

CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES
April 16, 2025

PRESENT: Galen Wells, Chair; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Nick Kantor; Richard Roina (left the meeting at 7 pm); Darius Williams

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

OTHERS: Gennaro Grimaldi; Jim Travers; Ben Cherner; Atty Liz Suchy; Atty Adam Blank; Seelan Pather; Mark Ochman

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Wells called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with participants calling in, separately, as well as in the Common Council Chamber, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. #2025-24 SUB - Gennaro Grimaldi - 107 Wolfpit Avenue (District 5, Block 16, Lot 22) - Subdivision application to create a total of two building lots - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Ms. Wells opened the public hearing.

Gennaro Grimaldi began the presentation with a brief background of his history working for the city. He said that he had wanted to subdivide the property so that he could sell the home where he was born 92 years ago. Mr. Kleppin said that it was a straightforward subdivision application. He said that there is a dwelling on a portion of the lot and that there could be another structure on the other property. He noted what requirements that the commission could impose before a zoning permit is obtained. He noted that they will need permits from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Ms. Wells explained how the members of the public could make comments during this public hearing. There were no members of the public, either in the chamber or online, that spoke on this matter.

**** MR. ROINA MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that application #2025-24 SUB – Gennaro Grimaldi – 2-Lot Resubdivision – 107 Wolfpit Ave. (5-16-22) in CD-1M zone be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Per the Re-Subdivision Map, dated 2.18.25, prepared by LandTech; and
2. The final subdivision survey be filed on the Norwalk Land Records prior to the issuance of a Zoning Permit; and
3. That all department sign-offs are obtained prior to issuance of any Building Permit; and
4. That a financial guarantee, in an amount determined by Staff, be submitted to guarantee the installation of all erosion and sedimentation controls prior to issuance of a Zoning Permit; and
5. That all required soil sedimentation and erosion controls are in place prior to the start of any construction; and
6. That any additional needed soil sedimentation and erosion controls be installed at the direction of the Staff; and
7. Add a condition that “That a Connecticut licensed engineer submit an engineering certificate that all required drainage and utility improvements were properly installed prior to issuance of a certificate of zoning compliance; and”
8. Prior to obtaining a Zoning Permit, a planting plan shall be submitted that complies with the street tree requirements of the subdivision regulations (per §3.38) along Starlight Drive.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this proposal complies with all applicable subdivision and use policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be April 28th, 2025.

At this point the commissioners reviewed the resolution but there were no comments.

Mr. Kantor seconded.

**Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron;
Tammy Langalis; Nick Kantor; Richard Roina; Darius Williams approved.**

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

IV. PRELIMINARY REVIEWS AND REVIEW AND ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

A. #2025-32 8-24 Referral - City of Norwalk - 24 Monroe Street and 1 State Street - Lease agreement of +/- 1,300sf of commercial space to Tacos Please LLC - Report & recommended action

Jim Travers, Director Transportation, Mobility and Parking, began the presentation by explaining that the Planning & Zoning Commission would be reviewing a lease for the Taco Please, who owned a food truck and would now like lease space at the SoNo Train Station, which was previously leased by LobsterCraft. It would be a 5 year lease and is approved by the Parking Authority, but also needs Planning & Zoning Commission approval.

There was a discussion about how the space was advertised. Mr. Travers said that there was a property manager who handled the lease for this spot.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-32 8-24 Referral – City of Norwalk – 24 Monroe Street and 1 State Street – Lease agreement of +/- 1,300sf of commercial space to Tacos Please LLC be **APPROVED**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the reasons for this action are to implement the following Plan of Conservation and Development goals, policies and actions:

1. To “Continue to strengthen Norwalk’s urban core with a mix of uses to attract residents, visitors, and businesses,” and
2. To “Continue implementation of transit-oriented development (TOD) and a range of mixed-use opportunities for sustainable live/work/play communities in the city,” and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notice of this action be forwarded to the Common Council.

Ms. Jordan-Byron seconded.

**Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron;
Tammy Langalis; Nick Kantor; Richard Roina; Darius Williams approved.**

No one opposed.
No one abstained.

B. #2025-14 CAM - Benjamin Cherner - 5 Outer Road (District 5, Block 84, Lot 158) - Coastal site plan review to demolish existing house and in-ground pool and construct a new, flood compliant, single-family detached dwelling - Report & recommended action

Ms. Wells asked who was representing the applicant. Ben Cherner, the owner of the property and architect, began by explaining the project. He said that the house would be demolished and a smaller house would replace it. The pool would be removed. At this point, they reviewed the site plan.

Mr. Cherner said it would be half of the size of the existing structure. They would use renewable materials and would leave existing native plantings as well as replant native vegetation. He said that he liked the new zoning codes. There was a review of the proposed elevation plans for the new home. There would be no garage or enclosed entry. Mr. Cherner said that it had been reviewed by the Village Creek Architectural Review Board. All the neighbors had been notified about the application.

Ms. Lenkowsky was seated for this application as well as the entire meeting to vote on other applications.

**** MR. WILLIAMS MOVED: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that application #2025 - 14 CAM – Benjamin Cherner – 5 Outer Road – Demolish an existing house and in-ground pool and construct a new single family residence to be flood compliant be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. That the building and site be developed in accordance with the following plans:

a. Per site development plan dated 1/3/2025 and revised 4/4/2025 prepared by McChord Engineering Associated, Inc., Wilton, CT

b. Per architectural plans dated 2/5/2025 and revised 3/15/2025 prepared by Cherner Design LLC, Norwalk, CT

c. Per landscape plan dated 2/5/2025 and revised 3/27/2025 prepared by Cherner Design LLC, Norwalk, CT

2. That all department sign-offs are obtained prior to issuance of any Zoning Permit; and

3. That a permit is obtained from the Department of Public Works regarding City storm-water management requirements; and
4. That all required soil sedimentation and erosion controls are in place prior to the start of any construction; and
5. That any additional needed soil sedimentation and erosion controls be installed at the direction of Staff; and
6. That any changes to the plans be reviewed by Staff prior to implementation; and
7. That the proposed engineered site plan be revised to include a zoning chart, including separate building coverage and impervious surface coverage calculations, prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and
8. That any utilities comply with setbacks; and
9. That flood certifications be submitted prior to issuance of a zoning permit and prior to obtaining a Certificate of Zoning Compliance (COZC), prepared by a CT licensed engineer or architect; and
10. That flood compliance be achieved and demonstrated with a FEMA elevation certificate prior to COZC; and
11. That pervious gravel be used for the driveway and walkways; and
12. That stormwater and discharge be treated on site; and
13. That all plantings be implemented prior to COZC; and
14. That all plantings be maintained, and any dead plantings must be replaced in accordance with the approved planting plan; and
15. That no changes to the seawall are permitted without City review and DEEP approval; and
16. Nothing in this permit shall obviate the requirements for the applicant to obtain any other assents, permits or licenses required by law or regulation by the City of Norwalk, State of Connecticut, or the Government of the United States, including any approval required by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers- obtaining such assents, permits or licenses is the sole responsibility of the applicant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this proposal complies with all applicable coastal resource and use policies and with all applicable sections of the Zoning Regulations for the City of Norwalk; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the preceding conditions and modifications of this application are integral to the Commission's approval because, if not for those conditions and modifications, the Commission would have denied this application.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be April 25th, 2025.

You must obtain a zoning approval and a building permit prior to any work on the site.

Mr. Kantor seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Nick Kantor; Richard Roina; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

C. #2023-11 SP/MV - Thomas J. Telesco - 151 Main Street (District 1, Block 87, Lot 1) - One-year extension of time request for approved special permit for motor vehicle repairer use - Report & recommended action

Since there seemed that no one was available for this application, the commissioners moved to the next item.

D. #2025-28 CAM - 94 East Ave, LLC - 94 East Avenue (District 1, Block 56, Lot 2) - Coastal site plan review for a change of use from +/- 5,200sf of office to six dwelling units for a total of 11 dwelling units within the existing building - Preliminary review and approval of village district architectural peer review

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation with an introduction of the project team. She then oriented the property for the commissioners. She described the current property which had a recent addition in 2012. The plan would be to convert some of the office space to residential units. She further described the changes as well as discussing the number of parking spaces.

There was a discussion about the city's third party architectural review.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED THAT THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION APPOINT A REVIEW ARCHITECT FOR THIS APPLICATION.**

Mr. Williams seconded.

There was a discussion about the difference in value between an office building and a residential building since this was the second application.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Nick Kantor; Richard Roina; Darius Williams approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

There was a discussion as to whether there would be a public hearing for this application. Atty Suchy did not think it was necessary for several reasons, including that the work was interior.

**** MR. ROINA MADE A MOTION THAT A PUBLIC HEARING WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR THIS APPLICATION.**

Mr. Williams seconded.
Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Nick Kantor; Richard Roina approved.
No one opposed.
Tammy Langalis and Darius Williams abstained.

E. #2025-31 SP/CAM - Milan Pribelsky - 65 Van Zant Street and 28 Rowan Street (District 3 Block 34, Lots 13 and 16) - Special permit and coastal site plan review application(s) for the construction of a 3.5-story, 22-dwelling unit, mixed-use building - Approval of usage of third-party architectural peer review

Mr. Baker said that they were requesting the commission to approve the use of a 3rd party peer review. The staff had requested a quote from D'Carlo and Doll.

**** MR. ROINA MADE A MOTION THAT THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION APPOINT A THIRD PARTY REVIEW ARCHITECT FOR THIS APPLICATION.**

Mr. Kleppin said that the commission could review the plans as well because the review could take 6-8 weeks. At this point, the commission was shown the plans, as well as an aerial view of the property.

Mr. Williams seconded.
Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Nick Kantor; Richard Roina; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.
No one opposed.

No one abstained.

F. #2025-27 SP - TVG Partners - 595 Westport Avenue (District 5, Block 17, Lot 8) - Special permit for change of use from +/- 85,400sf portion of existing building from manufacturing to self-storage facility - Preliminary review

Atty Blank began the presentation with an introduction of the project team. He then oriented the commission as to the location of the property on an aerial map and described the same. He showed them current pictures of the site. It was not clear what the use would be but part of it would be self-storage. There would be minor changes to the exterior. The storage use would be less intense than the previous use. He said that they would come back for a public hearing.

There was a discussion about other uses of the building. Atty Blank said that there was a restriction about allowing more residential uses. There was also a discussion about the ownership of the building.

G. #2024-65 SPR/CAM - Hyde Park Properties, LLC - 71 Water Street and 25 Elizabeth Street (District 2, Block 44, Lots 14 and 13) - Coastal site plan review application for the construction of a six-story, 32-dwelling unit, mixed-use building - Report & recommended action

Atty Blank began the presentation with an introduction of the project team. He said that they had received sign-offs from some departments as well as comments from others. The project had been approved by the Redevelopment Agency and had been referred to the architectural peer review firm. He discussed the parking and parking garage. There would be a 3 level fitness area, and rooftop amenities. The building would be made of glass. There would be much better drainage on the site. He said that a green roof would no longer be a part of the project. He also noted that the traffic engineer would speak that evening about the project. He said that they would agree to providing a signage plan. There would be changes to the building for pedestrian handicap access on Elizabeth Street. He showed them renderings of the exterior of the buildings. He also noted that the mechanicals would have to be raised higher due to the zoning regulations, but expected this to be addressed as a condition of approval.

Seelan Pather said that there are no offices in the building besides the owner, Klaar Windows and Doors.

There was a discussion about the flooding on Water Street. Atty Blank said that Transportation, Mobility and Parking (TMP) may change the direction of Elizabeth Street but was not sure of it at this point.

Mark Ochman, the engineer on the project, continued the presentation by describing the existing parcel with the building and asphalt parking lot. He then described the proposed building which would contain residential and retail space. He explained how they would follow the DPW's drainage manual.

There was a discussion about water flooding into the garage. Mr. Ochman said that there was a solution for that so it would not.

Mr. Pather, the architect for the project, continued the presentation by addressing further the concerns about flooding on Water Street. He compared this project to another project that his firm had completed on Water Street. He reminded them that the zoning regulations had increased the elevations in the flood zone since that project had been completed. He showed them renderings of what the building would look like. He then said that there was a factory aesthetic in South Norwalk. He described the elements used in the facade. There would be balconies on the building. He also noted that one of the main elements of the project would be glass since the owner of the building owned a high quality glass company. He described some public space that was being created. They would use high quality materials. He showed them the interior designs of the buildings for the different floors.

There was a discussion about where the affordable housing units would be located. Mr. Pather said that there would be 3 1 bedroom units.

There was a discussion about this being Norwalk's first fully glazed residential building. Mr. Kleppin said that was the most he could recall. There was also a discussion about the parking which would be open parking to share with retail during the day.

Eric Raines, the landscape architect for the project, continued the presentation. He described the plant materials and the seating opportunities. He also described the planters which would tolerate salt spray.

Steve Cipolla, the traffic engineer, continued the presentation with a description of the traffic study and how it was conducted. From the study, he described the additional vehicles that would be added from this project.

Frank Fish, BFJ Planning, continued the presentation by discussing the memo that they had submitted in January. There had been comments which the applicant had responded to. He said that there were additional comments which the applicant would respond to. He said that subject to the 4 additional comments, they would recommend this project.

There was a discussion about the number of workforce housing units. Atty Blank said that they would work with staff if changes were necessary.

**** MR. WILLIAMS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2024-65 SPR/CAM – Hyde Park Properties, LLC – 71 Water Street and 25 Elizabeth Street (District 2, Block 44, Lots 14 and 13) – Coastal site plan review application for the construction of a six-story, 32-dwelling unit, mixed-use building be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. That the site shall be developed in accordance with the following plans, and as further modified per these conditions of approval:

a. Per the site plans entitled “Site Development Plan,” prepared by Ochman Associates, Inc., dated 11/29/2024; and

b. Per the architectural drawings entitled “71 Water Street,” prepared by Beinfield Architecture, dated 3/31/2025 and revised to 4/8/2025; and

a. Provided that the applicant shall provide documentation to the Planning & Zoning Commission’s Staff (Staff), that the building construction complies with Section 8.4.5.N.2.g of the Norwalk Zoning Regulations, prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and

b. That all mechanical equipment shall be elevated to two feet above the base flood elevation; and

c. Per the landscaping plans entitled “Water Street,” prepared by Eric Rains Landscape Architecture, LLC, dated 12/5/2024; and

3. That all utilities servicing the site shall be installed underground; and

4. That any changes to the approved plans, including change of use, shall be submitted to the Commission’s Staff (Staff) for review and approval prior to implementation. If any proposed changes are determined to be substantive, Staff shall refer the changes to the Commission for their review and approval prior to implementation; and

5. That the applicant shall provide details on compliance with Section 6.11.2 Solar Energy and Natural Drainage prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and

6. That the applicant shall submit a final Workforce Housing Affordability Plan, subject to Staff approval, prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and

7. That an approved Workforce Housing Affordability Plan shall be filed on the Norwalk Land Records prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance for the residential portion of the building(s); and

8. That should any building façade material become damaged and/or deteriorated, the applicant and any future owner(s) shall repair the damaged and/or deteriorated façade within thirty (30) days upon receiving notice from the City; and

9. That any pruning of trees within the city right-of-way shall be done in coordination with the City of Norwalk's Tree Warden; and

10. That any and all conditions required by Norwalk Health Department are applicable to this approval; and

11. That any and all conditions required by Norwalk WPCA are applicable to this approval; and

12. That any and all conditions required by Norwalk DPW are applicable to this approval; and

13. That any and all conditions required by Norwalk TMP are applicable to this approval; and

14. That any and all conditions required by the Norwalk Fire Marshal are applicable to this approval; and

15. That a surety shall be submitted, in an amount determined by Staff, to guarantee the installation of the required erosion and sediment controls prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and

16. That all erosion and sediment controls shall be installed and maintained prior to the start of any construction or site work, shall be maintained throughout all construction and site work, and that additional controls be installed at the direction of Staff; and

17. That a Connecticut licensed engineer shall certify that all required improvements, including any required off-site improvements, were installed to City standards prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance; and

18. That a surety shall be submitted, in an amount determined by the applicant and verified by Staff, to guarantee the completion and maintenance of the site plan and any and all modifications to the plan and all work as required as a condition of approval prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this application complies with all applicable sections of the Norwalk Zoning Regulations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action shall be April 25, 2025.

Mr. Kantor seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

Jacquen Jordan-Byron abstained.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: April 2, 2025

**** MS. LANGALIS MOVED to approve the April 2, 2025 minutes.**

Mr. Williams seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Nick Kantor; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin said that the next meeting will be in 3 weeks, which would be a long meeting. He also noted that he would do a walk through of the Gray Barns with Ana Tabachneck, Ms. Wells and Mr. Kantor.

VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Kantor asked about city email addresses. Mr. Kleppin said he would follow up.

Ms. Langalis said that there would be a community event at Manresa Island on May 8. She asked whether the commissioners should attend. Atty Sapienza, one of the city's counsel suggested that they could attend but not to opine on the project.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Jordan-Byron made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Williams seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Nick Kantor; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero