

CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING COMMITTEE
December 4, 2014

PRESENT: Jill Jacobson, Chair; Linda Kruk; Joseph Santo; Nora King; Jim White;
Emily Wilson; Mike O'Reilly

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

OTHERS: Atty. Al Vasko; Earl Govens; Ray Sullivan; Atty. Liz Suchy;

Emily Wilson called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

I. PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE BUILDING ZONE MAP & SPECIAL PERMIT/COASTAL SITE PLAN

a) #2-14M/#8-14SP/#20-14CAM – Head of the Harbor South, LLC - 6 Smith St/2 East Wall St - Proposed map change for 2 East Wall St from entirely East Ave Village District (EAVD) to EAVD (in part) & Central Business Design District Subarea C (in part) and special permit for 4 story mixed use development with 5,000 sq ft office and 60 dwelling units in 2 buildings – Further review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by showing the commissioners the revised site plans. She also explained what was still part of the site plan and what was not. She noted that there has not been a CEAC meeting at this point as well as other referral letters from the public. There was a discussion about the referral process from the Zoning Department to the Planning and Harbor Management Commissions. There was also a discussion about the date this application would be on the Zoning Commission's agenda. Atty. Vasko continued the presentation by noting the changes that had been made to the site plans, as per the requests of the commissioners.

Earl Govens, the landscape architect on the project, continued the presentation by noting all of the traffic calming changes, as well as pedestrian access. He described what they would be using including Belgian blocks, crosswalks, etc. He also explained how a two way street would go into a one way street. There was a discussion about the T-turn available from cars that needed to turn around. The applicant had redesigned it to be 10 feet (instead of 19 feet) so that it would not be used as a parking space. It was suggested that the plans be shared with neighboring property owners so they could understand the proposal. He described the public access and drainage from the property. There was a discussion about the types of plantings there would be. Mr. Govens said that it would be mostly from plants that were native to the area. He showed the commissioners some sketches of the property. There was also a discussion about the waterfront walkway. Ms. King asked that the documents be sent to the Coastal Management and the Harbor Commission.

Ray Sullivan, the architect on the project, continued the presentation by showing revised plans so that the commissioners could see the project in the context of the other buildings. There was a discussion about the access to Wall Street.

At this point, Dori Wilson said that this application would be on the Zoning Commission agenda in January.

II. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDING ZONE REGULATIONS/SPECIAL PERMIT/CSPR

a) #7-14R/#1-09SP/#1-09CAM – TR SoNo Partners, LLC - SoNo Hotel – 43-47 South Main St – Proposed amendments to Washington Street Design District to permit extended stay hotels & related parking/technical amendments and modify special permit to 110 room extended stay hotel (formerly 121 room hotel with office) with 70 space indoor valet parking in an automated garage – Final review prior to public hearing

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map as well as noting this was on the Zoning Commission agenda for a public hearing the following week. She said that the Planning Commission would review it before the Zoning Commission.

Atty Suchy continued the presentation by informing the commissioners that the applicant had received all of the necessary CEAC sign-offs. She also said that design review had begun with the Redevelopment Agency.

b) #2-14R – Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to revise minimum lot size for indoor contractor parking facility from 12,500 sf to 10,000 sf, to allow as principal use in Bus #1 & Bus #2 zones subject to submittal of Environmental impact statement (EIS) and related technical amendments – Review of public hearing

As Dori Wilson began the presentation, Emily Wilson said that she would not comment because she had not listened to the recording of the public hearing. Ms. King said that she had issues about what happened at the Planning Commission meeting. She shared notes with the commissioners from what she had heard from a recording of the meeting. She believed that Mr. Greene had not given the Planning Commissioners the proper information. There was a discussion about the relevance of the Planning Commission's vote to the discussion of the public hearing. Ms. King suggested that all the commissioners listen to the recording. Mr. Santo said that he had spoken with Mr. Astrom, the chair of the Planning Commission. He asked him why they voted against the referral. Mr. Astrom said they were concerned that the lots were abutting residential zones and that there was no compelling reason to change the regulation. There was a discussion about what contractors would like to see in Norwalk. Ms. King said that she did not like how things were handled by Mr. Greene when he spoke to the Planning Commission. The application would be on the Zoning Commission agenda for action the following week.

c) Zoning Enforcement - Proposed new Chapter 117 to permit zoning officer to issue fines – Review of draft ordinance

Mr. Greene said that this is a draft ordinance written in response to a memo had been sent from the Planning and Zoning Commissions to the Ordinance Committee. The draft ordinance would allow zoning officers to issue fines to those property owners that were in violation to zoning regulations. There was a discussion of how the new zoning process would work.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero