

CITY OF NORWALK
PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
May 14, 2015

PRESENT: Jill Jacobson, Chair; Emily Wilson; Adam Blank; Nora King; Linda Kruk; Nate Sumpter

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

OTHERS: Atty. Liz Suchy; Tom Nelson; Mike Galante; Atty. Steve Grushkin; Theo Kindermans; Christopher Pitman; Ela Lagasse; Paxton Kinol; Craig Flaherty

Jill Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

I. SPECIAL PERMITS

a) #5-15SP – Special Properties III, LLC – 78 Cranbury Road/440 Newtown Ave – 15 unit Conservation development – Preliminary review

Before the presentation began, Mr. Blank recused himself and left the room. Mr. Wrinn began the presentation by explaining that a previous application was no longer valid. This new application considered the concerns that the commissioners had on the first one.

Atty. Suchy continued the presentation by explaining that this new application had 15 units, which was less than the previous application. She showed the site plans to the commissioners along with the previous one which showed more units. She also showed drawings of the new homes that would be on the property. She gave them a brief history of the previous use of the property. She then requested a public hearing in June.

Tom Nelson, the engineer on the project, continued the presentation by discussing the utilities, sewer and drainage systems.

Atty. Suchy explained that the applicant was supposed to be before the Conservation Commission, a few days prior to this meeting. However, due to a lack of a quorum, the applicant should be before the Conservation Commission at the end of May.

Matthew Popp, the landscape architect for the project, continued the presentation. He explained how far the units would be from the wetlands as well as the trees that would be planted. Some trees would be used as a screen for the neighbors.

There was a lengthy discussion about the public access to the conservation area. There is no parking there currently. Some neighbors had expressed concerns to the applicant about having a parking area. Atty. Suchy said the applicant did not want access by the public behind the homes that would be built. Some commissioners thought it would be helpful to have a small parking area so that people from the neighborhood could enjoy the conservation area. There were some suggestions of where to place the public access.

Mike Galante, the traffic engineer, continued the presentation by showing the commissioners an aerial photo of the area. He discussed the traffic study and how it was done. He also discussed what new traffic would be generated once the project was completed. He would not recommend any changes to the traffic in the area. He also discussed the accidents in the area.

Mr. Sumpter asked Atty. Suchy to describe the homes that were to be built. She also said that the architect would be at the presentation in June.

b) #7-15SP/#6-15CAM – Skyzone Trampoline Park – 360 Dr. MLK Jr. Drive – 40,000 sq ft commercial recreation trampoline center in an existing building – Final review prior to public hearing

At this point, Mr. Blank returned to the room. Mr. Wrinn began the presentation. There was a discussion about the plans for circulation of traffic and painting which were the concerns that the commissioners had had at the previous meeting. There was also a discussion about graphics for the buildings but Atty. Suchy said that it was an item that could be handled at a future date.

c) #3-14SP/#11-14CAM – Maritime Village I, LLC – 17-19 Day St – 68 units/ 9790 sf mfg - Modify approved plan to increase number of units to 76; revise manufacturing use in Bldg A to office & 2 dwelling units; revise affordable housing plan to change # of units from 20% affordable (14) to 10% workforce (8) and related modifications – Determine if minor change (ZC must act on change to Workforce Housing Plan)

Dori Wilson began the presentation by going over the modifications to the site plan. One change was from a manufacturing use on the first floor to an office use. They were also asking for a change to affordable housing plan since the Zoning Commission had recently changed the regulations. The application is also with Redevelopment for its design review. There will also be a change in parking requirements because of the change in use from manufacturing to office and residential. They are removing the generator from the roof. There was a discussion of the width of the sidewalks. There was also a discussion about how the Zoning Department keeps track of the workforce housing apartments in these developments on annual basis. There was a discussion about adding this to a future agenda, after the commissioners received reports from the applicants. There was also a discussion of these developments in connection with impacts of new students on the Board of Education.

d) #1-15SP – Alliance Energy, LLC – 224 Connecticut Av – Replacement gas station – Final review prior to public hrg

Mr. Strauch began the presentation by explaining that the public hearing had to be delayed because the notices to the public had not been sent out. Although there was still no resolution about the traffic light, it would be a condition of the resolution until they had heard back from the state Department of Transportation.

e) #6-15SP – RAP II, LLC – 123 Richards Ave – 64 unit congregate housing/assisted living – Preliminary review

Before the presentation, Mr. Blank recused himself and left the room. Mr. Strauch began the presentation with an introduction of the application to the commissioners. He also oriented them as to the location of the property on an aerial map.

Atty. Grushkin continued the presentation with an introduction of the other members of the project team and then a brief description of the project. He described it as upscale senior living for the memory impaired. He also went over the number of units and number of parking spaces. He then described the persons that would be living in the facility as well as how each wing was a “household.” He explained how the facility worked in order to explain the traffic situation. There was a discussion of patients with Alzheimer’s and an inner courtyard which helped make them feel secure.

Michael Crowley, a principal of the applicant, continued the presentation with a discussion of their business model which included many different programs. They also have a facility in Trumbull. He said that the commissioners could look at that one if they would like to.

Ms. King had questions about business models that other facilities used so Mr. Crowley explained how their facilities were different. It was a monthly rental fee. He then further described the daily life of the residents, including meals.

Theo Kindermans, the landscape architect, continued the presentation with a description of the drainage system.

Mr. Strauch discussed the Conservation Commission application because it would have to be completed prior to the public hearing for this application. There was also a discussion of the lighting. There was also a discussion of the existing trees and plantings.

Christopher Pitman, the architect on the project, continued the presentation. He described the mechanicals on the roof. There was also a discussion about the spillage from the lights as well as a discussion of the sidewalks. They also discussed how to drive through the property.

Mr. Strauch then reminded the commissioners about the fact that the applicant still had a CEAC meeting to attend. There was a discussion about whether they could be on the agenda in June. Since there were other applications on the agenda for that night, they may end up being pumped off the agenda.

f) #3-09SP – SIR Development – 124 East Ave – Request to modify approved plan to replace beech tree – Determine if minor change

Mr. Blank returned to the room. Mr. Strauch began the presentation by explaining the approval of the application several years ago which included the applicant maintaining a beech tree. Although they have maintained the tree, it now needs to be replaced. There was a discussion about how big the new tree was. Mr. Strauch said that the Zoning Department would also keep a check on it.

g) #X-15SP – 155 Woodward Ave – Modify mixed use with manufacturing/warehouse to increase warehouse – Determine if requires new special permit

Mr. Greene began the presentation explained the current special permit and why the staff thought they should come before the commissioners. The applicant wanted to modify the use to increase the warehouse use. They would be storing things for Norwalk Hospital. The Committee agreed it was a minor change.

II. SITE PLAN REVIEWS/COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEW

a) #9-13SPR/#25-13CAM – CP IV Waypointe BP I, LLC – 515 West Av – Waypointe Midblock 494,578 sf mixed use development – Modify approved plans to use TOD parking to reduce residential pkg required from 638 sp to 551 sp, to increase restaurant space from 11,550 sf to 17,050 sf & related modifications – Determine if minor change (ZC must act on parking change) and b) #3-13SPR/#3-13CAM – NW MFP Norwalk Town Center I, LLC – 11 Merwin St – Waypointe North Block 140,978 sf mixed use development – Modify approved plans to use TOD parking to reduce residential pkg required from 169 sp to 141 sp, add 1,988 sf yoga fitness use & related modifications – Deter if minor change (ZC must act on parking change)

Dori Wilson began the presentation explained how the applicant wanted to revise the parking requirements for the one bedroom units to use the new TOD parking requirements. The applicant indicated that they have enough on-site parking for all the uses. The other modification would be to increase the square footage for restaurants and to decrease the square footage for retail. There would also be changes in the use of the parking lots by commercial and residential tenants and a new commercial trash room for the restaurant tenants would be added.

There was a discussion about the change in the tenant mix by the applicant's engineer Craig Flaherty. He explained that this change is responding to the interest they have had from prospective restaurant tenants. He also explained how the parking and elevators would work. There was a discussion about whether there would be a fee to park in the new parking garage. Mr. Kinol said that some of the restaurants have asked for them to charge a nominal fee for parking. There is a concern that the parking lot would be used by others in the neighborhood. The commissioners agreed that the changes were minor. There was also a brief discussion about adding Bikram Yoga as a new tenant in the north block, as well as modifications to the parking for that site to comply with the new TOD

parking regulations. The committee agreed to the changes and this will be added to the May Zoning Commission agenda for action.

c) #X-15SPR/#X-15CAM – CP IV Waypointe BP, LLC - Waypointe Design District Development Park Master Plan – Update approved plan to add two new parcels: 6 Butler and 25 Butler Street – Preliminary review

Dori Wilson began the presentation by showing the commissioners the site plans for the blocks. She said that the applicant had decided to add two small properties to the Waypointe Design District Development Park. The amount of acreage has increased since the applicant first started the process from just over 10 acres to 14.47 acres. This item would be on the May Zoning Commission agenda for action.

d) #X-15SPR/#X-15CAM – CP IV Waypointe BP, LLC – 33 Orchard St – Modify workforce housing plan for offsite units at 33 Orchard St from 5 units (all one bedroom units) to 4 units (1 three bedroom, 1 two bedroom & 2 one bedroom units) – Determine if minor change (ZC must act on change to Workforce Housing Plan)

Dori Wilson explained the changes that the applicant was requesting for the Workforce Housing units. Mr. Kinol explained the number of units in the offsite housing, explaining that the building worked better divided into 4 units, rather than 5 units. He also said that this building came with the property. They were fixing it up and making it one of the nicest houses on the block.

There was a discussion about how the families are chosen to be in the affordable housing units. Ms. Ela Lagasse went over the process. Mr. Kinol explained that sometimes when someone has been asked to rent an affordable unit, the person decides they do not want it. If their income levels go up in the future, then they will have to move out or pay the market rate rent. There was a discussion about how to address this situation. Ms. Jacobson said that this discussion was now getting off track so they should put this on the agenda for another meeting.

e) #X-15CAM – 159-165 Rowayton Avenue, LLC - 159-165 Rowayton Ave – Minor changes to existing building

Ms. King said she was not pleased that this application was placed on the agenda at the last minute. Mr. Greene explained that the application did not comply with zoning until the day before the meeting. He placed it on the agenda in order to help development in Rowayton. Atty Suchy explained that the applicant has had problems with the plans for the building for a while. The commissioners decided to put this on the Committee agenda in June so that they could get more information on it.

III. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF APPROVAL TIME

a) #2-09SP – ABM 28 Bouton LLC - 25 & 29 Bouton St – Multifamily development - Request for 1 year extension of approval time

Mr. Strauch explained that this was the applicant's sixth extension request. There were no violations, no changes to the regulations or any adverse impacts.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero