

CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
March 12, 2015

PRESENT: Jill Jacobson, Chair; Emily Wilson; Joe Santo; Nora King; Adam Blank; James White; Mike O'Reilly; Nathan Sumpter; Linda Kruk

STAFF: Michael Greene; Dori Wilson; Frank Strauch

OTHERS: Mr. Choudhary; Robert Sherwood; Atty Liz Suchy; Atty Frank Zullo;

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

I. SPECIAL PERMITS

a) #10-14SP – Special Properties III, LLC – 78 Cranbury Road/440 Newtown Ave – 21 unit conservation development – Status report

Before the presentation began, Mr. Blank recused himself and left the room. Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. He noted that the applicant was requesting an extension to the application which the commissioners granted until May.

b) #3-15SP – S. Choudhary – 391 Westport Ave/Strawberry Hill Av – Gas station & mini mart in existing former gas/service station – Preliminary review

Mr. Blank returned to the room before the presentation began by Mr. Choudhary. He showed the commissioners the site plans and the landscaping plans.

Mr. Sherwood, the landscape architect, continued the presentation by stating that they had increased the green spaces. It would be native in appearance which would reduce maintenance. He discussed the trees that would be used. There was a discussion about the curb cuts because of the tankers that deliver to the site. There was also a discussion about the width of the sidewalks. The site has been empty for a long time, possibly over 20 years. It could be on the Zoning Commission agenda in April.

c) #2-15SP/#6-15CAM – Skyzone Trampoline Park – 360 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. – 39,000 sq ft commercial recreation facility in an existing building – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property.

Atty Liz Suchy continued the presentation with a brief overview of the property which included various buildings. She explained the franchise that would be using one of the buildings on the property, Skyzone, as well as the business model. She then discussed what the applicant would still need to complete for the application. She then asked the commissioners to look at the property. There was a discussion about traffic/parking at the site. The franchisee of this location also owns the Skyzone in Bethel. One of the other buildings on the site would continue as is. The application would be on the Zoning

Commission agenda in May.

d) #1-15SP – Alliance Energy, LLC – 224 Connecticut Ave – Replacement gas station – Further review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by noting that no CEAC meeting would be required for this application. There was a discussion about the fact that the state's plans were for no traffic signal facing the gas station. Several commissioners had concerns about that. Mr. Greene said that there may not be an answer from the State of CT, Department of Traffic before the public hearing. There was a discussion about the curb cuts.

e) #14-10SP/#19-10CAM – Elderhouse – 7 Lewis St – Request for release of maintenance surety

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. The improvements have been maintained so he said that staff recommends release of the maintenance surety.

f) #4-15SP – Zimmerman Architecture – 380 Main Ave – Add new 2 story 6,558 sq ft restaurant (Burger King) to existing shopping center – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. He said that the Burger King would be two floors as per the regulations, the first floor would be the restaurant and the second floor would be used for storage. They have met the parking requirements.

Atty. Zullo continued the presentation by introducing members of the project's team. He then began a further discussion of the parking spaces. He noted that the shopping center's parking was shared by all the stores in the center.

The franchisee then answered some questions about other possible tenants that he had heard were interested in the site. One of them was a Chili's but the site was not big enough for their restaurant. He also explained where his two other Burger Kings in Norwalk were located. One of them would be closed and relocated to this location. Mr. Santo had some concerns about the parking because he believed that Total Wines' business was doing well. He thought there would not be enough parking. Atty. Zullo noted that the parking lot was also being used by vehicles that were not customers of the stores, including commuters and limo drivers. There was then a discussion about the architecture of the building. There was also a discussion about the sidewalks especially since there is a high school right next door. There was a discussion about using the second floor for restaurant use, but Atty. Zullo explained that they would then need more parking. The commissioners all agreed that the architecture of the building was very nice. There was also a discussion about outdoor dining. The public hearing would be scheduled on the Zoning Commission's agenda in April.

II. SITE PLAN REVIEWS/COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEW

a) #2-15SPR/#5-15CAM – 25 Butler LLC – 25 Butler Street - Relocate 8,600 sf historic building from 3 Quincy St to 25 Butler St for reuse as office – Preliminary review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by handing out photos of the building that would be relocated. The applicant was unable to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals (“ZBA”) this month, as they had been scheduled to.

Atty. Suchy continued the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. She discussed what would be moved and what would be removed. The building would be moved in 2 sections. If it could not be, then it would be dismantled. There was a discussion about asbestos in the building. The commissioners would be able to take action on this at their April Zoning Commission meeting, after the applicant went before the ZBA.

b) #1-14SPR/#10-14SPR – The Berkeley Holding, LLC/520 West Ave, LLC – 500-520 West Av (West Block) – Request to modify approved plans for 177,302 sf mixed use development (The Berkeley) with 129 units to use TOD parking requirements to reduce residential parking required from 225 sp to 192 sp and minor modifications to approved plans – Determine if minor change (ZC must act on parking change) and c) #2-14SPR/#2-14CAM - Norwalk West VI, LLC. – 26-36 Orchard St/2 Quincy St – Request to modify approved plans for 69 unit development to use TOD parking requirements to reduce residential parking required from 123 sp to 107 sp – Determine if minor change (ZC must act on parking change)

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the two properties on an aerial map. Atty. Suchy explained the change to use TOD parking for the one bedroom units and some minor changes as well. It was decided that the change could be placed on the Zoning Commission agenda for the following week. Mr. Greene said that they could have seasonal outdoor dining or a bar on the deck at this development with no more parking necessary. Two restaurants have agreed to be a part of the development, Barcelona and Colony Grill.

d) #X-15SPR – Marcus Partners Management – 101 Merritt 7 - Request to modify approved development park sign plan for Merritt 7 Corporate Park to add new cornice sign to Building 101 for Datto

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. She explained what the new Development Park sign would look like. It was decided that the application would be placed on the Zoning Commission agenda for the following week.

e) #4-15CAM – Peter Cummings Inc. – 5 Nylked Terrace – New single family residence – Preliminary review

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He explained all of the sign-offs that were received and reminded the commissioners that a public hearing was at their discretion. There was a discussion about the notices that were sent out to neighbors. The committee decided to add a line at the end of the notice that explained that if the neighbor had concerns they should call the Zoning Department. A phone number was to be added as well. The committee decided that a public hearing was not necessary.

f) #9-11SPR/#22-11CAM – North Water, LLC - 20 N. Water St – Request to modify approved plans for 133,035 sf mixed use development to reduce retail from 7,700 sf to 6,002 sf & increase restaurant from 7,200 sf to 8,898 sf; to add third restaurant & use TOD parking to reduce residential parking required from 174 sp to 141 sp – Determine if minor change (ZC must act on parking change)

Dori Wilson explained the changes from retail to restaurant use at the development and the changes to use TOD parking for the studio and one bedroom units. The conversion from retail to restaurant would allow a third restaurant to be added to the site: El Segundo. One of the goals of the project was to create pedestrian traffic on North Water Street which the applicant thought this would help create. The commissioners thought that this was a minor change. There was a discussion about the need for lighting under the RR bridge.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero