

**CITY OF NORWALK  
ZONING COMMITTEE  
December 6, 2012**

**PRESENT:** Adam Blank; Joseph Santo; James White; Mike O'Reilly; Mike Mushak;  
Nathan Sumpter, Jill Jacobson

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

**OTHERS:** Atty Frank Zullo; Atty Lawrence Cafero; John Stanton; Atty Liz Suchy

Adam Blank called the meeting to order at 8:16 p.m.

**I. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BUILDING ZONE REGULATIONS  
&SPECIAL PERMIT**

**a) #14-12R - Renzulli Assoc. Mobile Home Park, LLC - Proposed amendments to Article 130 to revise setbacks for trailers and accessory structures in automobile trailer parks - Further review**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. The applicants were not looking to add any additional units on site, just decks and sheds for each unit. The applicants requested a waiver of traffic and drainage studies as no additional units will be created. Atty. Zullo was representing the applicants. It was determined (by the Committee) that the traffic study and drainage study be waived and that this be sent to a public hearing in January.

**b) #13-12R/#8-12SP - Lowe's Home Centers, Inc. - 100 Connecticut Avenue - Proposed amendments to add anew definition and new parking requirement for retail home improvement stores and special permit for proposed 135,000 sq. ft. retail home improvement store - Further review**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He told the commissioners that the applicant had been to a CEAC meeting earlier in the week. The applicant would like to go to a public hearing in January. The Conservation Commission will be reviewing the application as well. He also told the commissioners that the Zoning Dept. staff had just received a traffic count for Black Friday. Mr. Blank thought the numbers were a little high but Mr. Wrinn said that they were still under what is required. Mr. Mushak asked about his e-mail requesting information from the Department of Public Works ("DPW") about the crosswalks and sidewalks and saving some trees. The applicant and the DPW are trying to work out an agreement. Mr. Blank asked if they could not do so, whether the Zoning Commission could make it a condition of the resolution so that some trees could be saved. Mr. Wrinn said it was DPW's decision as to what goes in the right of way.

Atty Cafero continued the presentation. He said that they had worked with Zoning Department staff to clarify the language in the text amendment for the definition of a "retail home improvement store." Mr. Blank was pleased with the new language. He then said he had worked with the applicant's landscape architect, Mr. Strauch and Mr. Mushak to see which trees could be saved and which could not be saved, along the borders of the property. They also discussed the sidewalks. Atty Cafero then said that if they were to have larger sidewalks, some of the trees that were thought to be saved,

would have to go. They have suggested an asphalt footpath which would save all the trees. Another suggestion was to go for concrete to asphalt in some areas. It is one of the dilemmas. There was a lengthy discussion about the sidewalks on Frost Street. Atty Cafero discussed the revised parking study which included counts for Black Friday on November 23, 2012. Atty Cafero also discussed how they had met with the owner of six properties on Clinton Avenue as well as meeting with representatives of the Spring Hill Association including Diane CeCe, Diane Lauricella and Al Raymond. Mr. Mushak had a few last questions about the sidewalks on Connecticut Avenue as well as the other sidewalks around the building. Mr. Blank asked about the traffic study in connection with the CVS project. He asked that the applicant to confirm that CVS would be acceptable with those changes.

John Stanton, Langan Engineering, continued the presentation. He discussed the traffic study, including the changes made in connection with the CVS project. Mr. White requested that the synchronization of the traffic signals be set up again. Mr. Stanton thought that it may have been broken up over the years especially with road improvements. Mr. Mushak thought that there is a challenge on the timing of the traffic lights. If one side is timed correctly, then the other might not be. Mr. Santo asked about the alignment of Clinton Avenue and Fairfield Avenue. Mr. Stanton said that with the addition of the three lanes on Clinton Avenue, it should help. The left turning lanes would be opposite of one another. There would only be two lanes coming out of Fairfield Avenue. Mr. Blank asked that if there was a model of the proposed site, he would like to see where the mechanicals would be. There was a discussion of drainage issues on Clinton Avenue. The DOT was pleased that this project would be helping with widening the roadway on their site.

Mr. Santo suggested that the driveway on Clinton Avenue should be eliminated. He also asked why there was going to be a 10 ft. hill on Connecticut Avenue since the property was level where it meets the road. He believed there could then be an entrance and exit there. Mr. Stanton suggested that a traffic signal would then be necessary but that the DOT would not allow it. There was a discussion as to why the land was being elevated at the front of the property. The grade of Connecticut Avenue is a factor as to why they are doing this. Mr. Santo recommended seeing a model so they could see what this hill would look like. He also thought there were not enough entrances and exits to the property from the west. He was not happy that there was only one option, Clinton Avenue.

There was a comparison of the driveways of the other major retailers on Connecticut Avenue, including Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Shop-Rite. Mr. Stanton said that the DOT did not want another left turn on Connecticut Avenue. There was a discussion about this. Mr. Stanton showed a board which described what improvements the DOT were performing, what improvements the applicant was doing alongside the DOT and what improvements would be done by the applicant if the DOT did not do them. Mr. Stanton went through other DOT improvements near the property. The applicant is trying to work with the DOT so as not to duplicate or tear down DOT improvements. Mr. Santo continued to have concerns about the exit on Clinton Avenue and the grading issues. Mr. Greene said that they could either have the applicant or the staff doing a grading plan which brought it down.

The hearing was set for January with a final review in early January.

**c) #17-12R/#9-12SP - Muller Park Realty Company LLC - 30 Muller Ave - Prop**

**osed amendment to add “artists workspace” as special permit use in Business #2 zone and legalize multiple special permit uses - Introduction& distribution of application**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He oriented the commissioners as to the location of Muller Park. He said that the owners were proposing an amendment in order to legalize the artists that are already in the space.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation. She said that a full presentation would be given to the commissioners next month. At one point, it was a fair ground. There was also horse racing on the property as well as a spur of a train line. The building also housed companies that manufactured such things as camouflage and lace. It is similar to a building on Wilson Avenue that is also renting to artists.

Mr. Blank asked if they had Aquifer protection. Atty Suchy would check with the Conservation Commission. He also thought it would dictate what types of artists that could be allowed there.

**d) Discussion of residential parking information**

Mr. Greene began the discussion. He explained how they obtained residential parking information. The study showed that Norwalk could reduce the parking requirements but he was not sure how far they cut. Although the city is developing housing near transit, today’s parking information does not show that they are quite as low as expected when located near one. Mr. Mushak thought that one variable was income. He believed that in lower income households there were more wage earners that had to drive to work. In higher income buildings, a single person could afford to live there with one vehicle. Mr. Greene said there would be more analysis. He said they would give the raw data to the commissioners to see if they had missed something in their analysis. Mr. Blank shared information he had from Stamford. If the parking was free, there were more cars parked. If the parking had to be paid for, the count was closer to one. Mr. Greene was not an advocate for a lot of parking but he did think it should be reduced slowly. Mr. Blank suggested that the residential parking rate should be lowered slightly. Mr. Mushak said that he knew many people living in Norwalk who did not have a car and rode bikes. He thought that the city should stop fighting bike lanes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero