

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
May 8, 2014**

PRESENT: Jill Jacobson, Chair; Joe Santo; Linda Kruk; Nora King; Michael O'Reilly and Mike Mushak (arrived after the meeting began)

STAFF: Michael Wrinn; Dori Wilson; Frank Strauch

OTHERS: Atty Liz Suchy; Phil Clark; Captain Hynes; David Zeikis; Patrick Morrow, Atty James Murphy; Vincent Penna; Bill Achilles

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 8 p.m.

I. SITE PLAN REVIEWS & COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEWS

a) #2-14SP – Swim Seventy LLC – 8 Willard Road – Aquatic facility in existing bldg – Final review prior to public hearing and b) #5-14SPR – Swim Seventy LLC – 11 Willard Road – Off street parking facility, 116 spaces for #2-14SP – Final review prior to public hearing

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by telling the commissioners that it would be on the Zoning Commission agenda in May.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation. She gave a brief overview of the building and the plans for them. She said they had all sign-offs for the application and are ready to go to the public hearing. She also said that there were discussions with a commercial neighbor about landscaping. The applicant would like to continue those discussions without having to come back to the commissioners.

Mr. Mushak asked where the swimming pool water would be drained. Mr. Clark said that under Norwalk's ordinances the pool is drained once every ten years into the public sewers, at a rate which the city determines to not overload the system.

c) #2-11SPR – Norwalk Fire Department – 121 Connecticut Ave – Fire Department Headquarters – Request to modify approved landscape plan - Determine if minor change

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by explaining the site plan which would add landscaping. There is also a chain link fence that Fire Department personnel are concerned that someone would back into.

Captain Hynes continued the presentation. There was a discussion about the shrubs that would be used and would grow into the fence. Mr. Mushak informed everyone that he had donated flower pots. At this time, there is no landscaping in the front of the building. The commissioners agreed this was a minor change.

d) #9-11SPR – North Water LLC – 20 N. Water St – Proposed modifications to approved plan for outdoor dining area, to add signage for Harlan Publick restaurant and related improvements - Determine if minor change

Ms. Wilson began the presentation by handing out pictures of what had already been added to the plaza outdoor dining area by the applicant, but not approved by the commissioners, which included a canopy over the outdoor dining and an outdoor fireplace. Mr. Mushak expressed a concern about noise from the outdoor dining.

Ms. Wilson also discussed the signage for the Harlan Publick restaurant. The applicant is seeking approval for several wall signs for the restaurant which will be opening soon. The regulations

may need to be amended with some help from the Redevelopment Agency. She pointed out some temporary signs mounted to the truss on Washington St which do not comply with the current regulations. These signs are considered temporary while they work out signs that will comply.

Ms. King expressed concerns about smoking under the canopy. She was also concerned about the fire code for the canopy. The applicant said they would prohibit smoking under the canopy.

Ms. Wilson also noted that there would be a change from double doors to a single door with a fixed window on the office space. The double doors would be used again if the space became retail.

The commissioners agreed all of these changes were minor.

e) #X-SPR – Equity One (Dorinoor), LLC – 500 Connecticut Ave. – Add 2 Story, 3,776 sf free-standing restaurant Starbucks) - Determine if minor change

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by noting on the site plan the location of a free-standing Starbucks as well as changing to a right turn lane on Connecticut Avenue. A sidewalk would also be constructed. Mr. Strauch noted some concerns of the Zoning Department staff which included the fact that the 2nd floor of the Starbucks building would have no windows as well as need for more landscaping. There was also a concern about problems with Town Fair Tire. He did say that the staff was happy that there would be a sidewalk would be built.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation by giving a brief history of the property as well as discussing the current application. She explained that the building would be placed where there was currently a free standing ATM. She then discussed how the sidewalk would be placed as well as its application to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (“DOT”) for the sidewalk.

Mr. Santo had concerns about losing the right turn lane into the property to make the sidewalk. Atty Suchy explained that the right turn lane was not up to DOT standards. She said that the Department of Public Works (“DPW”) was in favor of the proposed sidewalk. Mr. Mushak was concerned about losing the right turn lane especially when other areas of Norwalk were adding turn lanes. He made a suggestion to narrow the lanes to make room for the sidewalk and not take the right turn lane out.

David Zeikis, the traffic consultant, explained how the applicant would like the sidewalk to be the same size as the other sidewalks that are in the area. He also explained that this was Plan A. If the state did not like it, they would have to go to Plan B and Plan C. He noted that the sidewalks are used, more than people think they are.

There was a discussion about staff’s concerns with the free-standing building and Starbucks. Mr. Strauch noted that there could be extra traffic in the parking lot and would change the dynamic there.

There was a discussion about the lack of windows on the second floor. Atty Suchy said that it was a full second floor, which would be used for storage. Patrick Morrow, the architect on the project, continued the discussion further. He showed the commissioners the site plan. He said that the second story would be for storage and not used much. It would put daylight into the space where it would generate heat and require cooling. He explained that the windows would look like they were just put there. He oriented the commissioners as to the views on the building as he showed them plans for the exterior. He also explained the signage that was shown on the exterior plans. Mr. Mushak asked about the lighting which Mr. Morrow explained in connection with the signage, shown on the plans. It would enhance the signage. Ms. Kruk asked why the canopy over the driveway was not green. Mr. Morrow said that it was Starbucks’s decision. Ms. King asked if Starbucks had signed a lease for the building. She was concerned that the building would be built and that Starbucks would not come to the city. Mr. Mushak discussed the trees that were in front of the building but he did not see the trees on the plans. He had no problem with the lack of windows.

The commissioners agreed the application was a minor change.

f) #6-14CAM – Kerschner – 5 St. James Place – New SFR – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on Belle Island. The current house was demolished and a new house would be built in its place. It would be smaller and in the A flood zone. He showed them the site plan for the house. It meets zoning regulations and does not impact coastal resources.

There was a discussion about the dock and the in ground pool on the property which would be moved to another location. Ms. King wondered why there was not a lot of backup information. Mr. Strauch said that for a single family residence, the Zoning Department did not want the process to be onerous. Mr. Wrinn suggested that, in the future, the staff could provide a copy of the survey. There was also a discussion about the placement of the driveway. She also requested that in the future, the commissioners receive a map which indicated the location of the house in the neighborhood.

g) #2-10SPR / #14-10CAM – A. J. Penna & Son - 10 Goldstein Place – Request for return of maintenance bond

Mr. Santo asked that this application be heard next. Mr. Strauch informed the commissioners that all the improvements and plantings had been made. The staff recommended that the maintenance bond be returned. The applicant, Mr. Vincent Penna, thanked the commissioners. He also said that he would donate the trees for the landscaping at the Fire Department headquarters and maintain them for 1 year.

h) #4-14SPR - 39 Lois, LLC – 39 Lois St. & 19 Willard Rd. – 4 story, 28,198 sf mixed use development with 24 multifamily dwelling units – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He noted that Swim Seventy was located near the property as well. He explained the current building located on one of the properties as well as describing the proposed mixed use development. There would be parking easements between the two properties.

Atty Murphy continued the presentation by handing out a packet of information to the commissioners. He then introduced all of the experts. He noted that the access to the site was from Willard. Past proposals for this site had access from Lois St. He also said that after staff's review, the application was zoning compliant and no variances were needed. He then went over the outline and then the commissioners would ask questions to the experts. There was a discussion about the narrow driveway. Atty Murphy also said that the applicant would be meeting with the neighbors on May 20. He then showed the commissioners the plans for the exteriors.

Mr. Achilles, the architect on the project, continued the presentation. He described the exterior of the building and how it sloped on the land. There would be covered parking as well. He described the interior of the building which included offices and residential units. There will be three workforce housing units, spread equally throughout the building.

Mr. Mushak asked whether the applicant would use a parking credit for the mixed use. Mr. Strauch said they would be. Because they are using 2 properties, it would be filed on the land records. The agreement would be in place between the two properties for 25 years which would be reviewed by Norwalk's Corporation Counsel.

Atty Murphy then discussed the storm water management plan and why the property had wetlands on it. He said that the Conservation Commission seems to be pleased with their application.

There was then a discussion about the date of the public hearing which was decided would be in July.

Mr. Mushak expressed concerns about the lighting since the buildings would be behind a residential neighborhood. Atty Murphy also told him that there is a slope. A high hedge and full cut off lights would be used.

i) #3-14 SPR – Kingsway Sr. Housing – 152 Westport Avenue – Off street parking facility for 29 cars – Prel review

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. He said the applicant had tried to put in permeable pavers; however, since there was a lot of rock on the property, it would not be economically feasible. Mr. Wrinn said that there was no need for a public hearing and it would be on the Zoning Commission agenda in May. There was a discussion about the landscaping.

II. CT DEEP REFERRALS

a) CT Dept of Energy and Environmental Protection – 46 South Beach Road – Seawall height modification

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on Belle Island. He told them that the existing wall would be raised 2 ft. since a new house would be constructed on the property. Mr. Strauch explained that the CT DEEP's process was different than the Zoning Department's. Ms. King wondered if the neighbors were sent a legal notice. Mr. Strauch said that there is usually not a public hearing and that the state's process was different.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero