

CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES
May 7, 2025

PRESENT: Galen Wells, Chair; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams (after the roll call)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker; Amelia Williams

OTHERS: Alan Lo; Atty Liz Suchy; Eric Lindquist; Grant Wright; Ethan Schukoske; Andrew Pistor; Diane Cece; Christina Olson; Henry Chapman; Marcy Demby; Atty Lisa Feinberg; Kelli Cook; Marc Cornell; Joel Green; Roger Goodman; Peter Lane; Mike Charlton; Beverly Wright

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Baker called the roll.

III. REVIEW AND ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

A. #2025-38 Special Appropriation - City of Norwalk - 98 South Main Street - Special Appropriation request for \$583,668 in Special Capital Appropriation funds to the Recreation and Parks Department for the development and construction of the Norwalk Community Recreation Center at 98 South Main Street - Report & recommended action

Alan Lo, Building and Facilities Manager for the city, said that this project is under construction but that there have been problems with an exterior wall. The city has received funding from the federal, state and city governments. There has been water damage to the exterior wall. He described the corrective measures including repointing the entire building. He explained that they had found an account from which there were leftover funds so that there would not be additional spending by the city.

Ms. Wells seated Ms. Tabachneck and Ms. Lenkowsky for this application and the remainder of the meeting.

There was a discussion as to other problems that might be found at the site. Mr. Lo explained that there would be some monies remaining if there are additional problems that arise. There was a question about whether there were other projects with leftover funding that they could use if there were additional problems. Mr. Lo noted that prices are higher with mechanical equipment but they do try to bring the cost down.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that application #2025-38 Special Appropriation - City of Norwalk - 98 South Main Street - Special Appropriation request for \$583,668 in Special Capital Appropriation funds to the Recreation and Parks Department for the development and construction of the Norwalk Community Recreation Center at 98 South Main Street be **APPROVED**.

Mr. Bryce seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

B. #2025-25 CAM - Robert E. Stephens - 36 Dock Road - Demolish an existing house and construct a new single-family residence with associated improvements adjacent to tidal waters and wetlands - Report & recommended action

Tom Nelson, the professional engineer for this application, began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He explained the proposed project by showing them the site plan which included a new house in the same place as the existing house. There would be a new septic and storm water detention system. He described the coastal buffers as well.

**** MS. LANGALIS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that application #2025 - 25 CAM – Robert E. Stephens – 36 Dock Road – Demolish an existing house and construct a new single-family residence with associated site improvements adjacent to tidal waters and wetlands be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. That the building and site be developed in accordance with the following plans:

a. Per site development plan dated 3/3/2025 and revised 4/17/2025 prepared by McChord Engineering Associates, Inc., Wilton, CT

b. Per architectural plans dated 2/28/2025 and revised 4/28/2025 prepared by Bridger AAD, Darien, CT

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c. Per zoning location survey dated 11/22/2024 and revised 3/6/2025 prepared by All Seasons Land Surveying, Millerton, NY

2. That all department sign-offs are obtained prior to issuance of any Zoning Permit; and

3. That a permit is obtained from the Department of Public Works regarding City storm-water management requirements; and

4. That all required soil sedimentation and erosion controls are in place prior to the start of any construction; and

5. That any additional needed soil sedimentation and erosion controls be installed at the direction of Staff; and

6. That any changes to the plans be reviewed by Staff prior to implementation; and

7. That any above ground utilities comply with setbacks; and

8. That all plantings be implemented prior to COZC; and

9. That all plantings be maintained, and any dead plantings must be replaced in accordance with the approved planting plan; and

10. Nothing in this permit shall obviate the requirements for the applicant to obtain any other assents, permits or licenses required by law or regulation by the City of Norwalk, State of Connecticut, or the Government of the United States, including any approval required by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers- obtaining such assents, permits or licenses is the sole responsibility of the applicant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this proposal complies with all applicable coastal resource and use policies and with all applicable sections of the Zoning Regulations for the City of Norwalk; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the preceding conditions and modifications of this application are integral to the Commission's approval because, if not for those conditions and modifications, the Commission would have denied this application.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be May 16th, 2025.

You must obtain a zoning approval and a building permit prior to any work on the site.

Mr. Williams seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. #2025-15 R/SP - Norwalk Center, LLC & The Auto Collective - 10 Norden Place(District 3, Block 17, Lot 40) - Zoning regulation text amendment application to amend Article 4 and Article 9 to create a "Car Club" use within the SD-LI zoning district and special permit application for a +/- 137,000sf Car Club within an existing building - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of property on an aerial map and then showing them the current site plan. She explained the zoning as it is today. She explained the proposed project and gave them a general overview and background of the property. She said that staff had suggested the text amendment for the Car Club use. She explained the use which would include events on weekends and how many people could attend. There would also be educational uses in the STEM field. She described the hours and number of employees. She also noted which signoffs they had received from various city departments.

Eric Lindquist, the professional engineer on the project, continued the presentation. He said that the site was limited as far as the design was concerned. He described where the parking would be. He said site changes were limited. He also described the retention system. He said that there would be erosion control measures. He also addressed the parking spaces in the zoning table.

There would be parking spaces for the Car Club use. There was also a discussion about where the closest houses were. There was a discussion about traffic calming measures which Mr. Lindquist said it would be addressed later as well. There was a concern about the number of cars when there would be events at the club. There was a discussion about other parcels that could also become a car club. There was a discussion about whether this could turn into spot zoning but Mr. Kleppin did not think so. He said that there might be places in South Norwalk but they would not be the same size as this one. There was a discussion about how the cars would enter the building.

Grant Wright, the architect on the project, continued the presentation by showing them the current building. He showed them the event space and vehicle storage area, and main entrance and club space. He showed them renderings of what the space would look like when completed, both on the exterior and interior of the building.

There was a discussion about the definition of a member sponsored event.

Ethan Schukoske, the traffic engineer, continued the presentation with a description of the traffic study and how it was completed. He said that they had also studied a similar facility for data. They also projected data for when the venue had events and shared a table for a typical July schedule.

There was a discussion about the July schedule and whether it was a typical schedule.

Andrew Pistor, the owner of the car club, explained why they believed that this use was necessary. He said that in limited instances, there would be cars outside. He said that it would not be a general use venue for events. He described the types of vehicles that would be housed in storage. He also said that they had spoken with Norwalk High School about possible STEM based programs. There could be teams going to national competitions. It is a quiet, low density use and would have a family friendly area.

There was a discussion about events being open to the community or non-members. Mr. Pistor said that there would not but there would be events with Scouts. Membership would be open to everyone. There was a discussion about membership fees.

At this point, Ms. Wells explained how the public could make comments on this application. Mr. Baker noted which agencies and towns the application had been referred to. They had not received comments from these agencies that the applications were not compliant. He also noted additional staff changes.

Diane Cece, East Norwalk Neighborhood Association (ENNA), said that she would make a lengthy statement so it would be a part of the public record. She said that they had not met with the owners after submission of the application for several reasons. They had received an invitation for the board members to meet in the parking lot and would not be able to tour the facility. She said that they had offered to meet them indoors. There was also an invitation to meet in Westport. They choose to meet directly with P&Z staff. She said that they wanted to work collaboratively with applicants

prior to an application filing. At this point, she read the entire, lengthy statement into the record.

Christina Olson, 3 Heron Court, said that her house was within 100 feet of the property. She said that it was a great use but was concerned about the added event space and was concerned about possible BBQs. She would like to see indoor events and would not like to see outside idling. She had concerns about the number of members. She had concerns about pollution and asked if there would be screening. She said that Formula 1 had many events during the year.

Henry Chapman, 2 Heron Court, said he thought this was probably the best project for the site and is in favor of it. He also said that he shared the concerns of previous speakers.

Marcy Demby, 11 Norden Place, said that this project would have traffic issues and suggest a signal to slow down the traffic. She has had difficulties getting out of her driveway.

There were no other speakers and Ms. Wells closed that portion of the meeting.

Atty Suchy said that there were letters of support which should be included as part of the record. Mr. Lindquist responded to questions about an increase in impervious areas which he said was minor but they had added a stormwater management plan. Mr. Schukoske addressed questions that were raised about traffic. Mr. Wright did not have information on solar panels, but that there would be upgrades on the rooftop mechanicals. Mr. Pistor said that there would not be an industrial kitchen or that there would not be any EV cars since they would be storing classic cars only. Vehicles would not be allowed to be maintained on the property but car owners would probably use local mechanics. He also explained the goal of the event space. There was a discussion about the size of the event space, as well as its use. Mr. Pistor said that it would be a multi-use space and not have a large amount of people in it. Ms. Tabachneck would not be opposed to a large event space since there is not one in Norwalk. There was then a discussion about the conditions of approval including the number of people, etc. If they wanted to change it, but would come back to the commission for review.

Atty Suchy spoke about the times when they could meet and where with ENNA after the application had been filed. She then addressed Ms. Cece's statement. At this point, Ms. Wells closed the public hearing and noted that there are 2 resolutions for this application.

Mr. Baker reviewed the staff changes to the text amendment. The commissioners also reviewed the language. Ms. Jordan-Byron said that she had missed part of the presentation about a comment for car taxes. Mr. Baker said that they could speak with the Tax Assessor.

**** MR. BRYCE MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-15 R – Norwalk Center, LLC & The Auto Collective – 10 Norden Place (District 3, Block 17, Lot 40) – Zoning regulation text amendment application to amend Article 4 and Article 9 to create a “Car Club” use within the SD-LI zoning district be **APPROVED** with the following modifications:

1. That the definition of Car Club shall be revised as follows:

Car Club: a membership-based organization where classic, vintage, and other passenger motor vehicles are stored and displayed inside a building including on racks, along with accessory space for members and member-sponsored events along with members’ lounge and club space that which may include the service of food and alcohol. Outdoor storage of and repairs to vehicles shall be prohibited.

2. That the proposed revision to Table 4.3.12.B-1 shall be revised to the following:

Storage of motor vehicles Car Club	1 space per 5,000sf of usable floor area plus 1 space per employee; accessory event, lounge and club space – 1 space per 500sf of usable floor area
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3. That Section 4.3.9.G Uses Permitted with Limitations shall be revised to include the following:

bc. Live Music shall be permitted in accordance with the applicable Use Table, subject to the following:

(1) Live Music is permitted as an Accessory Use to Restaurant, Brew Pub/Distillery, Retail (except in Residential zones), Car Club and Waterfront Club Uses, subject to documentation verifying that the Live Music will comply with the City of Norwalk Noise Control Ordinance, as amended.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning & Zoning Commission has found that the proposed text amendment is consistent with the following portions of the Plan of Conservation and Development:

1. That “Norwalk has a diversified economy with a larger business tax base and more high-quality, good jobs for residents,” through the strategy to “create a multi-faceted strategy to support entrepreneurs, startups, and tourism, as well as regional target industries, to grow new and existing businesses,” and the strategy to, “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. That “the user-friendly zoning ordinance is consistent with the future land use map and achievement of the vision and goals of the POCD,” through the strategy to, “modernize the zoning ordinance and the development approval process to achieve the goals of the POCD,” and the action to, “implement the recommendations of the Industrial Zones Study and the Norwalk Industrial Waterfront Land Use Plan;” and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be May 16, 2025.

Ms. Tabachneck seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

There was a discussion about changes about live music which including only allowing live music indoors. There was a review of other conditions as well, including 2, 4 and 5.

**** MR. BRYCE MOVED: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-15 SP – Norwalk Center, LLC & The Auto Collective – 10 Norden Place (District 3, Block 17, Lot 40) – Special Permit application for a +/- 137,000sf Car Club within an existing building be **APPROVED** with the following conditions:

1. That the site shall be developed in accordance with the following plans:

- a. Per site plans entitled "The Auto Collective," dated February 19, 2025, prepared by Tighe & Bond; and
- b. Per architectural plans entitled "The Auto Collective," dated February 19, 2025, and revised to March 24, 2025, prepared by Kenneth Boroson Architects; and
2. That the portion of the building designated for member-sponsored events shall have a maximum attendance capacity of 300 people per event; and
3. That there shall be no revving of engines or racing of motor vehicles on the property by the tenant, members, guests, or attendees of any events held on the property that are associated with the Car Club; and
4. That a follow-up traffic study shall be conducted by the applicant during a peak month of events and submitted to the Commission six-months after issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance, or when the membership has reached 300 members, whichever happens later; and
5. That Live Music shall only occur indoors; and
6. That any events held out-of-doors shall be subject to Chapter 88 Public Gatherings and Special Events of the City of Norwalk's Ordinances; and
7. That the applicant shall submit an updated site plan that delineates the parking areas associated with each tenant of the building prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and
8. That any changes to the approved plans shall be submitted to the Planning & Zoning Staff for review and approval prior to implementation, and if any proposed changes are determined to be substantive, Staff shall refer the changes to the Commission for their review and approval prior to implementation; and
9. That any and all conditions required by the Norwalk Health Department are applicable to this approval; and
10. That any and all conditions required by the Norwalk Water Pollution Control Authority are applicable to this approval; and
11. That any and all conditions required by the Norwalk Public Works Department are applicable to this approval; and
12. That any and all conditions required by the Norwalk Transportation, Mobility, and Parking Department are applicable to this approval; and

13. That any and all conditions required by the Norwalk Fire Marshal are applicable to this approval; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this application complies with all applicable sections of the Norwalk Zoning Regulations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be May 17, 2025.

Ms. Tabachneck seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

At 9:03 pm, the commissioners decided to take a break and return to the meeting at 9:15 pm. The meeting resumed at 9:17 pm

B. #2025-23 R/SP - Glazer Group, LLC - 1E River Road (5-44-18-BARN) - Proposed zoning regulation text amendment to Article 4 regarding the CD-1L zone and the Silvermine Tavern District Overlay zone to permit specific commercial uses in conjunction with a special permit application to allow for meetings, recreational activities, community gatherings/events, and special events within an existing historic structure - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Atty Lisa Feinberg began the presentation by noting that all notices had been made timely and submitted to the P&Z staff. She gave a brief background of the applications that were being proposed, one of which was a text amendment. She shared a drawing of the Grey Barns campus and explained the overlay zone that the property is in. She also shared an aerial view of the property which consisted of a barn, the village that included four homes and the tavern. She gave a history of the property which started in 1929. She explained how Mr. Glazer had acquired the property. The question was whether the Barn was approved for use for events. The application was to eliminate any ambiguity of the uses. She showed them the revised language for the uses in the overlay definition. Some uses can be combined with some or all of the structures on the campus. She also discussed the number of parking spaces. She discussed sound levels and aligning with the noise ordinance. She also discussed the applicant's proposed conditions of approval. She discussed hours for live events.

There was a discussion about a definition for event space, which Atty Feinberg said that staff was working on it. There was a discussion about the number of people that would be at the live events. There was also a discussion about having live music in both the tavern and barn. There was a discussion about heating and air conditioning in the barn.

At this point, Ms. Wells opened the hearing to the public and assured them that their letters had been read. Mr. Kleppin said that he had received letters from the public late in the day and would be included in the record the following day.

Kelli Cook, 176 Perry Avenue, said she had restored another home at 184 Perry Avenue. She was in favor of the project for several reasons.

Marc Cornell, 295 Silvermine Avenue, said that he agreed with the prior speaker's support for the tavern. He had questions about the number of guests that could be hosted at the barn and how that would affect the tavern, etc.

Joel Green, an attorney for Beverly Wright and Peter Lane, said that his clients would like to see Grey Barns thrive. However, they had concerns with the application which he believed had to be addressed, including parking, traffic, septic and the peaceful enjoyment of their property. He said that there were some documents that the applicant had produced but were not posted. He also had not seen the document on parking. He did not think the application met the zoning regulations which included a compliant site plan, survey that was not more than 6 months old. He asked if the hearing could be held open. He said that his clients remained open to meeting with the applicant which could include the P&Z staff.

Mr. Kleppin suggested that they continue to hear from the public and then make a decision about continuing the hearing.

Roger Goodman, 1 River Road, Unit 1, spoke in support of the barn and tavern. He has held events there and has listened to music there for years. He has not had an issue with sound from this property. He hoped that the commission would accept the application.

Peter Lane, 3 River Road, said that he believed his attorney, Joel Green, would like to continue speaking. He then noted his history since he lived at his property for 20 years. He discussed the approvals in 2008 which included what the septic could handle. He then discussed the seating at the tavern because of the septic capacity. He said that they support limited use of the barn. He did not want to see port-a-potties. He also said

that there were issues with the parking and traffic. He also said that the live music was loud and should not be in the barn.

Mike Charlton, said he was supportive of the barn and tavern. He said his house was closest to the barn. He is not bothered by the noise or the parking. He thought the septic was brought up to code. He asked them to work together so that Grey Barns could continue.

Beverly Wright, 1 River Road, Unit 1C, said she would like to turn over her time to Atty Green. Atty Green spoke about the increase in property values and that the chart provided lacked details. He addressed the upgrade of the septic which he claimed that this permit was a nullity. He again discussed the parking and how for different uses there would be different numbers of required spaces. He also addressed the valet parking which he did not think was zoning compliant. Atty Green also discussed the noise ordinance and that the sound study only discussed live music. He said that they would like to resolve many of the issues with the applicant. He asked that the applicant provide information that the commission would need to make an informed decision.

Ms. Wright said that she supported the tavern but could not support the Grey Barns application. She believed it would be a party barn and would allow three structures simultaneously. She was concerned about the noise levels as well as the parking which could cause back-ups.

Ms. Wells said that she would like to continue the hearing until their next meeting. Mr. Glazer was asked to speak during the rebuttal at the next meeting. There was then a discussion about the site plan which included the approved barn. The issue seemed to be the use allowed in the barn.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED:** that the public hearing would be continued at the Planning and Zoning Commission's next meeting on May 21, 2025.

Mr. Bryce seconded.

There was a discussion about next steps for the next public hearing which would begin with the rebuttal. Atty Feinberg said that she would submit the slides that she had used at this meeting. They were not hearing the rebuttal because of the late hour.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

C. #2025-08 R - Planning & Zoning Commission - Zoning Regulation Text Amendment(s) to Articles 4, 6, 8 and 9 regarding changes to the flood hazard zone regulations for buffer areas and construction methodology for residential flood compliance; maximum building heights for the SD-LI and SD-HI zones, rear setbacks for the SD-MC zone; Frontage requirements for Watercourse Lots; requiring a site plan review application for changes in use that exceed a certain size; how Trade or Vocational Schools are permitted; changes to Indoor & outdoor storage of passenger motor vehicles, Motor Vehicle Storage, Warehouse and Warehousing uses; Workforce Housing incentives and income buffers; clarification on mailings required for public notice; amending the definitions of Story, Lowest Floor and Motor Vehicle Body Shop and adding definitions of Unfinished Area and Finished (Habitable) Area - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Ms. Wells opened the public hearing and then continued it to the May 21, 2025.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: to continue the public hearing until May 21, 2025.**

Mr. Bryce seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. April 9, 2025, and April 16, 2025

These items were held until the next meeting.

VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

There were no comments from Mr. Kleppin.

VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

There were no comments from the commissioners.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Jordan-Byron made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Williams seconded.

Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Chapin Bryce; Ana Tabachneck; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Tammy Langalis; Darius Williams approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero