

CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 27, 2023

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, Chair; Nick Kantor; Mike Mushak; Galen Wells; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Ana Tabachneck; Richard Roina; Chapin Bryce; Darius Williams (arrived shortly after roll call); Tammy Langalis (arrived at 7:12 pm)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with participants calling in, separately.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll.

III. DISCUSSION

a. #2023-19 R/M – Planning & Zoning Commission – Zoning text amendment for complete re-write of the zoning regulations and map amendment for complete rezoning of the entire city. Topics:

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation by noting that they would go back to the edit table to go over items that had not been decided upon. He said they would also discuss three staff memos that the commissioners had received.

The first item was about language that was clarified within the 100 year flood zone which also applied to three other zones. He then explained that any changes that made on the edit table would then be updated to the tables that are online.

There was a discussion about corner stores and whether they should be allowed in civic zones. The next item dealt with motor vehicle sales and leasing. Staff did not recommend this in the CD-4 zone since it is more of a residential zone. Gas stations with repair are a different use. The next item was about allowing boutique manufacturing in CD4W and CD5W when compatible with water dependent uses.

There were a couple of items that were clarifications of family day care and group day care homes. Staff recommended using the same language as set forth in the

state statutes. He noted that they must be allowed in residential zones but can cap the number of children. Ms. Tabachneck made a request from her daycare provider, which she noted that she would not vote on. Mr. Kleppin said they could discuss it later.

The discussion returned to the language for family child care home and group child care home. There was also a discussion about setbacks and lot area for religious institutions, but they decided to table this item. The next item that was discussed was parking related to buffer depth and public parking access.

There was a discussion about the EV stations and Level 2 chargers. Mr. Baker explained the different levels which would be Level 1-3. He suggested that for developments, Level 2 chargers should be installed. There was a discussion as to whether there should be a charging station at a handicapped space and how many there should be. There was also a discussion about whether users have to pay for them. Ms. Jordan-Byron thought it was not free, but Ms. Tabachneck said that it depends on where you are. It was noted that there are different levels.

Mr. Kleppin discussed the development parcel size and Article 5 and whether it should be in the regulations. He also discussed vehicle miles traveled on page 326 of the draft. He then discussed heat pumps and fencing for solar. Mr. Baker said he would confirm with the Building Department about whether it would be necessary for zoning to require fencing as well.

At this point, the discussion went back to Ms. Tabachneck's comments about daycare centers which Mr. Kleppin said that there are different levels in various zones with different licensing requirements. There was also a discussion about day care which could be 12-24 children. There would be more impacts on the neighborhood. Ms. Tabachneck explained that the regulations state that there could be up to 35 children if the daycare is part of a religious institution and meets certain requirements under a special permit. There was a discussion about a comment from a resident about a group day-care home in an A residence zone. There was a discussion about how many children should be allowed in a group day-care home. It was noted that there is a shortage of daycare centers in Norwalk. Mr. Schulman noted that large daycare centers are not allowed in residential areas. There was also a discussion about daycare centers in schools and churches.

There was a discussion about the CD-4 and CD-5 zones and allowing one principle structure. There was a discussion about the lot frontage as well. Mr. Mushak did not think they should restrict it to one principle building and most of the commissioners agreed.

Mr. Kleppin discussed 40 Meadow Street which was Lajoies property and explained that they would like to be redefined. They would need to come in for a special permit as the new use. There would be improvements to the front of the property and the work would take place in the back. He noted that staff had worked with them and it would work for this property. He would like to get the commissioners' feedback. Mr. Mushak thought they provided a valuable service as a "junk yard." There was a discussion about the difference between a recycling operations and junkyard. There was also a discussion about how this property had become non-conforming during the industrial zone change but a clause had been added to give them some flexibility. Mr. Kleppin shared language that the staff recommended adding to the regulations, but it would still be a special permit use. There was a discussion about what they were doing for the neighborhood in connection with noise and fumes, etc. There was also a discussion about some of their operations being done indoors. There were suggestions about what to do with the oil, etc. from the cars that could become recycled materials. Ms. Jordan-Byron recommended public art in the neighborhood and Mr. Schulman agreed. There was then a discussion about some of the functions of the company which includes metal recycler.

The next item related to building heights including half stories. Mr. Kleppin explained how they could continue the discussion. There was a discussion about the use for a half story. There was then a discussion about conversions from hotel to residential use. Mr. Kleppin suggested 2 different options for the language. There was a discussion about some buildings in the area, including 50 Washington Street. Mr. Kleppin suggested a meeting with Brian Bidoli to further discuss the language. There was a discussion about the map.

There was a discussion about measuring ceiling heights which could then unnecessarily increase the building height. There was then a discussion about the interior height and cathedral ceilings. Mr. Kleppin said that they would look at this again.

There was a discussion about a proposed zone for a lot area of 6,250. Mr. Schulman suggested adding a residential zone back into the proposed zoning regulations. They discussed re-naming some of the proposed zones.

IV. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin said there is a public presentation related to the Resilient South Norwalk next Tuesday evening. He also said there is a cannabis forum as well. Two of the commissioners said they would attend.

V. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Schulman said he would like to have the proposed regulations voted on in December but they would have to continue weekly meetings to review the draft. He has found the special meetings productive. He asked the commissioners if they would be comfortable with continuing. There was a discussion about having one special meeting a month, but just longer. Mr. Kleppin then noted that there are several other items to discuss with the commissioners.

Mr. Kleppin discussed the Muller Park aquifer application several months ago. He noted that the tenant is no longer in the building.

Mr. Schulman said that there had been a request for an in-person meeting for the next Planning & Zoning Commission. He said they could make it a hybrid meeting.

Ms. Tabachneck discussed her meeting with Zoning Department staff regarding enforcement and reporting zoning violations. There was also a discussion about hosting a town hall at some point after the informational session about enforcement of zoning violations which still does not have a date. Ms. Tabachneck asked about a meeting with TMP for residential parking passes.

The next meeting would be next Wednesday, October 4 as a regular meeting and then a special meeting on October 11.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Langalis made a Motion to Adjourn.

Ms. Jordan-Byron seconded.

Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Mike Mushak; Galen Wells; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Ana Tabachneck; Richard Roina; Darius Williams; Tammy Langalis approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero