determination if minor change

Mr. Greene presented the application. The request for a change came from a neighbor and had to do with a dumpster. He was concerned garbage may be dumped onto his property. Instead he wanted it to go directly onto the street. The neighbor was asking for 2 islands surrounding the dumpster. It was determined that this was a minor change.

II. SPECIAL PERMITS

a) #2-11SP – Patriotic American Club – 34 Main Street – Reuse of 550 sq ft for a social club – Final review prior to public hearing

Mr. Carsen presented the application. Ron Kellogg stated that their sign offs were in place and they had sent out their certified letters. They were ready for the public hearing in the following week.

b) #3-11SP – L.A. Fitness – 761 Main Avenue (iPark) – 12,000 sq ft addition to L.A. Fitness – Preliminary review

Mr. Greene presented the application. Since L.A. Fitness has been so successful they wanted to expand the building. It would be 12,000 sq. ft bigger. There was a complication because part of the building would be in Wilton, CT. Lynn Ward, an agent for iPark, spoke on behalf of L.A. Fitness. They had met with town officials from Wilton that morning. There were problems with zoning. In Norwalk the building would have to be 2 stories. She said they were not sure how to deal with these problems. There was a discussion about the slope in front of the health club that people were walking up which they were not supposed to do. It has been ruining the landscaping. Joe Balskas, the traffic engineer, spoke regarding the increase of traffic when the addition is completed. He did not think a lot of traffic would be added once the addition was completed. Mr. Blank had a concern about the sight lines in the front. Mr. Greene stated that the public hearing would probably be on the agenda in June.

c) #4-11SP – P. Mendence – 8 Scribner Ave – Expand existing group daycare to child day care center in single family – Preliminary review

Mr. Carsen presented the application. It is an existing day care center that is being run in the applicant's home. They are looking to expand which required a new license and special permit. It has been operating since 2007 for 12 children. They are not expanding the structure but rather, the number of children. They would like to have up to 20 children. The state license allowed them to have up to 32 children but their space would not. The commissioners discussed making a condition of approval to limit the special permit up to 20 children. Parking was only sufficient for up to 20 children. The hearing would be in June.

d) #3-10SP – Maplewood at Strawberry Hill – 73 Strawberry Hill Ave – 84 unit congregate housing facility – Request to modify approved plan – Determination if minor change

Mr. Greene presented the application. It was a school that was converted to a nursing home years ago. Atty. Al Vasco, who represented the applicant, continued the presentation. They were attempting to add a canopy to the design. It is now allowed by the regulations for nursing homes and assisted living facilities. He believed it would be beneficial to the elderly and people coming to visit them. Michael Stein, the architect on the project, continued the discussion of the building. There will be two changes to the building. They all agreed that their changes were minor.

e) #19-05SP – St George Greek Orthodox Church – 238 West Rocks Rd – Discussion of duration of temporary parking area

Mr. Carsen presented the application. The staff wanted there to be clarification between the commissioners and the applicant as to what "temporary" means in the case of the temporary parking area. A member of the church staff attended the meeting to discuss the parking situation with the commissioners. There have been problems collecting money over the past several years. The commissioners decided to review the application yearly.

f) #X-11SP – Lillian August – North Ave – Tent sale – Determination if minor change in use

Mr. Carsen presented the application. In the past Lillian August has had a tent sale that ran over the course of one weekend. This year they would like to hold it for three weekends. The commissioners decided this was a minor change.

g) #14-09SP – Norwalk Hospital – Maple St – 628 space parking garage – Request to modify condition of approval regarding hours of construction

Mr. Greene presented the application. One of the conditions of the original application was that construction would end at 3:30 p.m. Now that they have demolished the old parking structure, they have found that the soil isn't sufficient to hold the underpinnings of the new garage. They have to make holes and will have to send a man down into the holes with hand tools. They are requesting to add another 2 hours onto the schedule every day for four days during the week for up to 12 weeks. This should allow them to keep to their schedule. All other construction on the site would still cease at 3:30 p.m. There was also a discussion about allowing all of the construction to continue for another 2 hours per day in order to help the project to be completed earlier. It was decided that the applicant would have to come to the commission to make such a request.

h) #X-11SP – Norwalk Inn & Conference Center – 99 East Ave – Replace damaged awning & reconfigure existing floor plan (not related to approved special permit) – Determination if minor change

Mr. Santo left the room before the presentation. Mr. Greene presented the application. This application was separate from the special permit previously approved. There was a collapsed awning which they would like to put back up. They would also like to make some changes to another awning. The commissioners decided this was a minor change.

III. SITE PLAN REVIEWS

A) Waypointe – West Ave/Orchard Street - Status update

Mr. Greene began the presentation. This would be a phased project which would extend from Loehmann's Plaza up towards Wall St. The first phase would begin a block north of Loehmann's. The proposed applicant was before the commission, not because they need approvals, but rather to present what they would be submitting in their application. The proposed applicant wanted to find out what questions to expect from the commission before they file their application. Atty. Suchy, representing the proposed applicant, Norwalk West LLC, continued the presentation. It would be a mix of rental units, including 10% affordable housing and retail businesses including restaurants. There would also be an internal parking garage with approximately 600 parking spaces. There would be a through block arcade which led into an interior courtyard. Doug Adams of Seligson Properties, also commented during the presentation. Mr. White asked when they anticipated filing the application. Atty. Suchy said it would be in before next Thursday. Joe Ancona, a shoe repair storefront, would be accommodated in the new retail space. Mr. Blank asked whether retail would only be on the first floor. Atty. Suchy described where all of the retail would be. She also described which buildings would be demolished and which buildings would remain. There were concerns that there would not be mounds of dirt for years instead of construction. The commissioners asked for the schedule of construction and completion. Mr. Adams stated that if they could begin construction in the fall of 2011, residents and retail could begin moving into the buildings in the fall of 2012. The finished build-out would be completed 3--6 months after that. The design guidelines of the Planning and Zoning Commissions have been used in their designs. Mr. Seligson asked that the project be fast-tracked because they are ready to begin work on the project. This project has already been in the works for 10 years. The commissioners were willing to hold a special hearing if it

was needed. It would be decided after they filed their application. Another time saver for this project would be that the application would go to the Redevelopment Agency at the same time as the Zoning Commission.

IV. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF APPROVAL TIME

a) #3-10SP – Maplewood at Strawberry Hill – 73 Strawberry Hill Ave – 84 unit congregate housing facility - Request for 1 year extension of approval time

Mr. Carsen presented the request which was granted by the commissioners.

b) #1-10SP – Gus Pappajohn – 38 Stuart Av – 16 unit multifamily development - Request for 1 year extension of approval time

Mr. Carsen presented the request. The applicant has paid the taxes. The request was granted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero