

CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING COMMITTEE
January 9, 2014

PRESENT: Emily Wilson, Chair; Jill Jacobson; Joseph Santo; Nate Sumpter; Michael Mushak; Linda Kruk; Nora King; Michael Coffey

STAFF: Michael Wrinn; Frank Strauch; Dori Wilson

OTHERS: Peter Romano; Atty David Waters; Victor Marenschuck; Michael Galante; Brian Baker; Matt Popp;

Emily Wilson called the meeting to order at 8:34 p.m.

**I. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDING ZONE REGULATIONS,
SPECIAL PERMITS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS**

a) #6-13R/#16-13SP – A. Glazer – 194 Perry Ave/River Rd - Proposed amendments to Silvermine Tavern Village District to increase to 19,600 sq. ft. for new structures and allow single family residences and special permit to rehabilitate Silvermine Tavern buildings, convert mill buildings to single family residence with guest house, construct new barn, add 4 units cluster housing and reconfigure existing parking lot – Further review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. She explained that the proposal was to revitalize the area. Since the proposed regulation had been revised and there was other review to be done on the application, it would not be on the Zoning Commission's agenda this month. Mr. Mushak had a question about the paving in an intersection. Mr. Romano said that they had worked on that. Dori Wilson said that the application would also be reviewed by the Planning Commission at their next meeting and then the application would be placed on the Zoning Commission's agenda. Ms. King asked whether the housing should be called cluster housing or single family housing; the staff responded cluster housing as all 4 houses will be on one lot.

b) #7-13R/#17-13SP – Merritt River Partners, LLC – 1 Glover Ave – Proposed amendments to Section 118-760 Commercial PRD regulations to reduce lot size, increase building area & density and special permit for 132 unit Commercial PRD – Preliminary review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. She discussed the history of the application which had originally been approved in 2005. The applicant was requesting to modify the 2005 approved plans from an 82,700 sf office building to 132 dwelling units. She noted that the applicant is working with staff to address zoning issues and could be ready for the Zoning Commission's meeting in February. Mr. Coffey asked about the current regulations. There was then a discussion about the lot sizes of other properties in the Executive Office zone and what type of other projects could be constructed there.

Atty Waters continued the presentation by introducing the members of the consulting team. He then discussed the location of the property as well as what could be built as of right. The traffic would be less with a residential building than with the office building that was approved. He described the ground floor parking and fitness center. He also spoke about the workforce housing units as well as the drainage improvements.

Victor Marenschuck, the architect on the project, continued the presentation. He described the entrances and egress, format of units, parking spaces, mechanicals, elevators, balconies and the courtyard. Mr. Marenschuck then discussed the materials board which he showed to the commissioners. He also described the rooftop which would house the mechanical units.

Mr. Sumpter asked where the affordable housing units would be. Atty Waters said that they were equally disbursed throughout the building.

Brian Baker, the civil engineer on the project, continued the presentation by describing the current drainage system. He then described the proposed drainage system which would recycle some of the water back into the ground and help the river. He thought this new proposed system was better than what was proposed in 2005.

Ms. King asked why there was a change from office space to residential units especially since there was not a lot of Class "A" office space in Norwalk. There was a discussion about whether there should be more office space or residential units. Mr. White noted that it was beneficial to have residential units where people worked. He believed that the applicant knew what was best at this time especially since they have done many projects in Norwalk and Stamford.

Michael Galante, traffic consultant on the project, continued the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. On it, he pointed out the intersections where the vehicles were counted. He explained how the traffic analyses were conducted. He noted that a prior project was to have built an extra lane at the intersection of Glover Avenue and Main Avenue. This extra lane was not built but Mr. Galante thought that it should have been. It would help to reduce the stacking of cars at this intersection. Mr. Mushak asked about the ramp and interchange at the Merritt Parkway exit nearby. Mr. Galante told the commissioners that the State Department of Transportation had been informed that an application would be filed for this project.

Atty Waters continued the presentation by saying that they had received all CEAC sign-offs. He then began a discussion of the Metro-North Danbury line from which the applicant leases some land. They did not have a problem with this new project. Mr. Mushak had questions about the wooded areas near the property. He asked the landscape architect, Matt Popp, some questions about this. He described the work that would be done by the Norwalk River.

Atty Waters discussed the proposed text amendments and the conditions for approval on drainage. There was also a discussion of the sidewalks especially across the railroad tracks.

Dori Wilson said that the application could be placed on the Zoning Commission's agenda for the month of February. Mr. Mushak had a few questions for Mr. Galante.

c) #3-13R/#15-13SP/#21-13CAM – Trinity Washington Village Ltd Partnership/City of Norwalk – Raymond, Water & Day Sts - Proposed amendments to Industrial Zone #1 regarding the location of parking for TOD properties in flood zones & new 193 unit multifamily development – Review of public hearing and, d) #13-13SP/#19-13CAM – Trinity Washington Village Limited Partnership /City of Norwalk – 13 Day St - New 10 unit multifamily development – Review of public hearing and e) #14-13SP/#20-13CAM – Trinity Washington Village Limited Partnership /Norwalk Housing Authority - 20 Day St - New 70 unit multifamily development – Review of public hearing

Dori Wilson began the presentation by explaining to the commissioners that the Zoning Commission could vote on the application at the next meeting. However, the applicant did grant them an extension until the following month for the regularly scheduled February Zoning Commission meeting. She went over the outstanding issues which included lease agreements, changing Raymond Street to a 2 way street and removal of parking spaces on Water Street.

There was a discussion of the streets involved in the project, the parking and the bus stop as well as adding a condition for it. Mr. Mushak had questions about the cost for raising the streets in the area. He believed the improvements should be done, regardless of whether the project went forward. A discussion followed about these improvements. Emily Wilson then said that the commissioners would need to review the public hearing at one more committee meeting. The commissioners questioned whether the Department of Public Works would be handling the improvements and asked for clarification. Staff referenced a letter and off-site improvements plan that had been received from the Redevelopment Agency in November. The letter indicates that the Redevelopment Agency is looking for funds to complete these improvements but does not yet have approved funding.

They also discussed the security plan and emergency parking plan that were submitted by the applicant. The commissioners also had questions about whether the extension of Day Street north of Hanford Place should be one way (as the applicant proposed) or two way.

f) #8-13R – Planning Commission - Proposed amendments to regulate the location and screening of mechanical equipment and HVAC units on rooftops in multifamily and business zones – Preliminary review

Dori Wilson began the presentation. The commissioners decided to put this on hold until next month's meeting.

II. MAIN AVENUE: Further discussion of possible new regulations for Main Av Service area from Linden St to New Canaan Av as recommended in the Westport-North-Main Corridor Study and Plan

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners on an aerial map as to the section of Main Avenue that was being discussed. She gave a brief overview of the proposed changes to the regulations referenced in the study. She distributed a chart to the commissioners which referenced the amount of traffic that different size and types of retail uses would generate. She noted that the BJ's Warehouse Club would have a lower trip generation per thousand sq ft than smaller retail store sizes. Mr. Mushak compared different types of shoppers at these stores. He thought that a warehouse type store would attract regional shoppers from other towns where small, retail stores would attract local customers. He referenced the Master Plan which recommended that revised regulations be considered to allow for smaller retail in this area. Mr. Santo disagreed. The commissioners had a lengthy discussion as to whether there should be new regulations or not.

Ms. Kruk made a motion to not go forward with the proposed regulations. Emily Wilson seconded the motion. The vote was 2-1.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero