

CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
February 14, 2013

PRESENT: Jill Jacobson, Chair; Nathan Sumpter; Emily Wilson; Adam Blank; James White; Michael Mushak; Harry Rilling

STAFF: Michael Greene; Mike Wrinn; Dori Wilson

OTHERS: Atty Ryan; Atty Liz Suchy; Craig Flaherty; Tim Gooding

Prior to the start of the meeting, Emily Wilson appointed Mr. White to the Plan Review Committee.

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

I. SITE PLAN REVIEWS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS

a) #21-96CAM/#11-89CAM - 2 Meadow St LLC - 2 Meadow St/300 Wilson Av - Modification of site plan to expand parking for DHL Delivery & modify contractor's yard - Further review

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He showed the commissioners the parcel on a map. The applicant would like to make changes to the site plan to bring it into compliance. There had been a carting service on the property but that is not there anymore. There was also a contractor's yard on the property which would be pushed back. There are some issues like screening and buffering. Mr. Wrinn said they could either consider it a minor change or send it to a public hearing. Mr. White asked whether they would work with the Zoning Department staff for landscaping. He said they would. Mr. Blank asked whether they could add conditions if they considered the application a minor change. He said they could. Atty Ryan continued the presentation. Mr. Mushak asked what the square footage of the contractor's yard was. Mr. Wrinn said he would have an answer for the next meeting. Everyone agreed it was a minor change.

b) #2-13SPR/#2-13CAM - CPIV Waypointe BP LLC - 515 West Av/Orchard/Merwin St - Request to modify approved site plan for 474,795 sf mixed use develop to revise retail/restaurant mix, add 16 units & increase to 852 spaces - Preliminary review and c) #3-13SPR/#3-13CAM - CPIV Waypointe BP LLC - 11 Merwin St - Request to modify approved site plan for 140,978 sf mixed use develop to revise retail/restaurant mix, add 3 units & increase to 181 spaces - Preliminary review

These two applications were taken as one for the presentation by Dori Wilson. She gave a background of the applications. She announced that there were new partners and that zoning permits were issued for both the north parcel and the mid-block parcel. However, the applicant is now making changes to each site plan which includes more units and more retail space. Since the applicant received their approvals, they have acquired the Casey Sheet Metal site at 4 Merwin St, thus the midblock site is now bigger. In addition, the applicant has added additional parking spaces for the new

uses. They would also like to reserve parking spaces for the residential uses only. In those cases, the reserved spaces would be taken out of the mixed use calculations. She said that the Zoning Department staff has reviewed the new site plans extensively and that they comply with regulations. A public hearing on these applications is optional. Mr. Mushak asked where all the new parking would be. Ms. Wilson said that it was on the roof which the applicant indicates would not be visible from the street.

At this point, Atty Suchy continued the presentation. She was asked further questions about the parking. The levels closer to the bottom were for the retail and restaurant uses and the upper levels would be reserved for the residential units. Mr. Blank asked how tall the light posts were on the roof of the garage. He was told they would be 12 ft. Mr. Sumpter asked if there would be workforce housing. Atty Suchy said there would be and that the number would increase. She told the commissioners that foundation permits had been issued for the properties so that work could start as soon as possible. Mr. Sumpter wanted to know the procedure so that people could apply for the work-force housing. In accordance with the workforce housing plan, the applicant would work with the Housing Development Fund to help find applicants for the workforce housing units. Mr. Sumpter asked how it would be determined who would receive the units. Dori Wilson said that the details are set forth in the Affordability Plan which was in the packets sent to the commissioners. Mr. Blank had questions about getting to the garage. He asked whether the doors went directly into the residential units or whether they went to a hallway. He was told they went into hallways. He asked whether the lights could be on a motion sensor between midnight and 5 a.m. Mr. Sumpter had questions about the workforce housing and how people would know about the availability. He believed that many times, people that were eligible would find out about them when it was too late. Ms. Wilson read from the Affordability Plan regarding the fair housing regulations so that everyone was aware of the requirements.

Mr. Mushak had some questions about the north property and the adjacent property fronting on West Ave that was not part of the site. He thought there was an odd gap. The applicant said that if that property became available, they would like to own it. Mr. White then asked about whether another piece of property was available and was told that it was not a part of this site plan. He knew someone who wanted to purchase it. Mr. Mushak asked whether there were any thoughts to having bike lanes on West Avenue. He mentioned that the Redevelopment Agency would work with them, if they thought it was a good idea. Craig Flaherty said that they were already working with the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Mushak wanted to discuss the bike lanes further but some of the commissioners said that that was under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works (DPW). Mr. Mushak mentioned that DPW had eliminated bike lanes that were part of a Connectivity Study for West Avenue including the portion that runs in front of this project. He asked the applicant if they preferred to have the bike lanes. The applicant said that they did prefer bike lanes and had given permission to eliminate on-street parking on West Ave to allow room for them as requested by Redevelopment. They stated that in Stamford on another project they recently completed, the city had required them to install a bike lane in front of their property at their own expense

Both applications would be placed on the Zoning Commission agenda for the

following week. Mr. Sumpter told the commissioners that one of the boards in the city has asked commissioners to sign a “civility agreement” to remind everyone how to deal with each other. He wondered if the commissioners could be a little more civil to one another. Mr. White did not think anyone was being disrespectful.

d) #1-13CAM - Cove Marina - 48 Calf Pasture Beach Rd - Boat storage bldg - Preliminary review

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He showed the commissioners what had previously been approved and is now on hold. The applicant has a smaller building that they would like to renovate especially to get taller boats into the building. It would require a public hearing. The applicant is still waiting for flood certifications and structural elements on flood gates. There was no variance required. Mr. Blank asked that the applicant provide a parking plan which would show where travel lanes were and how the parking lot would be distinguished between boat parking and patron parking to the Sunset Grille. He was concerned about where boats were sometimes parked which could be hazardous to car drivers.

II. SPECIAL PERMITS

a) #14-09SP - Norwalk Hospital - 24 Maple St - 626 space parking garage - Request for reduction in surety

Dori Wilson began the presentation. Since the parking garage was completed, the applicant was requesting that the bond be reduced to a maintenance surety. She said that the staff thought it was fine.

b) #X-13 SP - Sunoco Station - 1 Winfield St - Convert repair bays to variety store - Determination if minor change

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He explained where the site was located. The applicant wanted to turn the bays into a variety store. He said that other gas stations have done this. Mr. Wrinn said that this would not have a Dunkin Donuts or any other big name coffee in the store to attract a lot of traffic. Also, it would only be open from 6 a.m. - 11 p.m. There was concern about customers going in and out and the parking. However, Mr. Wrinn noted that the curb cuts could not be changed because of the trucks delivering gas. There would be 4-5 parking spaces required. The sign would remain. Mr. Rilling was concerned about the sight lines coming out of the gas station. Mr. Sumpter asked whether they could lease the parking to commuters. Mr. Wrinn said they could not. Mr. Mushak was concerned about the fact that so many gas stations had recently closed on Westport Avenue. Mr. Rilling asked that the staff work with DPW to confirm that customers could not make a left turn out of the parking. This would be considered a minor change if the staff could make the change to the parking lot.

III. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF APPROVAL TIME

a) #2-03SP/#6-03CAM - City of Norwalk - Calf Pasture Beach Rd - Restaurant - Request for 1 year extension of approval time

Dori Wilson began the presentation. The application was approved in 2003. Since there have been so many other projects such as storm damage repairs, the project has been put on the back burner. The Committee agreed to place this item on the Zoning Commission agenda for action.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero