

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMISSION
October 13, 2021**

PRESENT: Steve Ferguson, acting as Chair; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak

STAFF: Steve Kleppin

OTHERS: Vanessa Valadares; Anthony Carr; Atty Randall Avery

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ferguson called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately. Mr. Mushak expressed his condolences from the Planning Commission to Mr. Ferguson, whose uncle had passed away the previous day.

III. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

A. Special Appropriation – DPW – Rowayton Avenue over Keeler Brook Bridge Replacement Project – Report & recommended action

Vanessa Valadares, of the Department of Public Works, noted that the Keeler Brook Bridge had been closed after Hurricane Elsa. It had not been on the list to be repaired for several years. This is a special request for funding to repair the bridge. There was a discussion as to whether this repair would replace another. Ms. Valadares said that the other bridges on the top of the list still had to be repaired. The bridge had been built either 50-70 year ago. There was also a discussion about widening the road. She said they could not because this is an emergency repair so they have to replace it in kind. The hydraulic would have to be studied and that type of repair would not happen for 5-10 years. They would like to repair it as quickly as possible. There was a discussion about whether there would be FEMA money available.

**** MR. FERGUSON MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that Special Appropriation – DPW – Rowayton Avenue over Keeler Brook Bridge Replacement Project 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. That “Norwalk’s infrastructure and public facilities are resource-efficient, well-maintained, cost-effective, sustainable and resilient” (Chapter 11: Public Facilities, Infrastructure & Services); and

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

Ms. Langalis seconded.

Steve Ferguson; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

B. 8-24 Referral #09-2021- WPCA – 174-176 Bouton Street – Sanitary sewer extension – Report & recommended action and C. 8-24 Referral #10-2021 – WPCA – 238 West Rocks Road – Sanitary sewer extension – Report & recommended action

Vanessa Valadares, of the Department of Public Works (DPW), began the presentation by explaining that there had been recent changes to the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) guidelines for sanitary sewer extension. There were 2 projects, one on Boynton Street and the other on West Rocks Road. If the septic system fails, they would be ready to connect. There was a discussion about septic systems in the city. Ms. Valadares explained the process which included a public hearing before the WPCA.

There was also a discussion about whether the sanitary sewer extension had been approved previously. Ms. Valadares said that the project had been approved on the condition of getting this approval. There was a discussion about the paving projects in the area. Mr. Carr noted that the applicant is required to do monitoring of infiltration into the sewer lines, as well as explaining the whole process.

**** MR. MUSHAK MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that 8-24 Referral #09-21 - WPCA – 174-176 Bouton Street – Sanitary sewer extension 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. That “Norwalk’s infrastructure and public facilities are resource-efficient, well-maintained, cost-effective, sustainable and resilient” (Chapter 11: Public Facilities, Infrastructure & Services); and

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

Ms. Langalis seconded.

Steve Ferguson; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

**** MS. LANGALIS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that 8-24 Referral #10-21 - WPCA – 238 West Rocks Road – Sanitary sewer extension 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. That “Norwalk’s infrastructure and public facilities are resource-efficient, well-maintained, cost-effective, sustainable and resilient” (Chapter 11: Public Facilities, Infrastructure & Services); and

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

Ms. Shockley seconded.

Steve Ferguson; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

D. Zoning Commission referral - #2021-37 R - Oak Hills Park Authority – 165 Fillow Street/1 Charles Marshall Drive – Text amendment to remove “full-service” from the restaurant use for Oak Hills Golf Course – Report & recommended action

Atty Randall Avery, the attorney for the applicant, gave a brief history of the Oak Hills Authority which had been created in 1977. He noted that all further information was in Mr. Baker’s staff memo which they could review. There was a discussion about the difference between full-service, all-season restaurants and full-service restaurants. It was noted that the size of the bar was the difference. He also explained that it applied to this bar and some on Washington Street.

There was also a discussion about whether this text amendment would help Oak Hills become solvent. Atty Avery believed that it would help especially since the interior would be a sitdown restaurant and no longer a catering hall, as it had been in the past. Several commissioners were supportive of this application.

**** MS. LANGALIS MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that Zoning Commission Referral - #2021-37 R - Oak Hills Park Authority – 165 Fillow Street/1 Charles Marshall Drive – Text amendment to remove “full-service” from the restaurant use for Oak Hills Golf Course be **APPROVED.**

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

1. To achieve the Plan of Conservation and Development goal that “Norwalk aims to have the best city park and recreation system in Connecticut,” Chapter 7: Enhancing Open Space, Park, Trail & Recreation Systems; and
2. To achieve the Plan of Conservation and Development goal for Norwalk to “focus on maintaining and improving the large parks that serve the city such as Calf Pasture Beach, Cranbury Park, and Oak Hills,” Chapter 7: Enhancing Open Space, Park, Trail & Recreation Systems.

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

Ms. Shockley seconded.

Steve Ferguson; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

E. Industrial Zones Study Presentation

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation and he noted that Ms. Langalis was on the committee. The process had begun 10 months ago. Public comments had been solicited and neighborhood meetings would begin in the upcoming weeks especially in South Norwalk. He discussed the key takeaways, including industrial uses and contractor yards. There are 4 proposed classifications of industrial use in the study. He showed them a map of the existing zoning and the proposed classifications.

Mr. Kleppin continued by noting that the consultants recommended increasing the heights of buildings on the ground floor for some types of manufacturing. These buildings could include residential. He showed them examples from other towns around the state. He discussed mixed use industrial/commercial test fits. He showed them a slide about the proposed zoning districts and contractor uses in those districts. He also discussed what types of permits should be allowed. He showed them the proposed rezoning maps in South Norwalk, East Norwalk, Main Avenue, and downtown .

He then summarized the study as well as discussed the next steps.

There was a discussion about 230 East Avenue. There was a discussion about the comments from the businesses that are in these areas now. Mr. Kleppin said they would reach out to them since the study has been completed. There was also a discussion about how to make the study more user friendly. There was a discussion about whether these proposed zones would expand the places where HVAC, plumbing, electrical contractors could set up their businesses in Norwalk. There was also a discussion about the Perry Avenue section of Norwalk. Mr. Ferguson said he hoped this study would be used to help keep businesses in the city.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 11, 2021; September 27, 2021

Mr. Mushak suggested delaying the approval of the minutes until the next meeting. Mr. Ferguson concurred.

V. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin noted that the waterfront study had been started.

VI. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

There were no comments from the commissioners.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Langalis made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Baxendale seconded.

Steve Ferguson; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero