

CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING COMMITTEE
September 11, 2014

PRESENT: Emily Wilson, Chair; Jill Jacobson; Adam Blank; Linda Kruk; Nat Sumpster;
Jim White

STAFF: Michael Greene; Mike Wrinn; Dori Wilson; Frank Strauch

OTHERS: Atty. Liz Suchy; Atty. Frank Zullo; Seelan Pather; Manny Silva

Emily Wilson called the meeting to order at 8:01 p.m.

I. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDING ZONE REGULATIONS/SITE PLAN REVIEW/SP PERMIT

a) #4-14R/#8&9-14SPR/#9&10-14CAM - NW MFP Norwalk Town Ctr LLC & 3Q Property LLC – 17 Butler St/3 Quincy St/467 West Av (South Block) – Proposed amendments to revise CBDD residential setbacks to require only when residential use in residence zone & site plan for new 130,280 sf mixed use development with 54,250 sf retail, 3,229 sf restaurant, 11,441 sf gym and 620 seat theater and expanded parking garage (#8-14SPR) and retain 18,193 sf existing retail/ rest @ 467 West Av and expand existing pkg garage (#9-14SPR) – Final review prior to public hearing

Dori Wilson began the presentation. She said that the applicant has all of its sign-offs except Redevelopment and Office of State Traffic Administration. She noted that the plans were revised to widen the sidewalks along Butler St by one additional foot.

Atty Suchy gave the commissioners a brief overview of the application. The Redevelopment Agency was doing its review of the application. The Office of State Traffic Administration had started its review of the project. The neighbors have been notified about the public hearing but they have not received any calls from them.

Mr. Blank asked whether the crosswalk pavers on Butler Street which lead to Stepping Stones could be designed with something that would be more in keeping with the whimsical design of the Stepping Stones Museum. The applicant agreed to look into this idea.

b) #5-14R/#3-14SP/#11-14CAM – Maritime Village I, LLC – 17-19 Day/Raymond St – Proposed amendments to I#1 to revise TOD affordable hsg requirements from 30% to 20% and allow 10% at 100% of State Median Income instead of 80% State median for multifamily and mixed use of 5 stories & 60 ft and reduce residential parking requirements and special permit for new 70 unit multifamily development with 9,920 sf mfg (existing building) in TOD area – Review of revised amendment

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on a map. She discussed the commissioners' requested changes to the proposed plans as well the modifications to the proposed zoning regulation changes. She went over how this would change the rents for the apartments by making them affordable to persons earning 100% of State Median income or about \$84,600 per year. The applicant had also modified the proposed amendment to expand the changes to the residential parking regulations so that they would apply to the urban centers of Norwalk including the WSDD, RPDD, SNBD and CBDD zones.

Atty Zullo continued the presentation. He explained how the applicant was attempting to create a middle tier of affordable housing that would provide housing for those who are not eligible for workforce housing. He said the proposed amendment would benefit the city in that it would provide more affordable housing and the units would be deed restricted in perpetuity.

Seelan Pather, the architect on the project, continued the presentation. He showed the commissioners the revised site plan. There would be three buildings on the site, one of which was being renovated for manufacturing use. He described the architecture of each building and how they related to the area surrounding them. He went over the materials board. Mr. White had concerns about denting of the metal cladding on one of the buildings. Mr. Blank was concerned with the blank wall at the base of the larger building.

There was a discussion about parking and whether it would be high enough above the flood plain. There was then a discussion about the affordable housing and who would administer it. It was pointed out that the applicant usually self-administers it. Dori Wilson said that the applicant must submit annual compliance reports and these could be audited, if necessary. The documentation to verify that the applicant is in compliance is sent to the Planning and Zoning office. Mr. Blank said that he would like to see a uniform standard throughout the city.

Mr. White had additional concerns about the metal cladding for the buildings. There was further discussion about affordable housing. There was then a discussion about when the applicant would be ready for a public hearing. It was tentatively scheduled for October.

Manny Silva, the civil engineer on the project, continued the presentation. He explained the character of the current site. The site would be raised above the base flood level of 12 ft. Since there is no run-off control at the present time, there will be a storm water management controls added which he explained. Mr. Silva explained the landscaping plan included dogwood trees. He also said the type of tree could be changed, if necessary. He discussed the sidewalks and driveways. He said the lighting was adequate for the parking lot.

Atty Zullo discussed the traffic by stating that the levels of service would remain the same at all intersections. There was a discussion about whether the sidewalks were continuous. Mr. Sumpter was concerned that there might be a gap in the sidewalks between this development and the one to the north on Day St. Mr. Greene said that applicants usually volunteer to construct a continuous sidewalk if needed. Atty Zullo noted that the applicant could not afford to put in granite curbs as the Trinity Washington Village development had proposed. That project has federal government funds to subsidizing the costs of development.

c) #6-14R/#1-14SPR – The Berkeley Holding, LLC & 520 West Ave, LLC – 500-520 West Av (West Block) - Proposed amendments to revise the definition for Height of Building in a Design District Development Park to measure from centerline of highest street (currently measured from centerline of West Ave) and modifications to approved site plan for The Berkeley for 6 story, 177,302 sf mixed use development with 4,932 sf restaurant (formerly retail), 6,943 sf medical office, and 129 (formerly 127) residential dwelling units – Further review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by explaining that the applicants are proposing to add the Berkeley site as a new West Block as part of the Waypointe Design District Development Park. A zoning amendment was needed to accommodate the proposed design although there were only a few minor changes to the approved plans project (change of use from retail to restaurant, addition of HVAC units to roof, addition of 2 residential units, etc).

Atty Suchy continued the presentation by stating the reason for the request to add the Berkley to the Design District Development Park. She asked whether they could hold a public hearing for the zoning amendment only. Since the building was to remain the same, she said that they had previously held a public hearing for the site plan. The public hearing would be in October.

d) Discussion of CAM exemptions

Although Ms. King was not in attendance, Mr. Blank asked that they begin the discussion on this topic because there were people in attendance at the meeting that night. Dori Wilson began the presentation by going over the history of the regulations. She said that they had reviewed regulations of many of the surrounding towns. Mr. Greene answered Mr. Blank's question on when a coastal site plan application was needed.

Mr. Greene handed out a packet of information of all the construction projects that are currently happening in the city. Mr. Blank asked whether they could have suggested topics on the agenda in the future. If there was meeting that was going to end early, then they could discuss a topic that they may not have a chance to discuss. They decided to add a topic to the agenda; if the meeting ran late, they could decide to table the topic until the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero