

**CITY OF NORWALK
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: Felix R. Serrano, Chairman; Commissioners Lisa Cooper, Tom Devine, William Speirs and David Westmoreland

AGENCY COUNSEL: Marc Grenier, Esq.

STAFF: Timothy T. Sheehan, Executive Director, John Slovak, Comptroller; Susan Sweitzer, Senior Project Manager; Tami Strauss, Director of Community Development Planning; Sabrina Church, Community Development Planner

OTHERS: See attached sign-in sheet

**PUBLIC HEARING: THE PROPOSED WALL STREET-WEST AVENUE
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

(A verbatim transcript of the full public hearing is attached to these minutes.)

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency was called to order at 7:13 PM.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Serrano noted that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chairman Serrano opened the Public Participation portion of the meeting.

Bill Collins said with regard to the request for an extension of the Regional Plan Association contract, there is a severe question in his mind whether these folks are up to the job. The report that they did is very much 1960s/1970s kind of stuff, and we need more than that. While the goals of the Plan – innovative, accessible, authentic, lively and affordable –are obtainable, there is very little sign that this organization can accomplish those goals, so before extending the contract he thinks staff from the Redevelopment Agency as well as the Planning Committee need to sit down with the folks from RPA and find out what they propose that will make these things happen and talk with them about specifics on how to activate storefronts, what the specific zoning ought to be on new buildings in these areas, how wide the storefronts ought to be, and what the separation between storefronts ought to be so that small businesses can fit in. There are a lot of things that deserve a renegotiation and he hopes that they will continue to work at it.

The public participation was closed.

I – A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of December 13, 2018 Special Meeting.

- ** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 13, 2018 SPECIAL MEETING.**
- ** MR. WESTMORELAND SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED (MR. SPEIRS ABSTAINED).**

I – B. FINANCE

1. Approve Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for Year-To-Date November 30, 2018.
 - Operating Fund 100 had revenues of \$772,554 versus budgeted revenues of \$874,414 with an unfavorable variance of \$101,860. This is largely due to \$69,647 of undrawn salary and benefits for an open position.
 - Actual operating expenditures are \$708,439 versus a budget of \$882,039 resulting in a \$173,600 favorable variance of which \$69,647 is similarly due to the open position. There is also a favorable variance of \$44,572 for taxes and benefits expense mostly due to the switch from Anthem to the CTPP 2.0 City Medical Insurance Plan.
 - There is an actual operating surplus of \$64,115 versus a budgeted operating deficit of \$7,625 resulting in a \$71,739 favorable net operating variance.

Mr. Slovak said, as noted in the detailed operating statements, there aren't any big changes in the last five months to November 30th, and things are going smoothly and well. There is a bottom line positive operating surplus of \$64,000, and there is a positive year-to-date budget variance of \$71,000 for five months of operation.

- ** MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENCY STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR YEAR-TO-DATE NOVEMBER 30, 2018 AS PRESENTED.**
- ** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. CONTRACTS

A. MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM

1. Approve the continuation of the Marketing and Communications Contract with Silver Creative Group for the Microtransit Program in an amount not to exceed \$120,000 from Fund 115 for the year 2019.

Ms. Church said in June 2018 the Agency approved a \$50,000 contract with Silver Creative to do the marketing for the Microtransit Pilot Program for a period of six months, which prompted over 1,000 downloads and resulted in about 1,200 rides over the course of 12 weeks. As a result of the program's success, the Transit District has agreed to continue the service for the upcoming year with input from Agency staff, and an additional marketing budget to cover the entire year. We started the service in South Norwalk and the Wall Street area and expanded into East Norwalk towards the beach area and into a single family residential area towards Strawberry Hill to bring a variety of people into the downtown. We are also seeing riders going to and from the train station. We are discussing expanding hours by going later and perhaps starting earlier in the day, and also expanding the boundary even more. Their main concern is with wait times, and as you expand the

district, it becomes a longer distance and increases the wait time, and they don't want to see the wait time getting to the point where it is not convenient for the users.

Chairman Serrano asked if the Transit District had the capacity to handle more growth. Mr. Sheehan said they have another bus that they could put on line. Ms. Church said the ridership hasn't gotten to the point where we need a third bus, but once the ridership and the wait time goes up they will add on another driver.

Mr. Westmoreland asked if they are charging for the rides. Ms. Church said we are in talks about actually charging for it, but right now they think that it is better to keep it free and have the recognition so that people get more comfortable with using the service as it continues.

**** MR. SPEIRS MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONTINUATION OF THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACT WITH SILVER CREATIVE GROUP FOR THE MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$120,000 FROM FUND 115 FOR THE YEAR 2019.**

**** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS.

1. Review and approve proposed contract with Julio Pardo as recommended by the Norwalk Arts Commission for implementation of CNI public art project.

Ms. Sweitzer said this item is back in front of them from last month. The issue was that the original contract had been between the Redevelopment Agency and the Norwalk Arts Commission, and the Law Department made the decision that the Arts Commission is not a statutorily established commission and therefore did not have the authority to sign contracts, so the recommendation was that we execute the contract directly with the independent project manager, Julio Pardo. Julio is there if they have any questions regarding his background and/or his capacity to carry out the contract, but the terms and conditions of the contract and the phases and the scope of work of the contract are the same. We are coordinating and collaborating with the Arts Commission as we had originally. Mr. Sheehan said Julio was the Arts Commission's recommendation. The Agency will still maintain administrative responsibility for disbursement of funds.

Mr. Westmoreland said he doesn't understand the issue with the Arts Commission because they are ordinance created. Mr. Sheehan said the ordinance established the commission, but it gave the commission no authority, and that is the problem. His understanding is that the Ordinance Committee is going to take up modifications to the ordinance.

**** MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED THE APPROVAL OF THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PHASE I AND PHASE II CONTRACTS WITH JULIO PARDO, PROJECT MANAGER, TO COMPLETE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE CRITICAL COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS PLAN PUBLIC ART SUBJECT TO THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENCY COUNSEL IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED A COMBINED TOTAL OF \$100,000; AND AUTHORIZE FELIX R. SERRANO, CHAIRMAN, TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS AS REQUIRED TO DISCHARGE PHASE I AND PHASE II PUBLIC ART CONTRACTS WITH JULIO**

PARDO, PROJECT MANAGER, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED A COMBINED TOTAL OF \$100,000.

**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

C. REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION CONTRACT EXTENSION

1. Extend contract.

Ms. Strauss said staff is requesting an extension of our contract with the Regional Plan Association to make the necessary edits or do more research in order to submit a final document to the Planning Committee in February. Originally the Commissioners approved a \$150,000 contract, which expired in September. We have only spent \$65,257 of that \$150,000, so there is money left to extend the contract and get the work done in time. We have only asked for \$25,000 of the remaining \$85,000 of the contract as we don't expect that the work will exceed that amount. RPA is a nonprofit planning agency covering New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. They provide a range of expertise on energy, environment, housing, transportation and demographics that help go into the development of the plan. Mr. Sheehan said they provide assistance to municipalities as well as state government, and they are a voice with regards to urban planning in the tri state area.

Ms. Strauss said we will summarize the input from the public hearing and incorporate changes. Some of it was very technical and some things may require further research, but hopefully they can get it done in a month so we can stay on schedule.

Mr. Sheehan said the issue at this point is to ensure that what we have is ready to go for council approval and for Agency approval, not necessarily a timeline of a month. Important comment was brought forward on some technical issues with regards to the blight finding and the statutory requirements for a blight finding for a redevelopment plan area. The Commissioners need to be comfortable that the blight finding is a solid finding, and it is clearly the obligation of the consultant and staff to ensure that you have the ability to make that determination.

Mr. Speirs said there were a number of points that were made in the public hearing that had nothing to do with the plan and nothing to do with this commission, and he would like to get a list of the things that will either be investigated internally or with RPA that are relevant things associated with this plan that need to be addressed so that we are all on the same page and that we know about the things that came out of this. Chairman Serrano said they need staff to put together all the relevant points specific to the plan that were brought out and circulate that to the commissioners, and the commissioners will get back to staff if they have any follow-ups.

Ms. Strauss said a lot of what they heard we could do in-house without the expertise of the RPA, and then take the larger issues back to them, and we should be able to do it with a \$25,000 budget.

Mr. Sheehan said he is contemplating that the issues we will be working on are specific questions relative to the plan, and if we ultimately hit an issue that we have to engage with RPA on, we will bring that back to them.

Mr. Westmoreland asked if they would email the commissioners the list so they don't have to wait until the next meeting. Ms. Strauss said we are going to post it. It is going to become a public document, and she will email it to them when we have it done.

**** MS. COOPER MOVED THAT THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY COMMISSION APPROVE TO EXTEND THE TERMS OF THE RPA CONTRACT AND AUTHORIZE THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY CHAIRMAN TO EXECUTE THE CONTRACT AND ALL OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS.**

**** MR. SPEIRS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Real Estate Negotiations with the First Taxing District of the City of Norwalk.

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:39 P.M AS SET FORTH IN ARTICLE III OF THE AGENDA TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FIRST TAXING DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF NORWALK.**

**** MR. WESTMORELAND SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 8:02 P.M. and stated for the record that there was no action taken.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

(None.)

V. OLD BUSINESS

(None.)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further New or Old Business, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Pacchiana

**CITY OF NORWALK
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING
JANUARY 8, 2019**

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AGENCY COUNSEL: Marc Grenier, Esq.

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OTHERS: See attached sign-in sheet

Chairman Serrano welcomed everyone to the Public Hearing and thanked them for coming out. This is the Public Hearing for the draft Wall Street-West Avenue Redevelopment Plan. Tonight's public comment will be recorded in the public record and summarized and attached to the final version of the plan to be submitted to the Council for review.

The public comment period, which began in November, will end this Thursday, January 10th, and so additional written comments can be provided up until then. The plan is a draft and is subject to change per the comments received during the public comment period as well as tonight's public hearing. The process for tonight is we have a signup sheet and hopefully everyone has signed up if you want to make sure you make comments, and when called upon please come up, state your name and street for the record. We have a good group tonight, so in order to allow everyone the opportunity to speak, if you could limit your comments to about five minutes, that would be helpful so we can make sure everyone has an opportunity. We are here to listen, but neither staff nor the Commissioners can express their views or respond to your comments. However, if you do have questions, it will be noted by staff and answered afterward in writing and posted on the Agency website.

Finally, before we begin, we are going to start with a short presentation, but I just want to take a moment to clear up some confusion that was out there. One was regarding tax incentives. The Commission and the Agency, we have no authority with any possible tax incentive that may be proposed with regards to any portion of the plan, so I thought it was important that the public tonight was able to understand that. With that I will pass it onto staff for their brief overview, and then we will go right into the sign-in sheet.

(Whereupon Ms. Strauss referred to a PowerPoint presentation and gave a brief overview of the Plan.)

Ms. Strauss then called the first person on the list, John Lawlor. (No Comment).

Adloph Neaderland, 1 Greenhill Road, said he has been a longtime resident and former chairman of a company that he started with his son here in town, Sound Control

Technologies. We just had to buy a building because there are so few loading docks in town that we couldn't rent a space, so keep that in mind as far as the long range planning is concerned because – I'm sorry I didn't bring enough handouts. I didn't think there would be this much of a crowd. My concern is the relationship of the Redevelopment Plan and POCD on which I served on the advisory board. POCD is touted as the long range ten year plan overall for the city. What Redevelopment has done is segmented the city into small areas, not necessarily related to POCD. As a matter of fact, there is an inherent conflict because POCD – let's see if I can get this straight – POCD's emphasis has really been on expanding light industrial in order to spread the tax base away from homeowners whereas there is no mention of POCD in the Redevelopment Plan, this plan that we're talking about, and the plan doesn't mention, or really doesn't emphasize light industrial at all, and the conflict lies in what kind of buildings should be built to accommodate light industrial, if we're going to move in that direction, as opposed to multi story residential mixed use for restaurants and entertainment on the ground floor. There's no room for light industrial there.

Having talked about this fundamental conflict, I'd like to move onto the Plan as proposed. Redevelopment has made a major improvement in their plans for residential units. When you look at the West Avenue monoliths, there is no streetscape to be considered. One of the things that is in all the plans is to make the Norwalk area pedestrian friendly. Well, West Avenue is not pedestrian friendly. There is virtually no vegetation in the area.

I was in Seattle this past June for my granddaughter's wedding and I went to visit a redevelopment area that was done in the Green Lake area. In my handout I have pictures of streetscapes that would make you cry when you look at West Avenue. It's really a disaster. There's no consideration there for any vegetation in the street and it's far from pedestrian friendly. This new plan has some of that, but nothing like what they've done in Seattle, and I would urge someone from Redevelopment to go out there and see what is possible.

There's also some conflicting information in the plan. One of the sheets I have referenced here, and I can't read that far – don't get old, because when you get old you can't see and all things happen. In one section it says that sidewalks have to be 7' wide. Okay. In another section it says 5' minimum. So what is a developer going to do? He's going to make the building as big as possible and shoot for the 5' sidewalk, whereas even 7' wide is difficult for two baby carriages to pass. So I would say that this board should consider a major review of this plan. In other words, back to the drawing board because the people of the city have voiced that -- the 180 people who showed up last October for the POCD meeting voiced almost the unanimous opinion they did not want multi story residential mixed use buildings in downtown Norwalk, and that same voice was raised at almost everyone of the individual meetings that I attended. Now that doesn't appear in this report at all, so the real issue is what governs, the people of Norwalk or the people of Redevelopment? I say that we as taxpayers should have a major voice in what goes into the city, and that's not what's happening. And with that you can look at the handout and make your own intelligent decision.

Sandy Schmitt, 10 Quintard Avenue said three comments. She is very upset about Firetree moving into our neighborhood without anybody telling us. That's a disgrace. Okay? Second is the sidewalk of Quintard Avenue. Every sidewalk around Norwalk has been fixed. Quintard Avenue, it's been ignored. Okay? Third, the new development in Water Street, they come in, they dug all the building down, the dust is disgusting. I have a problem with asthma.

When at night I go to sleep it's bad. Okay? I have to wear my infibulator (phonetic). Third, no matter how many times we come to the open meetings, we give our opinion, but you know what? You guys do things behind doors. That's not acceptable. Open your books, open your lives with us, and hear what we are asking you guys to do. You guys not listen to us. You guys not listen to our cry. You guys do everything behind doors and just sign the papers. Zoning, everything, it's done behind doors. It's very upsetting. Please do something for us. Listen to our cry. Norwalk, it's bad. Water Street it's always flooding. Wall Street, it's – I don't know what's going on in there. Nobody is doing anything about that. Can you guys get together and fix this problem in Norwalk, or it's going to get worse. Thank you.

Jason Enters – no comment.

Olive Lawlor – no comment.

Bryan Dietz – no comment.

Bill Collins said all right, Mr. Chairman, you've got a good crowd, which is great because the first thing I wanted to mention was I think this is a very inappropriate time to hold a public hearing. 5:30 in the afternoon is sort of an advertisement, sort of an advertisement that you're not looking to have a lot of people come because people work, they have kids they have to pick up, they have to prepare dinner, they have things in the evening that they might want to go out to. 5:30 is pretty monumentally inconvenient for a great many people in town, and the members of the board can arrange their lives around it because you do it every month, but for average citizens I think you might want to think about it again when you hold another public hearing.

First of all, I'd like to say that I think this Plan is totally inadequate and should be sent back to the consultants with advice from the members of the board and the staff. First of all, it makes mention – it makes it sound important that the city pass some kind of Innovation District which would provide tax relief for any developer who comes in within the defined area and builds pretty much whatever he wants, and, you know, we're not novices at this, we know exactly what will happen. The people who build apartment buildings now will come back and build more apartment buildings exactly as they have been doing and they'll get their taxes reduced for it. I don't see anything too innovative about that, and I think that ought to be turned down by the city councilmen, but it ought to also be turned down by you. I realize you don't vote on the tax abatement, but it ought not to be included in this document because it sets the wrong tone. It has the air of boondoggle about it.

Also mentioned is, as an important thing, is this being part of an Opportunity Zone under President Trump's tax reduction bill for the rich. There is a provision in that bill, which I think is being referred to in this document, as providing – and Norwalk is qualified – has Norwalk qualified? We've qualified to be part of the Opportunity Zone under the federal law, which means that almost any rich investor can come in, invest in more or less what he wants to invest in, and get a tax deduction from the feds. Norwalk has not laid out the criteria. We don't have much to say about it. All that they have to do is put some money in,. It may or may not be what we want to have built, probably not. So I don't think it has a place in this document.

These are things I think that should be removed from the document. Things that ought to be inserted in the document are also plain, and I've burdened you with this at some of your meetings in the past. There's nothing in there about eminent domain. We have buildings within this district that need to be torn down. We have others that need to be fixed up. Developers, and I'll give Mr. DiScala credit, he tried to get hold of that awful building at Main and Wall, they didn't want to sell, and the city has no power to take the building. It's not even recommended in here that the city impose eminent domain so that either the city itself or through the developer – or developer through the city can get hold of whatever buildings are necessary where the owners are not willing to do anything. They just want to sit there and wait for the money to pour in later on. Eminent domain really needs to be put in here.

Thinking in the terms of the Parking Authority, which is working hard to try to get angled parking on certain streets that we have that would be acceptable for it – West Avenue, Wall Street, Main Street and Burnell Boulevard for examples. There's nothing in here about angled parking, so the Parking Authority is trying on its own to get some of that put together. No help from this document.

There's nothing in this document that talks about subsidizing the kinds of retail establishments and other attractions that we really want to have in NoNo. NoNo meaning North Norwalk for those who are not familiar with the term. It was first coined about 40 years ago and unfortunately didn't catch on, but it's probably time to have it catch on, so it would be parallel to SoNo. Anyway, if we want to get attractive retail, we have to pay for it I'm afraid. We're probably going to lose the Garden Cinema if the city doesn't put some money into that, and that will make the Wall Street area even more desolate. We could really use an ice cream parlor. No ice cream dealer/parlor owner is going to come in and set up on his own. He's going to need a subsidy until things get better. We need a book store. There's one being forced out in Darien. See what they would want to come up here and operate in NoNo.

I've noticed that mens shoe stores are not prominent around here. We could probably use one of those on Wall Street or West Avenue or someplace like that. A bodega like New York City where they have out in the front in the frames and shelves with the oranges and the apples and the pears and the rutabagas and the cabbages and all that stuff with the clear plastic sheeting around draws people like crazy in New York. It would do it here too, but we've got to pay for that to get somebody to start. Maybe the guys on West Avenue who have a very nice store would do that if we supported them.

There are lots of different kinds of shops that would appeal to people in town and other towns to come in and visit this part of the city which has a lot of density. I do think the emphasis on increasing the density is right on target, and I hope they keep that up, but it's the stuff around the edges, like the sidewalks. Somebody mentioned the sidewalks. They're in very crummy shape in many places, so you've got to do more than that. You've got to protect people who walk on the sidewalks from what comes down. There's nothing in here about awnings. I was very pleased to see in a rendering of the building that is proposed for South Main Street that it has awnings sticking out of it. I don't know whether they're fixed. I mean it's just a rendering. I don't know whether they're fixed or whether you roll them up, but we should require awnings on all commercial buildings that front on the major streets to protect the

pedestrians. And in places where awnings don't really work out because the sidewalk is too wide or isn't up against the building, the city should be prepared to build structures to protect pedestrians from what comes down from overhead. This is done in parts of Europe. I'm sure Mr. Westmoreland and Mr. Mushak have seen things like I've been talking about around the world. They send back wonderful pictures of the places they visit. There are so many things that could be done. None of them are suggested in this document.

And one other thing too was, before I forget, there is no provision proposed for public restrooms. We don't have any in Norwalk. Real cities do make provision for public restrooms. It makes a big difference in who comes to your town, how many people come to your town, and the quality of life in your downtown. There ought to be something in here about that.

So suffice it to say I'm very unhappy with this plan. I think before you consider extending the contract with the consultants, you ought to hold their feet to the fire and find out whether you think they really can do more creative activation type proposals for you. And if not, if they can't do that, say thank you, it's been fun, but we're going to go look for somebody else. I mean that's what real leadership is in a city. You can't just keep on going on the way you've been going on if you want to make change. If you want to make change, you got to go out and make some change. And I would admonish the Redevelopment Agency to take the bull by the horns and make some change, and if you need any further advice I'm always available of course. Thank you.

Chairman Serrano said if he could just remind everyone to try to keep your comments to five minutes so we can get everyone in, because I know people are standing as well, so we want to make sure.

Mr. Collins said no one else will be as long as I was.

Dennis O'Connor – no comment.

Brian Baxendale – no comment.

John Romano – no comment.

Rich Bonenfant, 17 Parkhill Avenue, said thanks for having a public hearing. I get kind of nervous when I agree with Bill Collins on some points, anyway. I don't like to admit it, but he was pretty good on that. Anyway, I guess your hearing tonight is a required formality in the process and I just want to say that I'm pretty sure that you guys must know that your staff isn't waiting for this process to play out. You're already going before the Zoning Board looking for all the changes on a plan that hasn't been approved yet. The Zoning Board's being presented with, you know, looking for the changes that are needed for this plan, which isn't even approved yet. So I just wanted to point that out.

The other night I went to the Planning Committee of the Common Council and they were talking about – they have been working on this plan for months, but I think – I'm watching them and their reaction when it seemed like for the first time they were hearing that they're going to move the Pulse Point to South Norwalk at the train station as part of the thing, and

they're going to cram in these new kind of 400 square foot studio apartments and put a lot of those in there because you can skip on your parking requirements if you do that. Okay? There's a parking advantage that goes with that. So with all these new apartments built for millennials that probably have babies sooner or later, what school are we all going to? Right? Every school is crowded now and we're giving away parks in order to build new schools. Where are the kids going to play? You tell me. There's no open space downtown. Can the wastewater treatment plant handle another, what, 4,000 apartments that are being built now, being planned, being online? So if we can't get a handle on our illegal apartments and the over crowdedness, what's that going to do with the density now?

So like Mr. Collins said, give people a reason to go downtown. You put traffic and no place to park and tons of apartments down there isn't going to make people want to go downtown and visit. He's right. Give people something to do. Give them restaurants and stores and attractions, and that will bring people downtown. You don't have to cram it with people. Thank you.

Bobbie Kinn said I wasn't going to say anything, but I will. I am Bobbie Kinn. I live at 399 Main Avenue, better known as Merritt River Apartments, and I want to speak to the apartment issue, because we keep talking about all the millennials that are moving into town. God bless them, they're spending money here. They go out at night, they're supporting the businesses, but the other section of the population that we need to consider are people – and I know I'm older than I look, I've got to get my roots touched up – are people who are downsizing, who have lived in other communities, who have lived in Norwalk and are now moving here into our apartments. We live at Merritt River and there are any number of families – I shouldn't say families – adults living in there who have moved here from Wilton. They've downsized out of Darien, they've moved out of Monroe and they've come down here. These people are spending their money here. It is a misnomer when we say that they are not paying property taxes. We are. We pay them as a part of our rent, but as a renter we do not see that benefit on our taxes, but that's okay because of the tax code change many of you may not see any more either.

We also say about all these apartments coming in and all these people having children, the reality is a lot of the apartments being built now are one and two bedroom apartments and studios. There are very few three bedroom units available in this town. We live in a building that has three bedroom apartments. There are children. At most we tend to see two children in those apartments. I think we can look at the school records and see how many children come into our school systems in the last year are actually living in the apartments that are being built. I think we would find it's a very small percentage and it is not impacting on the school systems in the manner in which we present. We are an overcrowded school system. There's no question about it. I was a teacher. I understand, but building more studio apartments is not going to cause them to have all sorts of children. Some of the apartments, you ask them what are their occupancy policies and they will tell you how many residents can be living in that apartment. I live in a two bedroom. I think you're allowed two people per bedroom. You go beyond that, you got to find something bigger. So I just want to correct that for the record. That is I think a conception that's put out there and before we continue to repeat that publicly, maybe somebody should look at our Board of Education and see what are the real impacts of the current apartments on the school system.

I do agree about flushing the toilet though. That is a concern. And it's not the people upstream that are going to suffer, it's all the people downstream. When they start flushing all the toilets, we have a problem, so put on a toilet tax -- I know we're not taxing the developers so we have the money to build the additional infrastructure. There are towns that put on a bedroom tax in the initial development so that you are capturing the money that you need for capital improvements and things like school systems and parks. That's a citywide issue. That's not redevelopment. That's it for the old people that live in the apartments.

Nancy Rosett – no comment.

Brad Craighead – no comment.

Theodore Stepanoff – no comment.

Frank Farricker, Wall Street Theatre, said I go to these meetings and I never expect when I'm number 17 on the list to be up by ten after 6:00, so I appreciate the no comments. And I appreciate the Agency for the Plan. There are a lot of good things about this plan. I do have one very important issue with it that I would hope that could be addressed somehow, and it has to do with the classification of blight, which is the requirement in order for this plan to be drawn. I believe that the RPA study is very flawed, as it does not identify blight. As you've heard people speak tonight about blight. People want certain things built in certain places, they want stuff done, but the plan does not address how, where and why blight is addressed. Matter of fact it's brought so broadly that it calls into question whether this Redevelopment Plan is actually permitted, so let me explain.

In order to find the maximum classification of properties as blighted, the Plan relies on three specific conditions for justification. These classifications are the potential presence of lead paint in properties, the location of a parcel in a flood plain, and the actual or perceived existence of a brownfield site. Regarding the lead paint, the study makes the claim that, and I quote, "lead paint remediation is a costly undertaking that is unlikely to be performed with regular home and building maintenance." It is assumed that this language is designed to confirm with Chapter 130 Section 8-125 of the blight determination criteria which is considered a condition from a defect that is not correctable by normal maintenance. This is a requirement that you have at least 20 or 25% of the properties in the designated area affected in this way. However, almost 59% of the parcels that you cite as blighted in the Wall Street area are cited as blighted solely because they were constructed before 1979 and the consultant didn't find a substantial renovation in the building district. So in other words, 59% if those properties are just because they're older than 1979.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health provides an EPA DIY remediation of lead paint guide to individuals and estimates the cost of a six room single family home in the 06851 zip code to be \$3,350, which is not extensive and beyond maintenance. The City of New Haven Healthy Homes program which addresses lead paint remediation tells homeowners to make six particular changes. (1), be sure to keep all your paint in good repair; (2) periodically clean horizontal surfaces like window sills using a detergent, use lead safe work practices when disturbing paint during home repairs or maintenance. It is obvious to me that mere presence of a pre-1979 home in itself should not make a home a blighted property, but the Plan does not make a differentiation between commercial and residential properties, because as you may

or may not know, the bias lead remediation standard is for houses, residential homes of one to four families that have a minor child in the house. Commercial properties, of which comprise a vast majority of the properties cited by the consultant in the Plan are in fact commercial properties or industrial properties, and those properties have no identified lead remediation standard unless there is substantial work being done, which I would assume being done on a business basis and therefore remediation of lead paint. I don't know why those buildings would be considered blighted. So 59% of your standard are just because the building is older than 1979. By example, the town of Greenwich has 65% of its housing stock built before 1970, with only 21% of those properties having applied for building permits. So, therefore, the town of Greenwich is 41% blighted and would be eligible for redevelopment with a \$1.8M average home cost. I think that the Agency needs to go back and find out which properties are actually blighted for real and make a case, because it gets a little sillier after that.

The next standard is location of property in a flood plain, or referred to as "potential flood blight". The Plan makes the statement that a property located in an AE zone, which is a location found to have a 1% annual chance of flooding risk and water based contamination are all blighted. In this designation the RPA again cites Chapter 130, other equally significant building deficiencies and environmental deficiencies known or suspected environmental contamination. The Plan further states that waterfront provides the potential for environmental contamination during flooding events, especially with heavy industrial uses in the flood plain. To be clear, this states that 44 parcels or 11% of the affected parcels in the proposed Wall Street area are blighted because it might flood and there might be contamination and that the mere presence in the location of an AE zone will never not be blighted regardless of the completion of work, elevation or structure or other prevention methods. Therefore, Head of the Harbor South, a brand new apartment building constructed in 2018 is cited as a blighted site, as a brownfield site and as an AE site, as is the medical building at 40 Cross Street, among many others.

Again, while actual investigation might show real risks, such as the AMEC site on Harbor Avenue for example, the entirety of the claim of blight for all properties in the AE zone is not proven by facts or logic. I would assume that since the goal of slum and blight is to eliminate blight, this is 11% on top of the 59. It's hard for me to say where the provable designation under state law. State law requires you to show blight as at least 20% of the parcels under one standard for state and 25% federal. I'm having a hard time finding in the Plan where that gives the responsibility to move forward with this Plan. And, again, I don't have anything against many of the proposals that were made. As a matter of fact, I think most of them were fantastic, but I do think that if you're going to do a plan, you've got to be able to prove that it is permissible under the law and has -- and you can demonstrate specific need rather than a hope for an ethereal plan for all of Wall Street.

I should also add that the plan cited, for example, the two nonexistent buildings that now comprise the POKO site as brownfield sites, Freese Park, St. Mary's Church, Head of the Harbor South, as I mentioned. I believe your methodology was highly flawed by your consultant, and I don't think that you can move forward with such a case if it's so fatally flawed in that regard. Again, continue on with the planning process, continue on with the good ideas that have come out of this -- the density, the apartments, so much of it is good, but make sure, please -- I'm not from Norwalk, I live in Greenwich, but I see so often around here

that good ideas get killed because you didn't do the foundation work to make sure that everything about it appears to everybody to be up and up and right on board. You now, you should do it, but I really think you should do it the right way. Thank you.

Jason Milligan said hello, Jason Milligan, 11 Belden Avenue. I own Milligan Real Estate. I like a lot of things about the Redevelopment Plan, especially some of the big mentions to the zoning changes that they want to enact. As I walked in here, I did receive an email with a draft of the more detailed zoning regulations that I can't wait to get back and read, and I think there's a lot of good stuff in there. I will say that it was hard to decipher between all of the competing plans that are circulation right now. I attended multiple meetings for the POCD. I realize that that plan is done every ten years. It's largely ignored. It's kind of a wish list. It's supposed to be a road map. It's supposed to take public input, and I think there was a lot of public participation, and I think a lot of the ideas in there are good. It would make sense to me to fully absorb that, have it be finished before other competing, confusing plans and conflated plans are thrown in the mix. And I'm not actually sure if there's three or four plans going around now, but I know there's the updated Redevelopment Plan that is to replace the 2004 plan. I'm not sure if that is the West-Wall-Main Plan, and I don't know if you can answer that question now, but if that's one plan, that's fine. If it's two plans, I believe I've read multiple documents that are over 100 pages. And the fourth one is the Innovation District, which was a separate document that's talked about in here.

So I have a suggestion that echoes a lot of what other people are saying. Wall Street is very unique. It's recognized for its uniqueness every time it's studied. Very similar recommendations are made every time it's studied. They are not always followed, and how to get the results you want aren't always agreed upon, but the results that we want are largely agreed upon, and I think that some of these zoning recommendations would accomplish a lot of our goals. So I would hate to derail those if this massive plan gets through, but I believe that the planners of Norwalk do fall victim of a big is better mentality for a variety of reasons. Big does attract large outside investment, and that is exciting, and you don't attract that without some of these big plans and special incentives, and if we desire that outside investment, the large outside investment, then perhaps we continue on this path, but there's a lot of local people, there's a lot of local and regional people that can bring you small incremental change and come up with change that is already happening. And I will commend the Redevelopment Agency if they deserve it, and maybe they do and probably they do, for Wall Street probably was very bad at one time. I think it was, but it's gotten incrementally better. There's a theatre down there that's doing quite well. There are new tenants entering. There's a smoothie shop that's opened that's great. If you haven't been there, you should stop by. They're delicious. And there are things happening. When I hear the blight and I hear that blight is the justification for the Plan, it doesn't feel good. I don't feel like that area is blighted. Blight seems bad, and it seems to be a deterrent to new entrance. If you're going to think about opening up a business, do you want to go to the blighted area or do you want to go to the one that's already experienced a renaissance, that's already on the uptake and upswing? I think the latter. So if blight is not the right classification, let's make sure that we get it right and let's take the good work that comes out of this Agency and use it but let's maybe slow down. Let's take the POCD, absorb it, rethink this plan. I think – has anybody thought the Plan is ready for prime time? No. So let's slow down. That's all. Thanks.

Steve Serasis, 24 High Street, said thank you very much for holding this public hearing and having us here to be able to sound off what we think we like or don't like. I agree with every single word that Mr. Collins said. I'm appreciative also that Frank Farriker spoke and also Jason, because a lot of what they talked about, I was going to talk about, and now I don't have to so other people can come up after me.

I will address the suggestion of an Innovation Center in the area. I will add to that that I'm part of the group that built the first Innovation Center in Shanghai in China, and our model has been copied three times in three major cities in China. It was originally built on 14 acres for \$26M, which would be double what that would cost probably here, and is planned to expand outward about 100 to 150 acres in the middle of Shanghai. The biggest hurdle is historic homes being taken down or moved or incorporated with modern building. That's where the biggest problem lies, and yes, even in a communist country the citizens are fighting getting rid of historic homes, which are deemed as blight, which people don't see as blight because they're historic. Now if we're going to move here to Norwalk, and for the life of me I don't understand how – I think we're seeking 15M for the innovation side of the project, how two and a half years ago we applied to be a finalist for an innovation zone grant from the state of Connecticut for \$8M and we were turned down because Wall Street was an undesirable area and they named blight and a couple other things, and that's unfortunate, but in two and a half years we haven't changed anything radically, and one of the big differences and one of the big things that they wanted us to do and they pointed out was infrastructure. I was at every meeting. A guy from the state sat with me at one meeting and we talked about what I was doing in China, what they were looking for, and what Norwalk lacked and why we didn't have it, and then we tried to change gears and everybody who asked for the money knew what they were asking for. They were very professional, and it was a great attempt to get this money, but then we changed gears and tried to move it to SoNo. I mean I wasn't for it, but SoNo was deemed too dense, or too much was going on there to be able to do what they wanted to do, and this is – the problem is that we have to be able to have the definition for blight corrected and have that changed in the Wall Street area, we need to have infrastructure work done before we do anything else, we need to have a train station put in so the millennials can walk to the train and take the train every day, but an Innovation Center, number one, we don't have enough room for it; number two, \$15M is a high price tag for what the plan is calling for, and believe me I really do know what I'm talking about with this, and that's why I'm addressing this and not going back to the points the other gentleman made that helped tie this together.

I do think the plan has to be revisited. I don't think that the Innovation Center should be even part of this plan right now, because if you want to do that, the bigger is better that was suggested earlier is not always good in the beginning, and to be able to do it the right way, that's far down the line, more than you think it is, folks. I kid you not. And I'm the first person in this room that would be all for an Innovation Center because I know how they're supposed to run. I see one so successful in another country on the other side of the world that they built three more, so it's not that I want to shoot down the idea of an Innovation Center, an incubation for companies. We're not ready. We don't understand what it really is. Yes, we're trying to pattern what other cities in America are doing, but that's not the model of the future. That's the model of yesterday, and maybe part of today, and that's what we're not looking at as far as planning that piece of the pie. All the other pieces that I wanted to talk

about, the three gentleman that I named have already touched on. I thank you for your time, and good luck.

Diane Jellerette – no comment.

John DiScala – no comment.

Frank Felicissimo said my name is Frank Felicissimo, I live at 66 Quintard Avenue. I came here with no intentions of speaking, but what I'm hearing is ringing true. It seems to me like a lot of – I've been here since 1973, and since I came to Norwalk I went to work for Nash Engineering and since I came here I have always said that this town has such a potential. I mean we have one of the most beautiful harbors, we have the beautiful Norwalk River. In my mind one of the best things Norwalk ever did was the Maritime Center. Now people have mentioned having something to do. Well, there's something to do. My nieces and nephews and my sisters and brothers come down for visits, and I mean the last big holiday you couldn't even get near the place. I mean this is a kind of attraction that we need, not these high rises that make the developers rich. I mean we've got so many of them now, it's like what are people going to do? There's nothing for people to do. And I totally agree with a lot of the comments that were made about West Avenue. It's not user friendly. One of the gentlemen said he had to go to Seattle to see what a vibrant downtown center is like with restaurants and shops. You don't even need that. Go down to Stamford, go down to Summer Street and see how nice it is down there. So my point is like, you know, redevelopment I think is heading totally in the wrong direction for what we really need. You know, a friendly fun place that makes profit for little guys and some of the big places as well. And I might also add, it's not on the agenda, but the travesty, I wasn't going to mention it, at 17 Quintard is just unforgivable, it's shameful, it's sinful, and it stinks of corruption. Thank you.

Patsy Breccia – no comment.

Danna DiElsi – no comment.

Dick Breccia – no comment.

Tod Bryant said I thought I had no chance of speaking here. Good evening. Todd Bryant, President of the Norwalk Preservation Trust, 23 Morgan Avenue, and I did participate drafting this plan to some extent, but I do have some comments on the final version, or at least this draft version. The first one being that I don't represent the Historical Society as it says on the first page. I actually represent the Norwalk Preservation Trust, and to kind of quote Rich Bonenfant, I'm a little worried when I'm agreeing with Jason on some of these things. That having been said, I'm looking at various plays and I'm going to play to my strengths here as quickly as I can, but unfortunately I have another meeting to go to, but in terms of the historic buildings and historic preservation, I think they are not mentioned as much as they should be. There are two historic – or one full historic district and part of another one included in this plan, and I was surprised to hear Frank talk about the definitions of blight, because effectively that means that every historic building is blighted, and I realize that the whole idea of having to declare areas blighted in order to get funding is kind of an artifact of urban renewal from the 50's and the 60's, and unfortunately it was a bad idea then and it has not gotten any better over time. There's got to be a different way to figure out what qualifies for funding. And

nowhere in this plan when they talk about incentives do they mention state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, which are already available to buildings listed in the National Register which includes every building in the two historic districts that are included in this plan. There are various places that it should be listed, and there is no particular map or call-out of a historic – there are two maps of a historic district, but they're inaccurate, and the listings of which buildings are in which is also inaccurate. This map here also is pretty confusing, because there are various buildings and areas that have multiple designations and they kind of pick one, so I think this map needs to be revised. This is page 10.

Page 12 is where there's a limited discussion of a historic district which needs to be totally revised to include the tax credits. That's under goal three of authenticity, and should also include those kinds of things because it's the kind of incentive that can convince people to rehab their historic buildings rather than demolish them, and there is a certain underlying feel to this about what can we tear down next, and that just doesn't feel right to me. This is a place that needs to be enhanced, not changed as much as it might, much to Jason's point, and I think a lot of the research that has been done and a lot of the things that I've read talks about incremental ways to build a downtown. The National Main Street Center has done that, and a lot of other things. I think that's one of the biggest problems in SoNo is because it's a single big owner and a few small owners out on the edges, and that creates its own kind of problems. Multiple small owners doing their own stuff are much more likely to build a vibrant area than one or two big ones, and there's plenty of research to back that up.

Where I'm seeing this whole thing about implementation is starting on page 21, about implementation actions which kind of identifies areas that on their own could rise to their potential without being demolished for new buildings.

Another thing is in the design guidelines and neighborhood improvements. I think that, once again we're going back to tax credits, but also the Historical Commission should be involved certainly in any kind of design review or design decisions being made or even zoning decisions being made for buildings in an historic district or other buildings that could be historic which are not included in those historic districts.

I think that's about it. Otherwise there's a lot of good stuff in here. I just hope that it's not overshadowed by the stuff that was possibly – that was perhaps not as well done as it should have been. So thank you.

Marc Alan said I've been asked to identify who I'm speaking for because I am a commissioner in the Norwalk Arts Commission and I am also a business owner in Norwalk, and I am also a board member of the Wall Street Neighborhood Association, and it's really as the Wall Street Neighborhood Association that I'd like to speak today. First of all, a lot of people don't know that we exist. We are relatively a new organization that's a 501-C-3 as of January 1st, and we're comprised of 30 to 40 and -- a growing membership, 30 to 40 businesses and property owners in the Wall Street-West Avenue area, and there are at least eight members of our association here today, and I just want that noted.

You know, one of our recent successes was negotiating the conflict that arose over a mural that was curated by one of our members, and it was cited for a zoning violation and there was going to be fines and we've been able to negotiate a moratorium that would allow a retail

business to open. That's Mr. Mangoes at 91 Wall Street. So really I'm mentioning this because I was very encouraged by the Redevelopment Plan. I thought there was a lot of good stuff in there. Mentioning the arts, which my business is associated with the Factory Underground Studio. We have here a new business owner, the owner of Mad Labs that's opened right on – what is the address? – 23 Leonard, a new business. We have, directly across the parking lot from my building is a brand new business that just moved into the area called Art Soundsation Lighting. We have the Wall Street Theatre, which is – so basically my point is that I think redevelopment has done a great job over the years, and I think that Wall Street is largely revitalized. I mean as evidenced by all the people here, all the participation of all these people representing the concerns of Wall Street and West Avenue. I mean, just the sheer number of people shows – I mean we are revitalized. Not that I don't think there isn't work to do, but I think we have come a long way. When I hear people talk about how desolate Wall Street is, I live very close to Wall Street. I work in Wall Street, I own a business in Wall Street. It is not desolate. We have coffee shops, we have smoothie shops, we have theaters, we have restaurants. We've come a long way. We do have work to do, but I just want it noted that Wall Street is alive and there is representation. and I thank you guys for hearing me.

Nancy McGuire said my name is Nancy McGuire, business owner at 64 Wall Street, and I'm also one of the members of the board of the Wall Street Neighborhood Association, and I'm going to carry on with what Marc is saying. I think if you walk around for 17 years and you tell everyone you see that the sky is falling, people will eventually believe that the sky is falling. We've all walked around now for about 17 years saying that Wall Street is blighted and it's terrible place and there's no parking, and people around our state and region are beginning to believe it, and we are having more – well we've had difficulty in the past getting tenants to move into the retail spaces there, but I will tell you that I think you guys, the city, you all have done a really good job since we bought our building in 2000, and I think that's – and we have seen the difference. We've seen more and more people walking down the streets, we've seen more and more people showing up on the weekends, so what I'd like to do for you guys tonight, I'd like to just give you all a different picture of Wall Street than we've all been talking about for so many years. And I apologize. I was in a hospital today, a little family emergency, so I'm a little unprepared and I might be a little shaky cause of the stress since this morning, so forgive me for that.

Okay. So Wall Street is looking really, really good. Just walk up and down the street any time, right now, and you'll see for the first time in probably 30 or 20 years Christmas lights, holiday lights. We've lit up buildings, we've lit up the islands, the city lit up Freese Park. More and more of the store owners have put holiday lights, Christmas trees, all other source of holiday lighting in their windows, colorful lights in certain of the businesses, and it's so encouraging. It's really wonderful, and that's going to continue. That is sustainable, because as a neighborhood association, really we're about 30 to 40 people, business owners, and people who live down there, strong, but we reach, right now every single week, we're reaching a population of about 200 people. Now we're not mass mailing everyone in the whole state to let them know what's going on, but we want you guys to know what's going on in Wall Street every single weekend, and it's really cool and it's exciting, and the kids are showing up in the afternoons, in the coffee shop and doing their homework, and they're having meetings and marketing meetings in the coffee shop, which by the way is going to be

expanding to a really cool kind of a Greek Italian meeting place, and we need more of those places in our downtown area.

So right now on Wall Street, just a different picture. We've got a yoga studio, a Crossfit facility, the Café Aroma, a brand new – yes, we do have an ice cream shop and they didn't need to get tax money or government money. It's Mr. Mango, so please stop by and have a smoothie. The restaurants that are there are beginning to get more and more filled every weekend. Peaches has got live music almost every night. Magnolia Room is bringing in musicians. Katia's Boutique, if you haven't visited Katia's Boutique on the second floor of Main Street, this isn't just a little clothing shop, you're going to be meeting up with a stylist. How many of us get to meet with a stylist to dress us for big events? Right? We have a ballet studio up on Main Street which is offering all kinds of shows. They had holiday shows. Of course the movie theater, and we understand that that may change soon, but every single week they're offering lots of movies. We have an art gallery and we have showings and he's showing different artists. Duleep's building is no longer blighted. She's got windows in the first floor, and she's got a broker – (applause) – she's got a good broker with signs out and they're trying to track new retail to rent her space. That's not a blighted building anymore. That's a building that's actively being marketed. The Chinese shop, thank God is not blighted anymore, and it looks wonderful. I went in there to try to look at it at one point, it was so full of mold. It absolutely met the criteria. It's not blighted and it's up for lease right now, and it really, really looks good. The Fairfield County Bank building that was empty is now under construction, and it's for lease as well. Frishel around the corner, one of the streets around the corner, he is working on his façade of his building.

So anyway, I want to tell you all also, a lot of this has to do with the fact that the retailers and the business owners on Wall Street are coming together and we're talking every week and we look at Wall Street as an open air mall from one end just about up to East Avenue all the way down to the other end past the library and almost over to Route 7, very similar to what the RPA map looks like. We all worked together to get those holiday lights up this year. We offer first Friday events every single Friday. We include the library. We're planning a film festival. God knows we've got enough places to show movies in the area. And then next year we just started with Dana who owns the Silk Touch, by the way, an amazing company. If you have a company and you want to replace your silk flowers every quarterly or whatever, what a great business. I actually leased something from her during the holiday season, but Dana and I are going to be pulling together some of the retailers around the region and we're going to have a Christmas festival, a holiday festival next year on Wall Street in one of the spaces, and we're going to bring in temporary boutiques and retailers and will bring in music and you will see more people down on that area.

I also want to tell you we have complained about the angled parking. The retailers do want to see angle parking. And thank you, Dick, for making it. Did I do that right? Where is he? He's back over there behind the – Anyway, but even if those angled parking that are proposed by the Norwalk Parking Authority don't add a whole lot of spaces on the street, the meters and the angled parking give the perception that parking is available. We also thought that maybe on the meters when they put them back, we're going to say "Welcome to Wall Street!" You have five parking choices, and we're going to put them right there and they come in from Greenwich to go to the shows and the music, they're going to put the money in or the credit

card in or however you all plan to do it and they're going to see right there five places they can park, so it's not going to be a mystery anymore. So we're very, very strong.

I do want to mention that the arts is alive and thriving, as Marc had said. Factory Underground is producing music. SoNo studios produces music. We have the town company that produces. The Wall Street Theater of course is showing many, many shows and bringing huge amounts of people into the area. Oddly enough, Frank always mention they all come down from New Canaan, which is really cool. Right? So we're getting them in there, and our area is not blighted. We do need some things and we do need some improvements, and we're hoping that the RPA will work with us. Simple things that retailers want to see and we can get those spaces filled up. They want to see some more trees and it makes a little more pedestrian feeling. They want to see some angled parking. The street lights on the street look like interstate lights, like you go down to SoNo or you go down to New Canaan or I was just on Main Street I think in Stamford, that really cool street, beautiful antique looking lights with actual outlets up high so you can hang some holiday lights. Right? And you come down to Wall Street and it looks like a freeway in there. We've got 35' interstate lights on the street. Why? Because, you know, it's not an interstate. It's not meant to be that. So we hopefully will get that changed. And also we also notice a lot of times on Wall Street we find that the Public Works for some reason every single December, about December 7th every year, year after year after year, they go in and they tear up the street, lock up more parking spaces, just when our retailers are trying to get their biggest sales of the year. Like why would you tear up a street, a retail street in December? So these are small things that we can do. There's some loose grates that make it sound like – that bang every two minutes as the cars drive by. Those are things that we can fix for not too much money. We also would love to have water available to keep the vegetation alive.

So the last thing I want to say is I just want to tell you guys that I'm Nancy McGuire. I'm here this evening. I have a piece of paper. We'd love it if you're not on our weekly newsletter, come find me, give me your email address and find out what's going on on Wall Street and come down and join us. And I do want to thank you guys for the great plan. There's so many good ideas, and I love a lot what Tod said about the character and love what the other guy said about the streetscapes, and thank you for giving us a chance to talk. (Applause).

Ron Paladino said I do cry when I go by Wall Street, especially with that boondoggle that's there right now. It's unbelievable, and I can't believe that it got there. It reiterates the fact that our zoning is broken in Norwalk and needs to be overhauled yesterday. And hopefully that will be done. I think we have way too many apartments. The apartments are causing the density and the traffic and everything that goes with it. The schools are overcrowded, the infrastructure. We can't take anymore. We're busting at the seams. Enough is enough. I can't believe that the Council or the Mayor thinks we need more, but we don't. And if we have developers that are willing to put their money in without tax incentives, let them do it. Don't sue them. Let them build. Let them – listen to them, see what they got to say, because what we're doing now is not working. And the only thing left for my grandchildren is going to be to look up at the tall building and see if you don't fall backwards. Nobody is going to come to Norwalk to look at apartment buildings, and that's just what we're doing. We're making apartment buildings everywhere. We need open space, and that's pretty much it, other than shame on everybody for Quintard Avenue, letting that go through. Thank you.

Diane Lauricella said good evening. Much of what I was going to say I've edited from my little talk because it was all well thought out by Mr. Collins, Mr. Milligan, Tod and others before me. Especially on the angled parking. I think that's something that we talked about it in the '90s. Let's move on that. Let's work with Public Works. That is something that you specifically talk about I believe in the area of coordination in your plan. I'm here tonight briefly because I don't think this plan is quite ready for prime time. At first I wanted to say let's hold it until the POCD is complete. I'm not sure that I come away still feeling that way. I also wanted to say I'm not sure that I agreed or ever agreed with the combination of the Wall Street neighborhood and West Avenue. For those of you that are newer to this in the audience and those at this Agency, back when – I go way back and I have some gray roots also in my hair style today, but what happened under the Frank Esposito administration is at that time we were in an economic development boom and the Council at the time and the Mayor at the time suggested to Mr. Seligson, who wanted rightly to develop the West Avenue area, why don't you take on the Wall Street area as well. Many of us were opposed to that because we didn't want to bypass the boom, and the fact is, of course, this developer wanted and had put a lot of investment in the West Avenue area, so that Wall Street was an afterthought, and by the time it could even possibly be developed, the boom, the economic boom was gone. Now there's a lot of ifs, ands or buts on that, but the history is correct. We missed it then. Let's not miss it again.

So I'm going to be putting forth some written material. I have just six or seven very brief takeaways. Number one, I don't believe this plan is green enough. I know that there's an area that talks about, in the design guidelines about not using too much impervious pavement, meaning impenetrable to rainwater. I think that's very good, except we need to also look at green enough includes energy micro grids, clean energy, and there are benefits both on a federal and state level for utilizing and encouraging our development community to use renewables and passive solar and other green, and none of that is mentioned here. I am going to be also advocating for that in our POCD and we do have more discussion about it, but let's put it in this plan as well. We have nothing here about green rooftops, and I'm not talking about trees on a roof, I'm talking about succulent plants that reduce the water impact of a rainstorm, and there will be more intense rainstorms coming our way, so we need to look at vegetative buffers and green this sucker up.

We need green infrastructure that also includes what New Haven has done. They've changed a lot of the landscaping on the streets in order to make sure you have bio swales alongside the street. It's working out very well and they're saving money as far as overflows and pollution to the harbor.

Number two, not enough river respect. I wanted to add that on page 20 under the goals, under accessibility and as well as page 12, please include the river as a historic structure. It is. As the first president and founding member of the Norwalk River Watershed Association, the river is a historic asset and should be in this plan as such, as I will say in the POCD. I will be talking with Ms. Jellerette and others that care about history. The time has come for this river to be lauded.

Number three, the train station. As far as an opportunity site, page 21, I want to make sure the train station is an opportunity site. Harbor Avenue with more sidewalks and making it

walkable and bike able is an opportunity site, and please add the Garden Cinema area as a cultural opportunity site, in addition to the river as an opportunity site, and the library as an opportunity site. Just add those, please.

Number four, not enough attention paid to affordable housing. Now I'm not one of the wealthiest people in this room. I aspire to be one day, but I'm a renter and I agree with what was said about renters. We pay taxes indirectly by our annual rental fees and paying for utilities often. So let's not discount that, but I want to tell you I'm looking for a rental in the near future and 400 square feet for older adults that are single or are downsizing isn't enough, and I really think that you should rethink limiting yourself to these micro units. I know that there is another side. You cited Rental.com. Site Hotpads.com, because you'll find that most of the rentals in urban areas, including Bridgeport, Stamford/Norwalk, are less cost for more quality space. I would say what is the magic number? 550 square feet? 750? Please let's not have the Redevelopment Agency once again limit us because we have people, like Mr. Milligan and others, who want to provide alternatives to different kinds of space on apartments. So, please, it's too small and too expensive.

Number five, I'm almost done, allow higher number of stories in the areas that were once the flood zone. Mr. Fishel's building, I was told that Zoning has not allowed taller buildings. If you look at the history of the Wall and Main Street area, there used to be people on the street at the turn of the century. Why? Because there were people living above the retail. Let's not limit development community by zoning that doesn't make sense anymore. It's not – we're not going to have the same problems with flooding because we're looking at resilience and hardening sites.

Number six, Innovation District. I think that is not ready for prime time, and I'll be asking that the Council put it on hold until we take a look at other alternative means. I love clean industry. I love light manufacturing. Let's make sure, as Mr. Neaderland said, that we have accommodations for that area. We're not going to have billowing, belching smoke stacks anymore. That's not going to happen. We've had some redevelopment real estate lawyers that have literally gone to Zoning and said industry is dead. Well, that is foolish. It was greedy at the time. We have to look and see what Bridgeport is doing, New Haven is doing, and other cities.

On page 37, please add the Norwalk River Action Plan, because in it are numerous pages of things you can positively do to enhance the river, the harbor and make Norwalk a better place to live. It was approved by Mayor Esposito and the Council at the time. It should be added.

Lastly, I want to give you some open space advice. I've been doing my homework on this. The site that is on the corner of Hoyt Street and Cross Street is currently used as a parking lot. My understanding it's still owned by the City of Norwalk. It was once a park under the Frank Esposito administration. They allowed, in order to attract Cablevision and keep them there, for them to turn it into a parking lot. I wanted to ask all of you, including our president of the Council who's in charge of Land Use and Building Management, starting tomorrow I'm going to be asking that when the next lease comes up, that that is not renewed, that we help the Cablevision building people find better accommodations for their trucks and we turn that back into a public park, because we have enough residences there. Thank you.

Ursula Corkutt said she is a walker, she walks on Wall Street several times a week, and it's not all that pleasant. There are trees missing, sidewalks are a little bit nah, but it's getting better. It has been changing, and that's great. I've been down on West Avenue where there's a lot of apartments and it seems the sidewalks are narrow and there's not much green. There's not many trees. They're kind of like canyons, so I don't walk there. I walk where it's nice, and we need to work on that. I'd like to add trees and some green space. Thank you.

Weverson Ponte – no comment

Lisa Henderson said good evening. I'm Lisa Henderson. I reside at Apple Tree Lane. We also own a small business in Norwalk and we own a number of investment properties in Norwalk. I originally attended the CNNA meeting about the Wall Street area last year. I've attended a number of events now at the Wall Street Theatre. The crowd in this room should be an indication that the community is paying attention and is not currently in favor of the Plan. Many people here spoke about the many issues that should be looked at, added to, questioned, and we are currently faced with. There are still too many unanswered questions, so please rework the plan in the best interests of the future of Norwalk. Just want to comment on the time of this meeting. I think you can see many people are interested and 5:30 is a terrible time for people. Most people were stuck in traffic. Thank you.

Donna Smirniotopoulos said I'm Donna Smirniotopoulos, 18 Shorefront Park. I'd like to begin with the POCD. You've heard several people mention that the POCD is also in its draft stages. Several months ago – I'm a member of the Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhood Associations and as a member of the provisional executive committee, we submitted a memo to the Planning Commission many months ago asking them how does the people's plan fit into all the other competing plans, and the plan that you are overseeing right now, the Redevelopment Agency, West Avenue-Wall Street Plan, is one of those plans, and we did hear back from Steve Kleppin. We never heard back from anybody on the Planning Commission about where the people's plan fits in, and we understand the Redevelopment Agency has a role to play in Norwalk, but I think that as a member of an organization that represents neighborhoods we're very concerned about where the people fit in, and I think one of the reasons you've heard from people in my neighborhood, which is the Quintard area, is that they see that there are parts of Norwalk that are being addressed by plans, but there isn't a plan that takes care of us and that takes care of the neighborhoods. There aren't codes – well, there are codes, but they don't seem to be enforced in order to protect neighborhoods. That's why you've heard people talk about 17 Quintard this evening.

This plan includes, the plan that you're looking at includes \$15M in stimulus money, tax abatements, for the Innovation District. We need \$1M to save Quintard, and the Mayor and the Legal Department is coming up empty. Apparently the city and the Redevelopment Agency have money to chase would-be developers in court in order to prevent smaller scale development, but there's no money to protect and defend the neighborhood. So I realize maybe that's not your purview to worry about what's going on on Quintard, but, you know, Frank Farriker spoke very eloquently about blight and the role of blight. Most people, myself included, walking on Quintard Avenue probably in 2013-2014 would have looked at 17 Quintard and said that looks blighted. We would all give our backs, the shirt off our backs today to have that blighted house back instead of a prison or an over capacity drug rehab. So think about that when you consider blight and the role of blight. Sometimes the blighted

house is better than the alternative. And I thank you for your time this evening, and good luck with your plan.

Patrick McMahon said he is the CEO of the Connecticut Main Street Center. We're a statewide nonprofit and we work with communities to get more investment in their downtown areas. I want to applaud you for all the work that you've done. You have all of the attributes to have a very vibrant, successful downtown, and this is just leading – the work that you're doing today is really critically important, the planning behind it, but you also need ultimately to have an organization on the ground. Communities that do really well with downtown revitalization have someone who's responsible on a daily basis from an organizational standpoint to be meeting with the property owners, meeting with the business owners, knocking on the doors, facilitating work with the Redevelopment Agency or the city departments. Communities that have that one person as an identifiable leader in the downtown, it goes a real long way for making things happen. So that would be my recommendation for a potential implementation goal. Thank you.

Ashley Cheah – no comment.

Isabelle Hargrove – no comment.

Deborah Goldstein – no comment.

Dave Osler, 56 Baxter Drive, also a business owner and resident of town. Wanted to hit a couple points. One, buildings being in flood zones, so particularly the Wall Street area where there's a problem with building heights, especially with the new Sandy regulations. It would be very nice if you guys adjusted building height to zero from elevation 16, or whatever the flood plain is set at. It would make a lot of people happy.

Second one, you know, we're going into a business cycle. There's been a fair amount of turbulence in the stock market recently. It's been nine years since the last one. We should be very careful about increasing density in areas that are already not fully stable, particularly West Avenue which has lost businesses recently, and Wall Street which has been coming up nicely, very nicely over the last several years. Where I do worry that -- we have lost two businesses over there in the last couple of years. Nobody has moved into Taste of the Philippines yet, which was a very nice store which is missed. And we need something in place to make sure that when the developers are working on building up those areas so that they can function financially so we don't lose them like we have with this stalled project over the last couple of years over there.

17 Quintard, I live in that neighborhood. I am honestly scared of what we're going to see out of that. You know it was a blighted situation before, and now we have a situation where we don't know what's going to happen. You know, I do live down Woodward. I'm in that area every day. Every day there is a fair amount of crime in the neighborhood. Not so much on the Shorefront Park side, but you go down towards Village Creek, that area in between can be quite messy, and I live right on the edge of that. That's the areas I wanted to hit. Thank you.

Ms. Strauss said that's it, unless somebody didn't sign in and would like to talk.

Chairman Serrano asked is there anyone that arrived late and didn't have the opportunity to sign in and would like to comment, this would be the time to do so. Ms. Strauss said and even if you haven't signed in but don't want to comment, we would appreciate you signing in.

Chairman Serrano said and then again, as I mentioned in the beginning, public comments are still accepted through Thursday, January 10th, so if you didn't want to speak but you still want to comment, feel free to do so. We'll be able to email you, Tami Strauss, so you can talk to her and get her email, but please we encourage everyone, even though you didn't have the opportunity to speak and would like to provide some comment, to do so. This is part of the process. It's an important part of the process, and we thank you all for coming out tonight. So thank you. And with that I will close the public hearing.

(The public hearing was closed at 7:07 PM.)