

CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

April 9, 2015

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

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

OTHERS: Atty. Liz Suchy; David Spear; Bill Hodell; Todd Gambino; Chris Kelly; Atty. Frank Zullo

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

I. SPECIAL PERMITS

a) #10-14SP – Special Properties III, LLC – 78 Cranbury Road/440 Newtown Ave – 21 unit Conservation development – Further review/schedule for hearing

Before the presentation began, Mr. Blank recused himself and left the room. Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by explaining that this application was being withdrawn and a new one was being filed the next day. Atty. Suchy confirmed Mr. Wrinn's report. She said they would file a new one the following day.

b) #2-15SP/#6-15CAM – Skyzone Trampoline Park – 360 Dr. MLK Jr. Drive – 40,000 sq ft commercial recreation trampoline center in an existing building - Preliminary review

Mr. Blank returned to the room. Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by discussing the parking. He noted that the applicant had brought detailed numbers from 3 other Skyzone's throughout the area. He explained that the parking was a little different due to the nature of the business so that is why they are having trouble determining the parking.

Atty. Suchy continued by discussing the problems with the parking. She explained how the other uses in the complex were helpful to the situation because they would not interfere with the applicant's business. Ms. King said that she would be supportive of less parking if there was a way for there to be a better circulation pattern for traffic.

Mr. Blank began a discussion about putting graphics on the outside of the building. However, the commissioners knew it could be difficult because there was a fine line between what was art and what was advertising. He thought it would be a good idea to have some art because there were other sports-themed facilities in the area.

Mr. Spear, the traffic consultant, continued the presentation with a description of the project, as well as how the traffic study was done. He said the level of service was

D or better. He also discussed an estimate of the traffic at the site. They also had looked at accident reports. He gave an estimate for parking.

Atty. Suchy said that they had filed a Coastal Area Management application as well. She requested a public hearing in May. There was a discussion as to when the SkyZone facility could be open.

c) #7-14SP – 587 Connecticut Ave – Mixed use development – Request to modify approved plans to add 5 units to residential building – Determine if minor change

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by explaining that the applicant wanted to add more units to the project. Because of this increase, there would be an increase of 1 more affordable housing unit. Although there is no change in the size or footprint of the building, the units would be smaller to accommodate more of them. The commissioners said it was a minor change.

d) #X-15SP – Jefferson Elementary/Board of Education – 75 Van Buren Ave – Add 2 additional modular classrooms - Determine if minor change

Mr. Wrinn began the presentation with an explanation of what the Board of Education was hoping to do with the modular units that were at Rowayton School and move them to Jefferson.

Bill Hodell, from the Board of Education, continued the presentation by discussing why they needed the units. Some classes were held in unconventional rooms such as computer labs.

There was a discussion about putting a time limit as to how long the units could be there. It was because the commissioners realized that enrollment was going up and there would be a need for more classrooms in the future. There was also a discussion about future plans for the Board of education. Mr. Greene noted that there would be a study done, just for this. The commissioners agreed this would be a minor change but only for 5 years.

e) #2-12SP – Petco – 230 East Av/Rowan St – 15,593 sq. ft., 150 suite Pooch Hotel with 45 dog daycare & grooming – Modify approved plan to add 800 sf dog training use on third floor - Determine if minor change

Dori Wilson began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. She also showed them the site plan. She then explained the change that the applicant was requesting which was to allow for dog training on the site. There was a discussion as to the type of training that would occur. The commissioners said it was a minor change.

II. SITE PLAN REVIEWS/COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEW

a) #12-10SP/#15-10CAM – Hillside Plaza LLC – 14-16 N. Main Street – Mixed use development – Request to modify approved plans to add rooftop bar and live music - Preliminary review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by showing the commissioners an aerial map of the property as well as the site plan of the building known as the Avrick building. She said that the restaurant space was still vacant. The proposed changes to the approved floor plan show a new kitchen and restroom area in the basement and more active restaurant floor area on the first floor therefore the applicant may need to file a new CAM application. The applicant also wants to add a rooftop bar. This would mean some issues with the state's liquor control office. Restrooms and a liquor storage area would have to be added to the roof.

Atty. Suchy noted that the applicant would also like to have live music on the roof. This led to a lengthy discussion about recent regulations which allowed live music only when indoors, where the windows and doors were shut. There was also discussion about the types of music that might be provided. The commissioners said that in prior years there were many complaints about the music being too loud in the neighborhood. The applicant would need more storage on the rooftop because of the bar that would be there and will need Redevelopment sign-off for the new construction. The commissioners decided that if the above issues can be resolved, that the restaurant revisions to the application were a minor change. The applicant agreed that they would handle the issue of the live music on the roof at a later date as this will require a new zoning amendment application.

a) #1-13SPR/#1-13CAM – TR SoNo Partners, LLC – 99 Washington St –5 story, 66 unit bldg with 154 space valet, tandem & stacked pkg. garage – Request to modify approved plans to relocate main entrance from sidewalk to parking plaza, revise masonry & metal panels to EIFS on side & rear facades & related changes – Determine if minor change

Before Dori Wilson began the presentation, Adam Blank recused himself and left the room. She then showed the commissioners an aerial map of the property as well as the approved site plan and the revised site plan. She explained that the applicant wanted to add more EIFS to the building to replace masonry and metal panels and to relocate the front door. Some of the commissioners were not happy with the changes.

Todd Gambino of TR SoNo Partners continued the presentation by explaining the reasons for the use of the EIFS. There was also a lengthy discussion about whether the front door should be kept. In the revised plan, they had placed the front door on the side, within the parking garage. He and Chris Kelly showed the commissioners pictures of the design of the Marriott Courtyard building in Stamford. The commissioners were concerned about pedestrian access and safety and decided that the applicant should keep a front door in addition to the side door. They noted that the revised plans made sight lines better. There was then a discussion about the EIFS on this building and others recently built. Some of the commissioners did not think that it looked well after a few years and this part of the change was not approved.

b) #4-97SPR – P.C. Richards – 444 Connecticut Ave – Request to hold tent sale – Determine if minor change

Before Mr. Strauch began the presentation, Mr. Blank returned to the room. He then showed the commissioners an aerial map of the property and explained where the tent sale was located. He also explained how the parking would work. There would be one sale in May and another one in September. He said the Planning and Zoning Office had not received any complaints from previous years. Although the applicant wanted to receive permission to hold the tents sales yearly, without returning to the Zoning Commission, Mr. White suggested that they come back for permission yearly for both sales. This idea was accepted as was the idea that the applicant could get an over the counter permit, unless there were any problems.

III. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF APPROVAL TIME

a) #9-06SP – 110 Richards Ave LLC – 110 Richards Avenue – Third story, 13,056 sq. ft. office addition - Request for 1 year extension of approval time

Dori Wilson began this presentation by indicating that this was the applicant's 8th request for an extension of time and then introduced Atty. Zullo. He explained to the commissioners why the applicant was requesting an extension of time. It would be on the Zoning Commission agenda for the following week.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero