

**CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 25, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Andrew Conroy, Chair; Marilyn Altman, Thomas Farkas, Benjamin Hanpeter, Lee Levey, Keith Lyon, Danielle Sanchick

OTHERS: Steve Kleppin, Zoning Official

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kleppin called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin confirmed that a quorum was present.

**III. OVERVIEW & DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT
ZONING REGULATIONS & MAP UPDATE**

Mr. Kleppin said that he had a PowerPoint slide deck showing the proposed changes. He explained that when he came to Norwalk seven years ago, the zoning regulations had not been updated in a long time and had been amended in a piecemeal fashion.

He said that the POCD was a good guide for aligning the zoning districts. There is a focus on the major TOD centers and form based codes. He displayed several zoning maps and gave a brief summary of each of the various zones.

The current zone is done on a Euclidian Zoning plan while Form Based approach looks at more of the visual presentation from the street. He also displayed a graph showing the current various functions that are allowed in the zones followed by the updated function graph for the new regulations. There is also a new section that list definitions, for different types of structures. There is also a summary of the major changes including ADUs (Attached Dwelling Units) and compliant parking spaces.

There are sections of the plan where there are numerous zones that border each other and the staff has worked on consolidating the business zones along with also changing the streetscape on Route 1 and Main Street with the buildings closer to the street. There is more consistency in terms of density. Another issue that will change is that the height of the building will be determined by the number of stories rather than actual height measurements. Impervious surfaces will be regulated along with grading, lighting and sustainability.

There will be many new terms used and new standards that will have to be adjusted as time goes on. Numerous other towns were given an opportunity to review the regulations and make suggestions.

Mr. Kleppin said that by having more consistency in the regulations, he felt that eventually there will be fewer variance applications as more of the properties are handled in a similar manner. There will be Public Hearings on June 21st and June 28th. If the regulations are approved in late fall, they would like to have the new regulations to become effective as of January 1, 2024.

Mr. Conroy asked how many of the land use attorneys were aware of these changes. Mr. Kleppin said that they had all made comments on the document.

Mr. Kleppin then gave the Board Members a tour of the website and provided a summary of the information contained there. He added that the Mayor had expressed some concern about up-zoning, and there have been several conversations about this. Mr. Kleppin then displayed how the interactive map works in providing the existing zoning and the proposed zoning.

Mr. Levey said that one of the frequent issues have been where applicants have been creating self-created hardships. Mr. Kleppin explained that the fines that were in the regulations were determined by the State legislature.

Mr. Levey asked whether there would be a survey of the historic structures. Mr. Kleppin said that Mr. Bryant had been at a meeting recently and spoke about this. Mr. Bryant will be sending Mr. Kleppin more information on this. Discussion followed.

Mr. Levey asked if there would be tighter regulations regarding construction yards. Mr. Kleppin said that the definitions have been clarified and also loosen up the regulations to provide areas where commercial vehicles can be parked. Mr. Kleppin said that zoning regulations gives the resident options. Discussion followed about particular zoning issues and potential variances.

Mr. Levey said that when he was on the Planning Commission, there had been studies done and then the final reports were put on a shelf to gather dust. Mr. Kleppin said that the Department had done a number of studies and how those studies have been reviewed.

Mr. Levey asked about establishing an Architectural Review Board. Mr. Kleppin said that he was not a fan of an Architectural Review Board, but they do use peer review for applications. He also said that in Rowayton, they have design review but it has no teeth since they don't have any standards.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

**** A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION WAS SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services