**DRAFT**

# CITY OF NORWALK
# PLANNING COMMISSION
# October 18, 2016

**PRESENT:** Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Walter McLaughlin; Steve Ferguson; David Davidson; William Dunne; Nora King

**STAFF:** Steve Kleppin; Michael Wrinn; Dori Wilson

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Astrom called the meeting to order at 8:51 p.m.

## II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Wrinn called the roll.

## III. REPORT OF LAND USE COMMITTEE, Fran DiMeglio, Chair

**Referrals – Report & recommendation**

**a) Capital Appropriation Reductions - Department of Public Works – In the amounts of $70,000 from Salt Shed Project & DPW Facility Camera Project and $20,000 from the DPW Replacement of Piping and Valves Project, respectively**

** **MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** by the Planning Commission that the capital project reduction request from the Department of Public Works regarding the Salt Shed Project, the DPW Facility Camera project, and the DPW garage piping and valves project in the amount of $90,000 be **APPROVED;** and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that notice of this action be forwarded to the Common Council and other appropriate agencies.

**Mr. Davidson seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; Nora King and David Davidson voted in favor.**
**No one opposed.**
**No one abstained.**

**b) Capital Appropriation - Department of Public Works – Increase of $90,000 for the Public Works workspace renovation at City Hall**

** **MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED RESOLVED** by the Planning Commission that the capital project appropriation request from the Department of Public Works regarding the Public Works workspace renovation at City Hall in the amount of $90,000 be **APPROVED** and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that notice of this action be forwarded to the Common Council and other appropriate agencies.

**Mr. Davidson seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; Nora King and David Davidson voted in favor.**
**No one opposed.**
**No one abstained.**

**c) Zoning Commission referral - #6-16R - Norwalk Land Development LLC - Proposed amendments to Article 121 regarding Mixed use retail shopping center signs in Reed Putnam Design District Subarea A**

** **MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** that the proposed amendment to the Building Zone Regulations as shown on a certain document entitled "**#6-16R** – Norwalk Land Development LLC – Proposed amendments to Article 121 regarding Electronic Video Screen Signs and Exterior sign manual for Mixed use retail shopping centers in Reed Putnam Design District Subarea A" and dated October 3, 2016 be **APPROVED**.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the reasons for this action are:

1) To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development to "Strengthen the revitalization of the West Avenue, Wall Street, and Reed Putnam areas by encouraging mixed-use development (i.e. offices, stores, services, restaurants and theaters together with housing, parks and cultural facilities). (A.3.1.2, p. 12,); and

2) To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development to "To encourage retail activity in the West Avenue/Wall Street and Reed Putnam areas and place emphasis on pedestrian-oriented environment (A.4.1.1, p. 12); and

**Mr. McLauglin seconded.**

At this point, there was a discussion of the tenant expression signs. Mr. Wrinn made the following suggestions which the commissioners agreed to:

"In addition, the following comments are made:

1. That the tenant expression signs in the northwest corner remain under the control of the mall operator in order to keep the design of high quality.
2. That public service advertising be placed on the EVS signs, if allowed by the state."

Mr. Davidson still expressed concerns for the amendment and made recommendations that Zoning Commission review safety issues and make modifications to the amendment

**** MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: to include the following language into the resolution:**

"In addition, the following comments are made:

3. That the tenant expression signs in the northwest corner remain under the control of the mall operator in order to keep the design of high quality.
4. That public service advertising be placed on the EVS signs, if allowed by the state."

**Ms. King seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; Nora King and David Davidson voted in favor.**
**No one opposed.**
**No one abstained.**

**** MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** that the proposed amendment to the Building Zone Regulations as shown on a certain document entitled "**#6-16R** – Norwalk Land Development LLC – Proposed amendments to Article 121 regarding Electronic Video Screen Signs and Exterior sign manual for Mixed use retail shopping centers in Reed Putnam Design District Subarea A" and dated October 3, 2016 be **APPROVED**.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the reasons for this action are:

1) To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development to "Strengthen the revitalization of the West Avenue, Wall Street, and Reed Putnam areas by encouraging mixed-use development (i.e. offices, stores, services, restaurants and theaters together with housing, parks and cultural facilities). (A.3.1.2, p. 12,); and

2) To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development to “To encourage retail activity in the West Avenue/Wall Street and Reed Putnam areas and place emphasis on pedestrian-oriented environment (A.4.1.1, p. 12); and

In addition, the following comments are made:

3) That the tenant expression signs in the northwest corner remain under the control of the mall operator in order to keep the design of high quality.
4) That public service advertising be placed on the EVS signs, if allowed by the state.”

**Mr. Ferguson seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; Nora King voted in favor.**
**Mr. Davidson opposed.**
**No one abstained.**

Mr. Davidson stated that his opposition was directly related to the EVS on the I-95 facade and that it relates to the question of safety at that location.

**d) Zoning Commission referral - #7-16R – NW MFP Norwalk Town Center II, LLC – Proposed amendments to Section 118-504 to revise Design District Development Park (DDDP) criteria for developments in Central Business Design District Subarea B and related technical amendments**

There was a discussion as to what comments they can add and whether they should deny the resolution and ask the applicant to revise the amendment without the density. There was a lengthy discussion about whether to approve or deny. At 9:10 p.m. they decided to take a 5 minute break. They returned to the meeting at 9:16 p.m.

**** MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** that the proposed amendments to the Building Zone Regulations as shown on a certain document entitled "#7-16R – NW MFP Norwalk Town Center II, LLC – Proposed amendments to Section 118-504 to revise Design District Development Park (DDDP) criteria for developments in Central Business Design District Subarea B and related technical amendments" and dated September 28, 2016 be **APPROVED**.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the reasons for this action are:

1) To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development to "Create an engaging urban landscape and architectural setting in the West Avenue area through the adoption and implementation of West Avenue planning, as amended” (F.4.1.10, p. 44); and

2) To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development to “Advance current redevelopment plans” (A.6.2, p. 13)

3) To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development to "Strengthen the character of neighborhoods and commercial areas and improve the quality of architectural design” (F.4.1, p. 43); and

4) To allow more flexibility in the development agreements required for properties within Design District Development Parks (DDDP) in the Central Business Design District (CBDD); and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Commission recommended that

1) That the Zoning Commission review the density issue.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that notice of this action be forwarded to the Norwalk Zoning Commission.

**Mr. McLauglin seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne voted in favor.**
**Nora King and David Davidson opposed.**
**No one abstained.**

Mr. Davidson said the vote against was to fulfill the obligations to the city as outlined by the city’s attorney and not to provide for additional density. Ms. DiMeglio stated that the city’s attorney had no recommendation for the density question. The basis for Mr. Davidson’s opposition was to disapprove that portion of the proposal that related to density. Ms. King asked that staff explain to the Zoning Commissioners why they had disapproved.

## IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 20, 2016 and September 21, 2016

**MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED** to approve the minutes of September 20, 2016, as modified by Ms. King, per email to Frank Strauch.

**Mr. Ferguson seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Walter McLaughlin; William Dunne; Steven Ferguson; Nora King, and David Davidson voted in favor.**
**No one opposed.**
**Torgny Astrom abstained.**

**MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED** to approve the minutes of September 21, 2016, as modified by Mr. Davidson.

**Mr. Ferguson seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Walter McLaughlin; William Dunne; Steven Ferguson; Nora King, and David Davidson voted in favor.**
**No one opposed.**
**Torgny Astrom abstained.**

## V. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. DiMeglio announced that the nominating committee had met. Mr. Astrom had declined to resume as Chairperson of the Planning Commission. The slate that she put forth was Ms. DiMeglio as Chair, Mr. Ferguson as Vice Chair and Mr. McLauglin as Secretary. Ms. King asked that this item be moved to the next meeting since Mr. Tsiranides was not in attendance. Mr. Astrom said that there would be an election.

**MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED** to nominate herself, as Chair, Steve Ferguson as Vice Chairman and Walter McLaughlin, as Secretary.

**Mr. Ferguson seconded.**

**MS. KING MOVED** to table this agenda item until the next meeting of the Planning Commission.

**Mr. Davidson seconded.**

There was then further discussion as to why the item should be tabled. Again, Ms. King reiterated that it was because a commissioner was not at the meeting as well as the fact that three people had met to discuss it without input from the remaining commissioners. Ms. King was concerned that since there were 7 people on the commission that they should have been allowed to have “their inputs and ideas put into the process.”

There was then a discussion as to which motion should be handled first. Mr. Wrinn said that the motion that was on the table first should be voted on. Mr. Davidson believed that the motion to table the vote of Ms. DiMeglio’s motion, which put forth the nominating committee’s slate of officers, should take precedence. Mr. Wrinn then reviewed Robert’s Rules to decide which way to act. In the end, the commissioners decided that the best thing to do would be to vote on the first motion. Ms. King had concerns about being told what committee she would be on and felt there was a lack of discussion.

Ms. DiMeglio reiterated her motion and it was voted on.

**Fran DiMeglio; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne voted in favor.**
**Nora King and David Davidson opposed.**

**No one abstained.**

## VI. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin said that if anyone had any questions or comments, they could email or call him. He also suggested that someone from the Planning Commission work cooperatively with the Redevelopment Agency on the revisions of the three plans that they had asked to extend, earlier in the evening. There was then a discussion about the best way to get in touch with Mr. Kleppin as well as having separating personal emails from business emails. Emails can be subject to Freedom of Information requests.

## VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Davidson discussed an email that was submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department staff from a Norwalk citizen about water conservation.

Ms. King welcomed Mr. Kleppin and explained how she would like to see the Planning and Zoning Commissions work together. She would like to see plans being implemented and working with the Redevelopment Agency. With new leadership, the Planning Commission can move in a new direction. Ms. DiMeglio responded by saying that she felt the Planning Commission strived to have discussions and come to a consensus on items. She believed Ms. King was being combative. Ms. King said that she would like to see more working as a team. There was a discussion about the committee chairs which were appointed by the Planning Commission chair. Mr. Ferguson said he thought that they could work things out.

After 14 years of service, Mr. Astrom announced that he would be resigning from the Planning Commission. The commissioners thanked him for his service.

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. McLaughlin made a Motion to Adjourn**
**Mr. Davidson seconded.**
**Mr. Ferguson seconded.**
**Fran DiMeglio; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; William Dunne; Steven Ferguson; Nora King, and David Davidson voted in favor.**
**No one opposed.**
**No one abstained.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Palmentiero