

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
May 9, 2013**

**PRESENT:** Jill Jacobson, Chair; Adam Blank; Harry Rilling; Joseph Santo; Michael O'Reilly

**STAFF:** Mike Wrinn; Dori Wilson; Frank Strauch

**OTHERS:** Atty. Liz Suchy; Kate Throckmorton; Atty. Steven Grushkin; Michael Glynn; Richard Pearson; Atty. Mike Lyons; Robert Cavallo

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

**I. SITE PLAN REVIEWS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS**

**a) #4-13SPR/#8-13CAM – Harborside Properties – 18 Harbor Avenue – Proposed contractor's storage yard –Preliminary review**

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. The applicant is proposing to construct a contractor's yard in an Industrial 1 zone.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation on behalf of the applicants who have owned the property since the 1970s. The property has a house and a garage. The house was built in the 1870s but the garage was built in the 1970s. The applicant cannot locate the building permit. The garage would be turned into the contractor's yard. It is currently being rented to an electrical contractor. The driveway would be paved and the applicant would have to provide a recreation area since there is a residential house on the property. It will look more residential in the front and commercial in the rear. Atty Suchy said they had all required sign-offs. Mr. Strauch added to the discussion that there would no longer be pavement in the front, but rather, a grassy "recreation area." He noted that there would be a 5ft. planting in the rear of the property to act as a buffer. None of the commissioners had questions for Mr. Martin, the drainage expert.

**b) #4-97SPR – P.C. Richards – 444 Connecticut Ave – Two week tent sale – Determine if minor change**

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. The applicant was seeking permission to put up a tent in their parking lot for two weeks in June. The applicant said that they might be moving the sale to another month such as September. Mr. Wrinn told the applicant that if the tent sale was a success, they could ask the commissioners to allow the permit to be an annual one.

**c) #9-13CAM – Jones – 4 Nathan Hale Drive – Additions to single family residence – Preliminary review**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He oriented the commissioners as to the location of the house. He noted that the only reason that the applicant was before the committee was because the house was within 100 ft. of a coastal resource.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation. She showed the commissioners some pictures of the current house and the plans for the proposed addition. She said that the applicant had all of its approvals except for the one from the Department of Public Works ("DPW"). The commissioners had no further questions.

**d) #X-13SPR – Van Dyk Baler – 360 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. – Modification to existing building – Determine if minor change**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He oriented the commissioners as to the location of the building. There is a company on the property that was seeking permission to raise the roof on the structures. The architecture would remain the same. There would be no change in the use of the building. The commissioners decided that it was a minor change.

## **II. SPECIAL PERMITS**

**a) #8-13SP – Casey’s Sheet Metal – 112 Main Street (Continental Manor) – Add manufacturing within existing space– Preliminary review**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. He noted that the applicant, Casey’s Sheet Metal, would like to move to the Continental plaza. He said that there was light manufacturing happening on the side. Their children would have to be kept busy if they wanted some changes ok. He showed the commissioners specifically where they would be during the move. The manufacturing would be done inside, in the back. Mr. Wrinn said the application would have to go to a public hearing in June.

**b) #X-13SP – M. C. Huntington – 607 Main Ave – Retail shopping center – Request to modify façade; add landscaping – Determine if minor change**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by passing out blueprints of the building to show the proposed modifications. The applicant would renovate the façade and upgrade the landscaping. They also wanted to discuss proposed sidewalks.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation. The shopping center has been there since the mid-1980s. The building has retail and office space on the second floor. The applicant would upgrade the façade of the Bentley Cleaners and the main building. The south building, which is a Starbucks, would be left alone. Landscaping would be done on the grass in front of the parking lot where there is none. There would be approximately 200 shrubs and 2 trees planted. Mr. Blank was concerned about all the signs that were currently on the grass. He was told that with all of the landscaping there would be no room for signs.

Kate Throckmorton continued the presentation. Mr. Wrinn asked about the types of trees that would be planted. One of the trees that she said would be planted was the

Japanese pagoda which she showed pictures to the commissioners. There would be many different of flowering bushes.

Mr. Wrinn asked the applicant about sidewalks. Atty Suchy said that they were hesitant to propose sidewalks since there were no sidewalks leading anywhere. However, the Zoning Department staff had recommended that the applicant propose sidewalks. Mr. Rilling did not think it necessary because pedestrian traffic was on the other side of Route 7. Mr. Santo thought that if the applicant would propose it, the commissioners should consider it. Mr. O'Reilly thought a crosswalk was necessary in the area. Mr. Blank asked where the bus stop was. Atty Suchy said that if the commissioners wanted a sidewalk, the applicant would work it out with staff so that they did not need to come back for another committee meeting. Mr. Santo suggested a narrow sidewalk to keep some of the landscaping. The rest of the application was considered a minor change.

**c) #4-13SP – Shelter Development, LLC – 162 New Canaan Avenue & 9 Wood Acres Road. – 90 unit congregate housing and assisted living facility – Final review prior to public hearing**

Before Mr. Strauch began the presentation, Mr. Blank recused himself and left the room. Mr. Strauch told the commissioners that the applicant had presented a model of the proposed assisted living housing. There had been a CEAC meeting which went well. The applicant should receive all sign-offs before the public hearing.

Mr. Rilling said that he had read many of the neighbors' letters which addressed concerns about an exit from the property into their neighborhood. He said he had since learned from staff that this was not the case. He wanted to have a condition on the approval that said the applicant could not request an exit in the future. Mr. Wrinn reminded him that any changes to the plan had to come before the Zoning Commission but that this could not be a condition for approval. Mr. Rilling said he had not yet seen the traffic report, although it was in his packet. Mr. Strauch said that the traffic report said that there would be no impact on traffic and it would not go onto Wood Acre Avenue. Mr. Rilling asked about the impact from deliveries for food, laundry service, etc. on the neighborhood. Mr. Strauch said that the applicant would be happy to answer his questions.

Atty Grushkin continued the presentation. He said there seemed to be a miscommunication about the exits from the property. The only way out of it would be on Rt. 123. Over an acre of the property would become given to the Norwalk Land Trust which would then put the property in conservation in perpetuity. He had spoken with the counsel for the Norwalk Land Trust who was excited about this. The house within that part of the property would be demolished and the remainder of the land would be left in a natural state. Although one of the commissioners had asked the applicant at the last meeting to add a sidewalk onto Wood Acre, the applicant decided against it. After a review of the area, they thought the slopes of the land would be too steep. It would not be in the best interest of the property or the neighbors to install a sidewalk. He also noted that three of the four contiguous neighbors to the property were in favor of the project. They had written letters indicating their support. He compared this project to another assisted living facility in Norwalk. He said that the neighbors were very happy

with the other one. He reminded the commissioners that the zone could allow other more intense uses that the neighbors may not like, including schools, houses of worship or camps. He described the residents of the assisted living facility. He said that they met all the requirements of the special permit. He addressed the concerns of some neighbors that the applicant would expand the facility.

Mr. Glynn continued the presentation. He explained about trash pick-up which would be picked up, twice a week, mid-morning. The food deliveries would be almost every day since they served food every day. Other deliveries such as FedEx and UPS would occur approximately 2-3 times per week. Mr. Rilling was concerned that trash pick-up would be at 3 a.m. and wake up neighbors. Mr. Glynn said that the property was residential and not commercial. It would not be in their best interest to have a garbage truck pick up early in the morning and wake up the residents. Mr. Rilling is concerned about the traffic from Rt. 123 cutting through the residential area.

Mr. Pearson continued the presentation by speaking about the traffic study. He gave a background about the services his company provides. He said that many of the traffic studies they perform are for this type of assisted living residence. He reminded the commissioners that there are not a lot of visitors for the residents and they don't drive. Most of the traffic is generated by staff. Their study showed that there would be no change to the level of service at the traffic signal. He did not believe that many people would take a "shortcut" through the neighborhood behind the property because that would then have them making a left turn into the property off of Rt. 123. Mr. Pearson answered many of the questions that some of the commissioners had about the traffic signals including the one about whether the traffic signals would be upgraded. He said that although it was a state road, the traffic signal was controlled by the city. There was a discussion of the shift changes of the staff which were at 7 a.m., 3 p.m. and 11 p.m. This would be out of the normal workday traffic.

Atty Grushkin said that the applicant had most of its sign-offs. It was still waiting for a sign-off from the Department of Public Works ("DPW"). The public hearing was set for the following week.

**d) #5-13SP/#7-13CAM – Sprite Island Yacht Club – 23 Shorehaven Road – Accessory structure for storage use –Preliminary review**

Mr. Blank also recused himself from this matter and remained out of the room.

Mr. Strauch began the presentation. He explained how the accessory structure had blown over to Shorehaven Golf Course during Superstorm Sandy.

Mike Lyons, who represented the applicant, continued the presentation. He told the commissioners that they had received a couple of variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals ("ZBA") and were now submitting an application for the re-building of the accessory storage building which would be a little smaller than the previous one but a little taller. He explained that the accessory building was used for storage and the land side support for the club, which was offshore. They also would work on boat motors from time to time. The building was used as accessory building since 1925 and continued after Sprite Island Yacht Club took over the island. There are many

departments and jurisdictions that they need to meet with to restore the building.

Mr. O'Reilly questioned why the commissioners need to review the application but Mr. Strauch reminded him that it was a special permit and CAM application. Mr. Wrinn said that there would be one more committee meeting before the public hearing.

Mr. Cavallo, the architect for the accessory building, continued the presentation. The new building will not sit directly on the old pilings. It will have new ones. It will also have panels that will come apart in case of another storm like Superstorm Sandy. The second floor will be used as storage so that, in the event of a storm, anything on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor can be moved upstairs. The style of the accessory building is to look like a New England boathouse. He showed the commissioners a materials board. The building had to be taller because of FEMA flood requirements. The applicant could have either raised it or, as they decided, added a second floor. The public hearing would be in June, 2013.

Ms. Jacobson asked why the neighbors were having concerns now, when the building had been there for a long time before. Atty Lyons explained that there were some concerns about the traffic coming from the parking lot. He showed the commissioners that people had to walk from the parking lot. There were concerns of a car accident at some point.

Before the start of the review of the next application, Mr. Blank returned to the meeting.

**e) #6-13SP/#10-13CAM - R. Grosvenor Ely - 71 & 77 Rowayton Avenue – Proposed 8 unit multifamily development – For information purposes only**

Mr. Strauch began the presentation. He asked the commissioners to look at the site. A full presentation will be made in June. There was a question about whether the commissioners could see a set of plans at the next meeting. Mr. Wrinn said there would be plans at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero