

CITY OF NORWALK  
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
January 9, 2014

**PRESENT:** Jill Jacobson, Chair; Emily Wilson; Joseph Santo; Nate Sumpter; Michael Mushak; Linda Kruk; Nora King & Michael Coffey (arrived after the meeting began)

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

**OTHERS:** Matt Edvardsen; Kim Morque; Eric Raines; Atty Frank Zullo; Atty Al Vasco; Paul Garavel

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

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

**a) #9-11SPR/#22-11CAM – North Water, LLC - 20 N. Water St – 5 story, 133,035 sf mixed use development with 108 units, 17,500 sf retail, 3,200 sf restaurant & related amenities – Request to modify plan to increase amount of restaurant space, replace 6,000 sf retail with 6,000 sf office, revise pkg layout to add 4 pkg sp, revise workforce housing plan to add 2 on-site units & related changes – Determine if minor change**

Dori Wilson began the presentation by handing out copies of the site plans with highlights, showing the requested changes. She discussed the modifications which would change some retail into restaurant space and some into office space for use by the developer. She also said there were three letters of support in the file from neighbors as well as a sign-off from the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Mushak was concerned about the retail space on North Water Street being converted to office space. He then quoted from 2 guidebooks for urban design which have been used for the past 10 years. He discussed the past history of the changes that the developer has requested for this project. He was concerned that the street was already quiet and would then continue to be quiet if there was office space on this street. He suggested that the developer try to rent the space after the building is completed. Dori Wilson explained how the parking was different for restaurants than retail. This was impacting the developer's plans. Mr. Santo questioned why the developer wanted the retail space to be changed to their own offices.

Kim Morque, one of the developers, continued the presentation to discuss the commissioners' concerns. He noted that the retail market is not viable for South Norwalk. He said that the developer would pay a higher rent than a retail store would. He also noted that if things changed in the next few years, they would put retail in the space. The commissioners were impressed with his remarks. Mr. Mushak asked if they could make sure that it didn't look like an office by keeping the windows transparent (no reflective material) and by adding lighting and artwork to enliven the space.

At this point, Mr. Santo appointed Jim White to the Plan Review Committee. Mr. White, Mr. Mushak and Ms. Jacobson discussed whether this matter was a minor change which they did.

Dori Wilson then handed out modifications to the affordable workforce housing plan. She discussed the previous changes to it and then what the developer was requesting at this time. Two units would be moved back to the development, for a total of 6 on-site units and one additional unit would be located nearby at the Beadworks building. She noted that all the units are being marketed. Mr. Sumpster asked several questions about the affordable housing units.

Mr. White then began a discussion about the distribution of workforce housing units. The commissioners also discussed having a workshop to consider revisions to the workforce housing regulations. Dori Wilson mentioned that some developers are voluntarily disbursing the units equally throughout all floors and all buildings. Mr. Mushak said that they had received some good recommendations from both developers and the public sector that should be considered. They discussed a possible schedule for this discussion for either the March or April committee meeting

**b) #8-84SPR – Campbell Office Building – 14 Westport Ave - Modification to approved landscaping plan - Determine if minor change**

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on a map. He discussed the changes to the landscaping plan that the developer was requesting. The commissioners agreed that the modifications were a minor change. Eric Raines, the landscape architect, asked whether they could cut three trees, instead of two. Mr. Mushak made a suggestion which Mr. Raines agreed with. Atty Zullo appreciated that the commissioners would consider this a minor change.

**c) #1-14CAM – Old Mill Saloon – 2 Wilton Ave – Request for live music – Determine if minor change**

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. The applicant was requesting to have live music on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Live music may have previously been at the restaurant, under previous owners. The commissioners agreed it was a minor change.

**d) #15-11CAM – Norwalk Museum Partnership, LLC – 41 North Main St – Proposed changes to approved plan – Determine if minor change**

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. He described the previous changes and stumbling blocks to getting the project completed. The applicant has been trying to keep the building historically accurate and has been dealing with structural issues. Mr. Mushak had questions about the live music. The commissioners agreed this was a minor change.

**e) #X-13CAM – Harbor Beach Company – 26 Harborview Ave - Harbor Beach Clubhouse - Determine if raising and modifications to structure constitute a minor change**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by showing the commissioners the plans for a building which had to be raised to base flood elevations. It would be on piers. There would be some minor changes to the building such as new windows, decks, etc. Ms. King asked whether the applicant would need a variance but Mr. Wrinn said that they would not.

## **II. SPECIAL PERMITS**

**a) #8-90SP/#8-11SP – Norwalk Hospital – 34 Maple St/Stevens St – Request to modify/replace equipment, add new storage tank and related site improvements at cogeneration plant– Determine if minor change**

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the cogeneration plant on an aerial map of the Hospital. She explained the purposed of the plant and told the commissioners that the applicant would like to replace equipment. A sound study had been done as well as a new landscaping plan proposed to help hide the new equipment.

Atty Vasko continued the presentation with an introduction of the consulting team. He then began a brief history of the cogeneration plant on the Norwalk Hospital's premises. Since the current equipment is over 20 years old, it is difficult to find replacement parts. The new equipment would save more energy and have fewer emissions. There was a discussion about the trees used in the landscaping plan. Mr. Mushak suggested that there should be a mixture of trees, rather than one type of tree. He said it would keep them healthy.

**b) #11-04SP – Georgetown Dodge – 300 Westport Ave – Replacement auto sales & service – Preliminary review**

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. The current owner was asking that the commissioners give him an idea of what changes they would request if the property was to be sold, including requirements for sidewalks and street trees.

Mr. Garavel continued the presentation. He questioned the commissioners as to what they would request from a new owner of his property. There was a discussion about sidewalks, which the commissioners said would be probable. After this, there was a discussion about street tree plantings on the property. Mr. White suggested that would be an item that they could work out with the staff. Mr. Mushak also made a suggestion about changing the floodlights that were aimed at the cars. Mr. Garavel said they were working with CL&P to change the lighting to LEDs.

## **III. REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF SURETY**

**a) #13-08SP/#26-08CAM – Shorehaven Golf Course – 14 Canfield Ave –  
Maintenance facility renovation & expansion – Return of maintenance bond**

Mr. Strauch said that all improvements had been completed. The Zoning Department staff recommended that the maintenance bond be returned.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero