

**CITY OF NORWALK  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
PUBLIC MEETING  
MARCH 6, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Peter Bondi, Chair; Eric Chandler; David Westmoreland

LEGAL NOTICE

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** THAT THE NORWALK HISTORICAL COMMISSION IS HOLDING A PUBLIC MEETING IN REGARDS TO THE REQUEST FOR A STAY OF DEMOLITION FOR THE NORWALK COMPRESSOR BUILDING, 20 NORTH WATER STREET BY THE NORWALK PRESERVATION TRUST. MARCH 6, 2011, 7:00 P.M. AT NORWALK CITY HALL, 125 EAST AVENUE, COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DATED AT NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, THIS 24<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2012

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Gunn Bromley, Curator

Mr. Bondi opened the public meeting at 7:10 p.m.

**Mr. Lee Levy**, Comstock Hill Avenue, Licensed Architect, provided his credentials. He spoke as Vice President of the Norwalk Preservation Trust. Mr. Levy said that the focus of South Norwalk for the last 35 years has been the preservation of historic buildings that comprised a majority of the area. The Norwalk Company has been a presence in South Norwalk for 100 years and sits at the gateway to the area.

Mr. Levy said that the Norwalk Company building is a classic example of post Victorian industrial architecture and is worthy of preservation in one form or another. He said that he would like to see the building remain intact, although it presents some obstacles. The current preservation technique presents an **opportunity to move the façade 10 - 15 feet to give the west side of North Water Street an enlarged sidewalk.**

Mr. Levy said that one of the goals of this project is to improve the connectivity between The Maritime Aquarium garage and Washington Street. The Norwalk Preservation Trust does not feel that this project will improve the situation and the

biggest obstacle is the Metro North rail road bridge. The only way to improve the width of the sidewalk is to narrow the width of North Water Street, but the cost to the City would be \$300,000. This would also slow vehicular traffic.

The street lighting and the Metro North Bridge are in the early stages of discussion with Metro North and no plans have been presented. The Metro North Bridge is an historic structure and pre-dates the Norwalk Company by 50 years.

Mr. Levy said that during Zoning Commission hearings, it was stated that the **façade of the building would be synthetic stucco**. They also proposed to use the architectural details from the building. He said that he feels this is a nod to the Preservationists. Mr. Levy said that the salvage materials present problems in re-use. The eastern gateway should not be a conglomeration of man-made material. Mr. Levy said that he would like to see a concept that connects The Maritime Aquarium garage to SoNo.

**Ms. Marija Bryant**, Morgan Avenue said that looking at the sparse turnout one would think all is ok with the plan. But when The Norwalk Hour ran a poll, 50 - 70% of the responses were against demolishing the building. Ms. Bryant said that she does not blame the developer or the architect, but places the blame on the City and Planning and Zoning Commissioners who should look at a broader picture.

Ms. Bryant said that the argument is that it will improve connectivity, but she said that she does not feel that widening the sidewalks will help. The problem is the Metro North Bridge and the loading dock; The Maritime Aquarium did not help by moving the entrance around the corner.

**Ms. Claudia Best**, Eversley Avenue said that she was shocked when she turned onto North Water Street and saw the demolition sign. She said that she wants to make Norwalk a place that people want to visit, but now they want to tear down the building because of the sidewalk. Ms. Best said that she likes the idea of a pedestrian walkway, which would create a safer area at night. Ms. Best said that it is a mistake to take down the bold building. She said that it is a beautiful building and Norwalk does not need more housing.

There were no other members of the public who had signed up to speak. Mr. Bondi asked if anyone else wished to speak.

**Mr. Westmoreland** said that he was concerned that the building would be torn down in April as soon as the delay is lifted. It would be a shame to tear down the building and then look at an empty hole. He asked the Redevelopment Director if he could make sure that a condition of approval is that the building will not be torn down until the new building is ready to be built.

**Mr. Kim Morquay**, President Spinnaker said that he appreciated the comments. He said that he realizes that this is an important property in South Norwalk and **Mr. Westmoreland's concern is legitimate. He said that they are a small business and when they do a project it is capricious and tenuous, so they can't give guarantees.**

Mr. Morquay said that a hole in the street is a project and their goal is to bring this project forward. He said that they have been waiting for this project for 15 years.

Mr. Morquay said that they are fully committed to moving this project forward.

Ms. Best said that she knows they are committed to the project, but there are some people who want to save the building.

**Ms. Carol Ann Falasca**, Truman Street, Norwalk Preservation Trust said that she has seen a lot of changes in South Norwalk. She said that little by little, she is seeing the concept of what SoNo was supposed to be being eaten away. She said that 100 year old brick is going to be sold and will they have a false façade. Ms. Falasca said that she is disappointed that they can't find a middle road somewhere where they can keep the façade, move the façade or even close North Water Street for foot traffic. She said that the traffic will not get worse by closing the street. Ms. Falasca said that she feels this is a better solution.

There were no other comments and the public meeting was closed at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services