

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
May 12, 2022**

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, Chair; Richard Roina; Brian Baxendale; Hector Pachas; Darius Williams; Mike Mushak; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Nick Kantor; Galen Wells; Tammy Lanagalis (arrived at 6:55 pm)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll.

III. REVIEW AND ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

a. #04-20 SPR – Open Door Shelter (previous approval under Route 7 and Maple LLC) – 24 Berkeley Street – Release of bond for construction of five-unit, four story townhouse building – Report & recommended action

Mr. Baker explained that this application had been approved a few years ago. The owner of the property sold the property and requested the bond to be returned. The new owner would be providing their own bond.

**** MR. BAXENDALE MOVED: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that the bond release request for application #04-20 SPR – Open Door Shelter (previous approval under Route 7 and Maple LLC) – 24 Berkeley Street – Release of bond for construction of five-unit, four story townhouse building be **APPROVED**.

Mr. Baxendale seconded.

Louis Schulman; Richard Roina; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Nick Kantor; Galen Wells approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action is May 20, 2022.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Discussion of single-family zoning

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation by noting that as part of the zoning regulation rewrite the Planning and Zoning Department staff, along with the consultants, had reviewed the number of residential zones that the city has. They realized that there were a lot of zones and it made sense to consolidate them. The consultant team confirmed that as well. He explained the various residential zones and acreage in these zones. He said that they consolidated the three A zones and split the B zones, based upon the width of the property.

However, staff had reviewed these new zones and showed the commissioners another plan. Mr. Kleppin said that under the alternate draft plan, the Triple A zone would not be consolidated but the Double A and Single A would. The B zone would still be split. They also reviewed the Plan of Conservation and Development to be aligned with it. He said that they would discuss the consolidation of the commercial zones at another meeting, as well as density standards.

There was further discussion about consolidating the A and Double A zones. The city would be regulating the lot width, not the acreage. There was also a discussion about the allowance of subdivisions. Under these new zoning regulations, rear lots would not be allowed in certain zones. There was a discussion about how many properties would become nonconforming. There was also a discussion about what having a nonconforming property would mean to the property owner. There was then a discussion of the C zone. There was a discussion about whether any additional development would occur in the Double A and Single A zones. There was also a discussion about the amount of parking for these zones.

There was a discussion about Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and affordable housing. The commissioners had received an email from Diane Lauricella on this subject. Mr. Mushak thought that the revisions to the residential zones would make more sense for the C and D zones. Mr. Kleppin said that this was the time to streamline the code since they are doing this rewrite of the zoning regulations. There was a discussion about whether developers could build a multi-family in the Double A and Single A zones. Mr. Kleppin said that it would not be allowed. They are only concentrating on single family housing at this time.

There was a discussion about allowing driveways in the front setback as well circular driveways not being allowed. There was a discussion about oversight by Planning and Zoning staff as well as the Department of Public Works (DPW) to confirm that homeowners are not paving over their entire front yard. Mr. Kleppin said that the consultants would handle these zoning regulations as well. There was a discussion about middle housing and where the zones are in the city. There was also a discussion about Rowayton, its walkability and density.

b. Discussion of Public Act 21-29 - Accessory Dwelling Units and Parking

Mr. Baker shared his screen to begin his presentation on ADUs and parking. He began by noting that the state had passed legislation in 2021 about accessory dwelling units. He then compared the state's regulations with Norwalk's regulations. He explained where the city complied with the state's regulations as well as what would have to be revised. ADUs are only allowed in single family zones. He then explained the next steps for the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mr. Baker then compared the state's regulations with Norwalk's regulations for parking regulations applied to multi-family housing. He showed them a chart which included real world parking scenarios of projects around the city. He then discussed the next steps on this item for the Planning and Zoning Commission. There was no deadline to adopt the state's regulations.

There was a discussion about the city opting out of adopting both sets of state regulations and then changing them later. Mr. Kleppin agreed but said that in the resolution to do so there should be language to specifically state what the city would be doing. It would help them maintain flexibility in the future. There was a discussion about some homes that had separate buildings such as pool houses, etc. which could be converted to an ADU.

At this point, Mr. Schulman asked the commissioners informally who would like the city to opt out of both sets of regulations. All said that they agreed to do so. There was a discussion about detached ADUs and the lot coverage. There was also a discussion about some properties having too many pods on them. There was a discussion about parking and having cars on the street.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 20, 2022

This item was tabled until the next meeting since the draft minutes had not been included in the commissioners' packets.

VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin said that the director of the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Ralph Kolb, had invited the commissioners to take a tour of the water treatment facility. It would not constitute a meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commissioner.

Mr. Kleppin noted that many times when large apartment projects are built, the question is asked whether it would be taxing on the city's infrastructure including water treatment and traffic. He said that Mr. Kolb had explained that the water treatment facility does have the capacity and that the city could add an additional 8500 units before there would be concerns. Mr. Kleppin said that they were not anywhere near that number of units.

There was also a discussion about the effects of adding children to the school system as well as how the tax abatement on these properties affected tax collection. There was also a discussion about the growth rate of Norwalk which, according to the last census, was 6%.

VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Ms. Jordan-Byron asked if it would be possible to extend the contractor yard moratorium. Mr. Kleppin said it would be extended through September. Mr. Kleppin said that he had toured the South Main/Chestnut area. Ms. Jordan-Byron invited him to the next district meeting.

Ms. Wells said that she would like to meet with the committee to revise the by-laws. She asked if there was a version of them in Microsoft Word which Mr. Kleppin said that he would provide it to the committee. She would schedule a meeting with the members including Mr. Kleppin.

Mr. Schulman reminded them that they would be meeting next Wednesday and asked Mr. Kleppin to send out the necessary materials.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Baxendale made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Mushak seconded.

Louis Schulman; Richard Roina; Brian Baxendale; Hector Pachas; Darius Williams; Mike Mushak; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Nick Kantor; Galen Wells; Tammy Langalis approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero