CITY OF NORWALK
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES
February 14, 2024

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, Chair; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Ana Tabachneck; Darius Williams; Chapin Bryce; Tammy Langalis (arrived at 6:10 pm) ; Richard Roina (left at 7:05 pm)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker; Amelia Williams

OTHERS: Atty Liz Suchy; Kristen Mitchell; Adam Bovilsky; Adam Cerini; John Grinstead; Azure Sleicher; Diane Lauricella;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with participants calling in, separately.

II. ROLL CALL & SEATING OF MEMBERS

Mr. Kleppin called the roll. Mr. Schulman seated Ms. Tabachneck for the entirety of the meeting.

III. REVIEW & ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

a. #2023-53 SP – Norwalk Housing Authority – 45 Meadow Street (District 2, Block 81, Lot 64) – Modification to previously approved special permit for the construction of 56 dwelling units within nine structures and other on-site improvements – Report & recommended action

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation with a background of the application and then explained the minor changes which included 1 less dwelling unit and the community center would be moved. She then showed them the approved site plan and then the proposed site plan. The reason for the move of the community center was because it would be more cost-effective. Kristen Mitchell spoke about what would remain from the previous plan. The playground would be at the community center.

There was a discussion about adding a floor to increase the number of units. Adam Bovilsky explained that the families that currently lived there were promised homes to return there. The size of the units was dictated by that. He said that parking was an issue at the site as well. Lisa Endo agreed that parking was an issue and that they should develop something as of right. Atty Suchy noted that another story is not allowed in the zone.

**** MR. WILLIAMS MOVED: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that **#2023-53 SP – Norwalk Housing Authority – 45 Meadow Street (District 2, Block 81, Lot 64) –** that the modifications to the site plan including the removal of one unit and the moving of the Community Center be considered a minor change.

Mr. Roina seconded.
Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Ana Tabachneck; Darius Williams; Chapin Bryce; Richard Roina approved.
No one opposed.
Tammy Langalis abstained.

Before the commission moved to the next item on their agenda, Mr. Schulman said that the commission had received a few letters about the Capital Budget. He said that they have no role in the final Capital Budget numbers. The Commission's role is to state that the Capital Budget items are in accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). He noted that if there was anyone on the call waiting to ask to speak on the Capital Budget then they should look to the Mayor's office or the Board of Education.

b. #2024-02 CAM – David E. Keelan & Christina Lake – 16 Rocky Point Road (District 6, Block 36, Lot 61) – Proposed addition to and raising of existing single-family house – Report & recommended action.

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation with an introduction of the project team. Many neighbors supported the application to the ZBA. She then gave a brief description of the application. She then said that most sign-offs had been received as well as letters from commissions. She said that they expected to receive a sign-off from the Department of Public Works.

Adam Cerini, the engineer on the project, continued the presentation by showing the commissioners the site plan. There was a discussion about the ground water treatment. Mr. Cerini said this would be an improvement. Atty Suchy said there is no storm water management on the property currently.

John Grinstead, the architect on the project, continued the presentation by showing the commissioners the elevations of the house.

Azure Sleicher continued the presentation with a discussion of the increase in the living space, but the occupancy of the house would decrease since there is a reduction in the number of bedrooms. It is a reduction in flood risk. She then gave a brief description of her background.

There was a discussion about the increase in impervious surfaces and adding additional drains in the yard. There was also a discussion about the landscaping plan.

Amelia Williams continued the presentation by discussing her memo which included her areas of concerns. There was a discussion about the outflow pipe. Mr. Cerini said that there is not enough space in the front of the house.

Atty Suchy suggested that some of the comments from commissioners, staff and DEEP be addressed in the conditions of the resolution for approval.

At this point, the commissioners reviewed the resolution, and specifically the conditions for the resolution. There was a discussion about DEEPs comments in their letter which are not a requirement. There was alos a discussion about making the addition a little smaller. Atty Suchy said that was not a decision they could not make at this point. Everyone agreed that this matter would be continued until the next Planning & Zoning meeting.

c. #2023-58 SPR – Greenwich Realty Development LLC – 6 Butler Street (District 1, Block 9, Lot 3) – Construction of a five-story, 20-dwelling unit, multifamily building – Report & recommended action.

This item was removed from the agenda.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. FY 2024-25 Capital Budget

At this point, Mr. Roina left the meeting.

Mr. Schulman again reminded attendees that the role of the Planning & Zoning Commission is only to confirm that the Capital Budget requests align with the POCD. He then turned the presentation over to Ms. Langalis, chair of the subcommittee for the Capital Budget requests. She gave a brief synopsis of the various departments and noted that the requests from the departments did align with the POCD. There was a discussion about items that did not have POCD citations which seemed to be mostly from the Health Department. Mr. Schulman noted who attended the meeting from the commission as well as from the Planning & Zoning Department staff. There was also a discussion about some citations from the Fire Department which may not have aligned with the POCD.

Mr. Schulman then opened the public hearing to members of the public who wanted to speak.

Diane Lauricella said she could not find a copy of the Capital Budget but could not find a link to it. She hoped that the Planning & Zoning Commission would explore a bigger role, similar to what they had in the past. She thought that it was time for a new, modern public library. Mr. Schulman reminded her that she should speak about the alignment of Capital projects to the POCD. She then spoke about the Water Pollution Control Authority items, as well as necessary city building upgrades which would include geothermal, etc. She asked them to make notes in their recommendations but Mr. Schulman said they could not. She asked again for the link to the Capital Budget.

There were no other members of the public who spoke for or against the Capital Budget. Mr. Schulman thanked the members of the subcommittee that worked on the review of it.

At this point, the commissioners reviewed the resolution from Mr. Baker. Mr. Schulman agreed with Ms. Lauricella that the role of the Planning & Zoning Commission should be changed. Ms. Langalis, who was a member of the Planning Commission in the past, described what the process looked like at that time. The role of the Planning and Zoning Commission had changed with the combination of the Planning and Zoning Commissions. Mr. Kleppin said that he could put together some recommendations that the commission could review and then have them sent to the leadership of the Common Council.

i. Action on FY 2024-25 Capital Budget

**Whereas the Capital Budget Committee of the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission, consisting of Ms. Langalis (Chair), Mr. Schulman, Mr. Kantor, Mr. Williams and Mr. Bryce, reviewed each capital request with each City department on January 19, 2024;*

**Whereas the Commission finds that the capital request by the Fire Department for the purchase of two vehicles (C0486) would be more consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development if the vehicles were electric or hybrid vehicles, and recommends that the Fire Department consider altering their request to purchase electric or hybrid vehicles;*

**Whereas the Commission requests that the Arts Commission consider moving capital request (C0804) from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget;*

**Whereas the Commission requests that the Business Development & Tourism Department consider moving capital request (C0680) from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget;*

**** MS. LANGALIS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that the FY 2024-25 Capital Budget is consistent with the 2019-2029 Plan of Conservation and Development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notice of this action be forwarded to Mayor Rilling.

Mr. Bryce seconded.
Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Ana Tabachneck; Darius Williams; Chapin Bryce; Tammy Langalis approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

b. #2024-03 R – Planning & Zoning Commission – Text amendment to require that any new proposed building(s) in any zone that exceeds a 5,000 square foot footprint or 20,000 square foot gross floor area be subject to a site plan review application unless a special permit is specified for the specific use.

Mr. Schulman opened the public hearing. Mr. Kleppin said that there are some items that needed to be clarified in the new zoning regulations.The clarification was for a trigger for a certain size property to come before the commission. . Mr. Schulman noted that they had discussed this amongst themselves.

At this point, the public was invited to speak on this matter; however, no members of the public spoke for or against this application.

**** MR. KANTOR MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** that application #2024-03 R – Planning & Zoning Commission – Text amendment to require that any new proposed building(s) in any zone that exceeds a 5,000 square foot footprint or 20,000 square foot gross floor area be subject to a site plan review application unless a special permit is specified for the specific use, be **APPROVED.**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the reasons for these actions are to implement the Citywide Plan:
1) Chapter 12, Goal 3 that *"The user-friendly zoning ordinance is consistent with the future land use map and achievement of the vision and goals of the POCD."* • The

policy to *"Support revision of the zoning ordinance to promote desired development and design patterns."*

• The policy to *"Support permit streamlining for projects with desired characteristics."* i. Strategy A., *"Modernize the Zoning Ordinance and the development approval process to achieve the goals of the POCD."* 1. Action i., *"Rewrite the Zoning Ordinance to reflect contemporary best practices in administration and user-friendliness and to be consistent with the POCD."*

2. Action ii., *"Review existing zoning districts to eliminate or replace zoning districts that do not contribute to achieve the Norwalk Tomorrow vision."*

3. Action iii., *"Include place-making and functional design standards in the requirements for non-residential and mixed-use development."*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action shall be February 19, 2024.

Mr. Williams seconded.
Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Ana Tabachneck; Darius Williams; Chapin Bryce; Tammy Langalis approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

i. Action on #2024-03 R

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 17, 2024; January 19, 2024

**** MR. WILLIAMS MOVED to approve the January 17, 2024 minutes.**
Ms. Langalis seconded.
Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Ana Tabachneck; Darius Williams; Chapin Bryce; Tammy Langalis approved.
No one opposed.
Jacquen Jordan-Byron abstained.

**** MR. KANTOR MOVED to approve the January 19, 2024 minutes.**
Mr. Bryce seconded.
Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Ana Tabachneck; Darius Williams; Chapin Bryce; Tammy Langalis; Jacquen Jordan-Byron approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin discussed a memo that had been sent to the commissioers about allowed encroachments, outdoor storage and clarification of stories in various zones. There would be a public hearing at the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting in April.

Although the new zoning regulations would be effective on Monday, the office had received applications under the old regulations before the deadline on Friday, February 16. He said that the commissioners would be busy in April and May.

VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Schulman discussed peer review consultants for traffic and architecture in conjunction with various city departments. Mr. Bryce would serve on the committee, as well as Mr. Schulman.

Mr. Kantor discussed the affordable housing survey and asked everyone to partcipate. Mr. Schulman said that he had received an email which did not seem like it was from the city. It was noted that it probably came from the consultants.

Ms. Tabachneck spoke about residential parking passes for East Norwalk and noted that there had been an economic and community subcommittee about the residential parking passes, citywide. She requested a formal letter be sent to Jim Travers or that he attend one of the Planning & Zoning Commission's meetings to give them a progress report. There had been an article in the newspaper regarding the meeting. Mr. Schulman asked whether the Planning & Zoning Commission could do something. Mr. Kleppin said that they could request further clarification. Mr. Schulman said that they could send a letter to request that this be addressed and resolved which Mr. Kleppin said they could do for the next meeting or the following one.

Ms. Tabachneck also spoke about expanding the availability of residential daycare. Mr. KLeppin said that the Planning & Zoning staff is doing research on this and hoped that they would have recommendations within the month.

Ms. Tabachneck asked for a community facing educational Q&A session to help residents understand how zoning enforcement works. Mr. Kleppin said that he and Jessica Vonashek were discussing this meeting but they need to have appropriate staff in place. The staff is being hired at the moment. There should be a meeting at the end of April with various departments who would be able to answer specific questions. He said that currently it is difficult to track complaints.

Mr. Williams suggested a fact sheet about certain violations specific to certain zones. Mr. Kleppin said that there is something similar to this on the city's website.

Mr. Schulman began a discussion about the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) but noted that the commissioners had to watch a video about this. There would then be a discussion about it. He then suggested that it be added to the agenda and have one of the city's Corporation Counsel discuss it with them. Mr. Schulman noted this is a state requirement.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Jordan-Byron made a Motion to Adjourn.
Ms. Langalis seconded.
Louis Schulman; Nick Kantor; Ana Tabachneck; Darius Williams; Chapin Bryce; Tammy Langalis; Jacquen Jordan-Byron approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero