

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMISSION
August 11, 2021**

PRESENT: Fran DiMeglio, Chair; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Steve Ferguson; Mike Mushak

STAFF: Bryan Baker

OTHERS: Vanessa Valadares; Hiram Peck

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. DiMeglio called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Baker called the roll. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately. Ms. DiMeglio noted that she would make a few changes to the agenda.

III. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

A. 8-24 Referral #07-2021 – Department of Public Works – 440 Newtown Avenue/78 Cranbury Road – Extension of private sanitary sewer for approved conservation development – Report & recommended action

Vanessa Valadares began the presentation with an explanation of the application. The applicant would maintain a private sanitary sewer. She noted some others would become public in the future. She explained the approval process. She also explained that the Planning Commission would see more of these types of applications. She then explained that more capacity is being added to the lines. In the future, the homeowner's association would have to maintain the lines.

**** MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that 8-24 Referral #07-21 - DPW – 440 Newtown Avenue/78 Cranbury Road – Extension of private sanitary sewer for approved conservation development 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
2. That "Norwalk has a neighborhood and housing strategy that maintains a variety of neighborhood types and housing choices through a variety of mechanisms" (Chapter 4: Housing Choice & Healthy Lifestyles); and

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

Mr. Baxendale seconded.

Fran DiMeglio; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Steve Ferguson;

Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

B. #2021-18 R – 25 Van Zant Street Condominium - 25 Van Zant Street – Building zone text amendment to create a “vocational/trade (workforce training center) school” use and to allow the use as a principal use in the Industrial #1 Zone – Report & recommended action

Hiram Peck began the presentation. Ms. DiMeglio noted that the application had been brought before the Planning Commission a few years ago but was withdrawn. Mr. Peck gave a brief history of the building and then discussed the changes to the regulations. He said that they are excited to provide this type of vocational training in Norwalk. There was a discussion about the specific text changes. One was the definition of the vocational school and the other was the use being added to the Industrial Zone.

There was a discussion about for-profit companies who could take advantage of Norwalk residents. Mr. Peck said they would screen their lessees and would make those details known. He said they had received interest from some schools but had not signed any leases since they have not received an approval. They are also in discussion with the state of Connecticut which is enthusiastic about the vocational school. There was a concern that residents would complete the training and then obtain a job. Mr. Peck explained that they would try their best to make sure that the interests of the students were addressed.

There were concerns about the accreditation of these schools, as well as the number of students, professors that would be attending the school. Mr. Peck explained that the traffic study relied on the maximum number of people that could be in the building at any one time. Mr. Peck noted that there would be interior renovations in the building, from time to time. There was a discussion about providing day care in the building, as well as other community gathering spaces. There was also a discussion about whether these were leases or condominiums. Mr. Peck said that they would be leased to various institutions.

Several commissioners supported the application. Mr. Mushak noted that Southwestern Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) had done a study about how many tradespeople were needed in Fairfield County. He said that he also supported this application.

**** MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** that #2021-18 R/SPR/CAM- 25 Van Zant Street Condominium – Proposed amendments to §118-100 and §118-700 of the Building Zone Regulations to allow trade and vocations schools as defined, in the I1 Zone be **APPROVED**.

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

1) Chapter 3, Goal 2Aiii. Study industrial zoning and update zoning and land use regulations to allow and encourage a wider set of uses in targeted industrial zones, focused on market opportunities in warehouse/logistics, brewing/distilling, artist/artisan uses and other light industrial uses that do not have detrimental externalities on nearby areas; and

2) Chapter 5, Goal 4A. Attract a higher education presence to downtown Norwalk. Staff comment: while this is not downtown, additional higher education is needed.

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

Mr. Baxendale seconded.

Fran DiMeglio; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Steve Ferguson;

Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 14, 2021

Since the commissioners asked for revisions to the July 14, 2021 minutes, Mr. Baker said that once the edits had been completed he would re-send them to the commissioners. They would be voted on at the next meeting.

V. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Baker reminded the commissioners of the Joint Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on August 31, 2021.

VI. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Mushak thanked everyone for the brevity of the meeting.

Ms. DiMeglio noted that some materials for the Planning Commission agenda had not been attached to it on the city's website. Mr. Baker said in the future he would post all materials for the public.

Ms. DiMeglio discussed the July public hearing for the combined Planning and Zoning Commission. She noted that the application would still go to the Common Council and that if approved, it would become effective as of January 2022. There would be 9 members and 3 alternates. The Mayor would determine who the members would be. She noted when the next meetings for the Planning Commission would be.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. DiMeglio made a Motion to Adjourn.

Ms. Langalis seconded.

Fran DiMeglio; Tamara Shockley; Tammy Langalis; Brian Baxendale; Steve Ferguson;

Mike Mushak approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero