

CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
December 9, 2013

PRESENT: Jill Jacobson, Chair; James White; Michael O'Reilly; Nathan Sumpter;
Michael Mushak; Linda Kruk; Emily Wilson and Joseph Santo

STAFF: Dori Wilson; Frank Strauch; Adam Carsen

OTHER: Atty Liz Suchy; Ela Lagasse; Michael Galante; Kevin Connor; Tim Sheehan

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 9:37 p.m.

I. SITE PLAN REVIEWS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS

a) #8-13SPR – FM Investments LLC – 587 Connecticut Ave - Proposed mixed use development with 34,700 sq ft industrial building and 80 multifamily dwelling units – Final review prior to public hearing

Mr. Strauch began the presentation. He said that the applicant has all of its signoffs and are ready to proceed to public hearing. The application would be on the Zoning Commission's December agenda.

b) #9-13SPR/#25-13CAM – CP IV Waypointe BP, LLC – 515 West Av/29 Orchard St – Waypointe Midblock – Modify approved plan to add parcel at 29 Orchard St, increase to 362 multifamily units (21 new units) and reduce retail space to 38, 431 sf (reduce by 1,000 sf) and related site plan modifications – Preliminary review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on a map. The applicant has submitted a new site plan to add a new parcel. They have obtained most of their sign-offs. She passed out a handout which showed the new site plan. The staff has concerns with the placement of the workforce housing units which are not distributed on all floors and in all buildings. The applicant believes that they have reasonably distributed the units throughout the project. Mr. Sumpter had questions about the applicant's response to staff's concerns. The applicant thought it best to come to the Zoning Commission. Emily Wilson asked whether the applicant knew about how to distribute the units before they made their application. Mr. Sumpter asked to see the copy of the letter sent to the applicant regarding the staff's concerns about workforce housing. There was a lengthy discussion about the interpretation of the workforce housing regulations regarding the units being "reasonably distributed" throughout the buildings.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation by introducing Ela Lagasse, who also represented the applicant. Ms. Lagasse gave the commissioners her background and then discussed the application. Mr. Sumpter had questions about the location of the units. Ms. Lagasse explained that the top floor, which had lofts, and those on West Avenue were rented at a premium. Mr. Sumpter was concerned about what units were not being offered

for the workforce housing units. A lengthy discussion followed amongst the commissioners about same.

Mr. Santo appointed Jim White and Mike Mushak to the Plan Review Committee. Ms. Jacobson made a motion to not require the applicant to move the workforce housing units. It was seconded by Mr. White. The vote was 2-1.

Dori Wilson continued the presentation by letting the commissioners know that if the applicant received all their sign-offs and/or condition them upon approval; they could waive the public hearing for this modification. All the committee members agreed to this.

c) #11-13SPR – Even Hotel – 426 Main Ave – Add 7 hotel rooms and request for waiver of 18 off-street parking spaces – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by showing the commissioners the plans for the hotel which had previously been approved. The applicant is now requesting a waiver for off-street parking.

At this time, Mr. Sumpster said that he wanted to see changes made to the workforce housing regulations regarding distribution of the units.

Mr. Strauch then said that the applicant would be adding more hotel rooms but requesting less parking. He referred to a study by Michael Galante that he had sent to the commissioners. Mr. Galante would later explain the report. One reason the applicant wanted to have less parking was to be able to have the garden as they originally planned. Mr. Strauch said they had all sign-offs that were needed.

Mr. Galante continued the presentation by referring to the parking study that he had prepared. He explained how he had used the other two hotels on Main Avenue to prepare it. Mr. Galante noted that the peak time for parking spaces at a hotel is at night and not during the day. Mr. O'Reilly had questions about the Hilton Garden Inn's parking. He was told that parking had never been a problem. Parking for employees would be off-site during events at the hotel. Some of the commissioners were concerned about the hotel not having enough parking since the applicant was requesting less than 1 parking space per room. They were told that overflow parking was being arranged at the shopping plaza next to the hotel. Mr. Strauch said that if the commissioners gave the applicant a waiver, then the parking would have to be monitored for two years to see if there is enough parking or not. Dori Wilson noted that the parking requirements were determined using a variety of sources and have generally been seen as adequate to accommodate the use. Mr. Mushak thought that the parking standard is too high in Norwalk. They agreed to the waiver for parking and they waived the public hearing as well.

d) #10-13SPR – Music Theater of CT – 509 Westport Av – Proposed tenant fit-up for theater use – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners to the location of the property on a map. He described the interior and exterior renovations. He described the parking spaces and the traffic flow on the site. The sound report said it would meet the

city's noise levels. They are still waiting for some sign-offs.

Kevin Connor continued the presentation by describing the types of performances that the Music Theater would be showing.

The commissioners agreed to waive the public hearing and the application would be added to the Zoning Commission's December agenda.

e) #27-13CAM – Kershner Development Co. – 10 Pine Point Road – Alter and raise portion of existing single family residence, add 1,600 sq ft of new, replacement – Preliminary review

Mr. Carsen began the presentation by orienting the commissioners to the location of the property on a map. He said that the existing house would be mostly demolished and elevated. The new house would be flood conforming. He discussed the drainage system. There were no adverse effects to coastal resources. The commissioners agreed to waive the public hearing.

II. MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE

a) #2-13MV – Main Ave Auto Repair, LLC – 527 Main Ave – Motor vehicle use – Replacement repair garage – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners to the location of the property on a map. He described some of the renovations to the interior and exterior. The site is non-conforming as to the parking. There will not be towing. The applicant has received all the necessary sign-offs. Mr. Mushak had a question as to the location of the dumpster because he was concerned that it would be on the road. The commissioners agreed to waive the public hearing. It would be on the Zoning Commission's agenda for a vote.

III. EXTENSION OF APPROVAL TIME

a) #6-08SPR/#16-08CAM - POKO IWSR Developers, LLC – Wall St/Isaacs St - Wall St Place mixed use development – Request for six month extension of approval time

Dori Wilson began the presentation by describing the history of the application. Mr. White asked Mr. Sheehan, of the Redevelopment Agency, about a grant the applicant may have received for this site but used elsewhere. Mr. White also described the condition of the property which he did not think warranted an extension.

Mr. Santo discussed conditions to be given to the applicant, which, if not met, the commissioners could decide not to continue to extend their application approval in June. Mr. Mushak asked whether the applicant owned all the parcels. There was a discussion as to whether setting conditions on the extension was a good idea. Atty Suchy said that a certain portion was not under the LDA. Mr. Sheehan then gave more information about the applicant's obligations under the LDA. Mr. Mushak asked what would happen if the

commissioners did not approve the extension at the next Zoning Commission meeting. Atty Suchy described some of the funding that the applicant is applying for. She suggested perhaps the applicant could give bi-weekly updates on the funding process so as not to come back in June to report. Mr. Sheehan reported on why the applicant has not closed on a Citibank loan. Atty Suchy said that she had had discussions with Mr. Sheehan as well. There was some discussion about the parking garage, and its impact on the LDA if the city lowered its parking requirement. The committee decided to move this to the Zoning Commission agenda for a vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero