

CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES
June 18, 2025

PRESENT: Galen Wells, Chair; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Chapin Bryce; Darius Williams; Ana Tabachneck (after roll call); Jacquen Jordan-Byron (7:46 pm)

STAFF: Steven Kleppin; Bryan Baker; Michelle Andrzejewski

OTHERS: Atty Liz Suchy; Stuart Lane; Diane Cece

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Wells called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with participants calling in, separately.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll.

III. REVIEW AND ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

A.#2024-12 SPR – Main Norwalk LLC – 272-280 Main Avenue (District 5, Block 21, Lots 174 and 97) – EXTENSION OF TIME REQUEST: Proposed construction of three (3) two-story structures; a +/- 19,000sf retail store with 10 apartments on the second floor; a +/- 2,240sf coffee shop; a +/- 2,200sf restaurant building; and electric vehicle charging - Report & recommended action

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation with a description of an application that the commission had approved. She then asked for an extension of time of one year to secure permits.

There was also a discussion about the possibility of a sale of the property. She explained that the purchaser could also move ahead with the project. There was also a discussion about having the property owner clean up the property since it was looking overgrown.

**** MS. LANGALIS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2024-12 SPR – Main Norwalk LLC – 272-280 Main Avenue (District 5, Block 21, Lots 174 and 97) the proposed construction

of three (3) two-story structures; a +/- 19,000sf retail store with 10 apartments on the second floor; a +/- 2,240sf coffee shop; a +/- 2,200sf restaurant building; and electric vehicle charging request for a one year extension of time be **APPROVED**.

Ms. Lenkowsky was seated for the entire meeting.

Mr. Williams seconded.
Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Chapin Bryce; Darius Williams; Ana Tabachneck approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

B.#10-17 SP - JDM YEW LLC - Brierwood Road/Yew Street - Bond release request for conservation subdivision - Report & recommended action

Mr. Baker explained that the bond was required for erosion controls. Since the project had been completed the applicant was requesting the bond to be released.

At this point, Ms. Tabachneck was seated for the entire meeting.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #10-17 SP - JDM YEW LLC - Brierwood Road/Yew Street - a request for the release of the bond for the conservation subdivision be **APPROVED**.

Ms. Langalis seconded.
Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Chapin Bryce; Darius Williams; Ana Tabachneck approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

C.#6-18 SPR - EDG Properties - 71-75 Connecticut Avenue - Bond release request for mixed-use development with 33 units and 14,800sf of medical office - Report & recommended action

Mr. Baker explained that this is a similar request to the previous application in that the multi-family residence had been completed. The applicant was requesting that the bond be released.

**** MR. WILLIAMS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application 6-18 SPR - EDG Properties - 71-75

Connecticut Avenue - Bond release request for mixed-use development with 33 units and 14,800sf of medical office - a request for the release of the bond be **APPROVED**.

Ms. Tabachneck seconded.
Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Chapin Bryce; Darius Williams; Ana Tabachneck approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. #2025-17 R/SP – The Mid Fairfield AIDS Project – 7 Moore Place (District 3, Block 35, Lot 27) – Zoning regulation text amendment application to modify the minimum parking requirement for a Boarding or Rooming House use in conjunction with a special permit application for a Boarding or Rooming House - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Ms. Wells opened the public hearing

Stuart Lane, the Executive Director of The Mid Fairfield AIDS Project, began the presentation with a description of the Mid Fairfield AIDS Project which began serving AIDS patients but now they have added housing to their mission. They also had programs for substance abuse, etc. He described the programs for homeless people with disabilities. He explained that everyone would have their own room and share kitchens and bathrooms. There is 24 hour staff available. He described the text amendment that they are requesting for the boarding house and parking.

There was a discussion about the number of staff members. He also discussed other programs that are referred to their program. There is no use of drugs, alcohol, steal or touch anyone else. If so, they are out of the house but sent to another place. Their success rate is 80%. There was a discussion about noise complaints from neighbors, etc. One of their neighbors is now selling them their property.

At this point the hearing was opened to public comments at which time, Ms. Wells explained how residents could speak.

Diane Cece, 37 Olmstead Place, said she was speaking as a resident and not as a member of the Board of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association. She did have concerns about the parking. She is supportive of the services they provided.

There were no other speakers so Ms. Wells closed the public comment portion of the meeting. Mr. Lane addressed Ms. Cece's comments and concerns.

There was also a concern about the parking and whether it would open up to other developments. Mr. Baker said that there would be oversight because it is a special permit application, so the commission would be able to review that for each one. There was a discussion about how the program was funded, which Mr. Lane said was both private and publicly funded. Mr. Lane said that the program would own the building for 30 years and couldn't sell it. He said that the program is constantly being audited.

Ms. Wells closed the public hearing.

Ms. Tabachneck made a motion to approve the text amendment and Mr. Bryce seconded. However, Mr. Baker explained that the resolutions for the text amendment and the special permit were combined. There was a discussion about whether they should vote on them together or separately.

Ms. Tabachneck said she would amend her motion to approve the combined text amendment and special permit.

**** MS. TABACHNECK MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission, that application #2025-17 R/SP – The Mid Fairfield AIDS Project – 7 Moore Place (District 3, Block 35, Lot 27) – Zoning regulation text amendment application to modify the minimum parking requirement for a Boarding or Rooming House use in conjunction with a special permit application for a Boarding or Rooming House be **APPROVED** based on the following findings:

1. That the proposed zoning regulation text amendment and special permit is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development, including the following:

a. Goal that, "Norwalk has a neighborhood and housing strategy that maintains a variety of neighborhood types and housing choices through a variety of mechanisms," with the policy to, "Support housing policies that provide housing for Norwalk's households across a range of preferences and household incomes," and the strategy to, "Seek solutions to provide sufficient safe and affordable housing for low-income and very low-income residents."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the special permit be subject to the following conditions:

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

- a. Per architectural drawings entitled “Bldg. A and B 7 Moore Place Norwalk, CT,” prepared by Marc A. Petrin Architects, LLC, that was submitted as part of the special permit application; and
2. That a certificate of special permit shall be filed on the Norwalk Land Records prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and
3. That all conditions as required by the Norwalk Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) shall be applicable to this approval; and
4. That all conditions as required by the Norwalk Health Department shall be applicable to this approval; and
5. That all conditions as required by the Norwalk Department of Public Works (DPW) shall be applicable to this approval; and
6. That all conditions as required by the Norwalk Department of Transportation, Mobility, and Parking (TMP) shall be applicable to this approval; and
7. That all conditions as required by the Norwalk Fire Marshal shall be applicable to this approval; and
8. That any revisions to the approved plans shall be submitted to Staff for review and approval prior to implementation, and that should any revisions be determined to be substantive by Staff, shall be submitted to the Commission for review and approval prior to implementation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of the zoning regulation text amendment shall be June 27, 2025, and the effective date of the special permit application shall be June 28, 2025.

Mr. Bryce seconded.

At this point, the commissioners reviewed the resolution.

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

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

B.#2025-13 POCD –Planning & Zoning Commission – Amendment to the 2019-2029 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) to adopt the Norwalk

**Affordable Housing Action Plan, dated 2025, as an addendum to the POCD -
Public hearing, report & recommended action**

Ms. Wells opened the public hearing.

Ms. Andrzejewski began by showing the commissioners a slide deck for the Norwalk Affordable Housing Action Plan Adoption. She said that the affordable housing plan would have to be updated every 5 years. She explained how they reached out to the community to receive recommendations. She then noted that the recommendations fell into 4 categories. She discussed the high priority items and what was already in the works. They are also working on state legislation including revising statutes for condominium home ownership. She also discussed proposed state legislation, some of which the city was already doing. There was a discussion about the definition of affordable housing which follows the state statutes.

There was also a discussion about the affordable housing fair held in May. Ms. Andrzejewski said that they would do another one since it was well received. It also helped the Planning & Zoning Department coordinate with non-profit organizations in the city. Ms. Tabachneck described her experience with it as well.

At this point the hearing was opened to public comments. Ms. Wells explained how residents could speak. No one spoke for or against the application.

Ms. Wells closed the public hearing.

WHEREAS, the Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-30j requires each municipality to prepare and adopt an affordable housing plan;

WHEREAS, the City prepared The Norwalk Affordable Housing Action Plan, “the Plan” in response to that state statute;

WHEREAS, a committee to oversee the Plan was comprised of members of the Planning and Zoning Commissioners, Common Council members, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, Norwalk Housing Authority, Norwalk residents, housing industry experts and City Staff;

WHEREAS, the Plan provided recommendations on to address affordable housing issues;

WHEREAS, at a joint meeting of Common Council and Planning and Zoning Commission was held January 30th, 2025 to present the Plan;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to the Citywide Plan were formally referred to Common Council on March 5th, 2025;

WHEREAS, the Economic and Community Development Committee of Common Council approved the Plan to be amended to the Citywide Plan, on March 17th, 2025;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to the Citywide Plan were also formally referred to WESTCOG on March 18th 2025 and the Harbor Management Commission on March 20th, 2025;

WHEREAS, the Common Council approved the amendment to the Citywide Plan, on March 25th, 2025;

WHEREAS, based on recommendations and comments received from Common Council, WestCOG and the Harbor Management Commission revisions to the Plan were implemented where appropriate;

WHEREAS, the Commission conducted a public hearing on the proposed amendment on June 18th, 2025 and considered all testimony presented;

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission, that the amendment to page 75 of the Citywide Plan be **APPROVED**; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the reasons for these actions are to implement the Citywide Plan:

1. Chapter 4, Goal A. ii. Create a Housing Policy Advisory Committee to develop and advise on housing policies that support Norwalk's quality of life, economic development, and affordable housing goals
2. Chapter 4 Goal A. v. Develop a Norwalk Housing Plan that establishes a set of housing data to monitor and analyze, a policy framework, and an implementation plan.
3. Chapter 4, Goal D. i. As part of the Housing Policy Plan, develop an integrated citywide strategy for affordable housing in Norwalk.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action shall be June 27, 2025.

Mr. Bryce seconded.

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

No one opposed.
No one abstained.

C. #2025-35 R – Planning & Zoning Commission – Zoning Regulation Text Amendment(s) to Articles 4, 6 and 9 regarding details on minimum and maximum ceiling heights for certain uses; allowing Open Space as a principal use in all zones; permitting Townhouses within the SD-MC zone by Special Permit; revisions to the limitations on certain uses that referenced out-of-date road classifications; revisions to the flood zone regulations specifying areas of structures that must be unfinished; deleting the definition of Attic; modifying the definitions of Story, Half-, Story, and Lowest Floor; creating definitions for Unfinished Area and Finished (Habitable) Area - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Ms. Wells opened the public hearing.

Mr. Baker began the presentation by noting that there were minor changes that staff had noticed during the permit process. He described the various changes which included adding in uses, allowing permits for townhouses in certain zones, changes in the special flood hazard zone, definition of half story, as well as other clean-up of the regulations.

At this point the hearing was opened to public comments at which time Ms. Wells explained how residents could speak. No one spoke for or against the application.

Diane Cece, 37 Olmstead Place, had comments about the townhouses and the restrictions on amphitheaters.

At this point, Mr. Baker addressed the comments about the amphitheaters but he said that there was no application pending for this. Mr. Kleppin said that there were no applications in the marine commercial area for townhouses but that they had received a request to allow it. They made it a special permit so that the commission could review the application.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #025-35 R – Planning & Zoning Commission – Zoning Regulation Text Amendment(s) to Articles 4, 6 and 9 regarding details on minimum and maximum ceiling heights for certain uses; allowing Open Space as a principal use in all zones; permitting Townhouses within the SD-MC zone by Special Permit; revisions to the limitations on certain uses that referenced out-of-

date road classifications; revisions to the flood zone regulations specifying areas of structures that must be unfinished; deleting the definition of Attic; modifying the definitions of Story, Half-, Story, and Lowest Floor; creating definitions for Unfinished Area and Finished (Habitable) Area be **APPROVED** to implement the following goals, policies, strategies and actions of the Norwalk Plan of Conservation and Development:

1. Chapter 10, Goal 1: “Norwalk has a comprehensive and balanced transportation system, with safety and multimodal accessibility the top priority of citywide transportation planning.”

a. Policy: “Support Complete Streets policies and multimodal level of service analysis to improve streets for all users and varying abilities.”

i. Strategy B: “Provide roads that serve the needs of Norwalk residents and commerce, and that facilitate safe and convenient access to transit, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities.”

1. Action i: “Make land use decisions that support walking, bicycling, and public transit use.”

2. Chapter 12, Goal 1: “General guidelines guide land use decision making.”

a. Policy: “Promote urban design guidelines for walkability for development in urbanized parts of Norwalk.”

b. Policy: “Implement transit-oriented design (TOD) guidelines promoting density, walkability, and mix of uses for development near transit stations (rail and high-frequency bus).

3. Chapter 12, Goal 2: “Neighborhood and corridor activity centers have urban design standards that promote walkability.”

a. Policy: “Support mixed-use redevelopment along commercial corridors.”

4. Chapter 12, Goal 3: “The user-friendly zoning ordinance is consistent with the future land use map and achievement of the vision and goals of the POCD.”

a. Policy: “Support revision of the zoning ordinance to promote desired development and design patterns.”

b. Policy: “Support permit streamlining for projects with desired characteristics.”

i. Strategy A: “Modernize the zoning ordinance and the development approval process to achieve the goals of the POCD.”

1. Action i: “Rewrite the zoning ordinance to reflect contemporary best practices in administration and user-friendliness and to be consistent with the POCD.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action shall be June 27, 2025.

Mr. Williams seconded.
Galen Wells; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Chapin Bryce; Darius Williams; Ana Tabachneck approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Public Act No. 25-49 (formerly HB 5002) and Public Act No. 25-33 (formerly SB 9)

Mr. Baker began the presentation with SB 9 since it would add to the workload of the commission, specifically on CAM applications because it removed the exemption of single family homes. Now any new single family homes being built would have to file an application if it was in the coastal area. At the moment, only those along the water would be reviewed by the commission. There was a discussion as to why the state was changing the law. Mr. Kleppin would also speak with the legislators in Norwalk about the legislation. He also said that it could be another 50 applications a year. It's also an additional cost burden on applicants. There was also a discussion about which zones would be affected. Mr. Baker also discussed the new process.

The next item Mr. Baker discussed was HB 5002 which was a housing bill. He discussed three components of it, the first which was the fair share component. Every community in the state will be responsible for providing a certain number of housing units, but it is not clear whether they would have to be affordable housing units. Norwalk's share would be 468 units but Mr. Baker believed that the city already complied with it. He also discussed the state's changes to the off street motor vehicle parking space requirements which were required in all zones. Another change in the state regulations would be to allow middle housing in commercial zones which Mr. Baker said is already allowed in Norwalk's zoning regulations. There would be no change necessary to the city's codes. The last component was the work, live, ride component which would allow communities to develop TOD around train stations, which Mr. Baker said that they had already done. Since Norwalk already complied with this,

the city would receive priority funding for infrastructure. Some communities are having issues with the bill, but Norwalk complies with much of it. Mr. Baker said that this bill would go into effect in October 2026.

There was then a discussion about the project at Raccoon Park at Merritt 7. Mr. Kleppin said it would have about 120 deed restricted units in it. There was also a discussion about whether this legislation took into account that Norwalk has a rate over 10% of affordable housing unit rate. He said that he had looked at the number of units assigned to neighboring towns and those were higher. Mr. Baker believed that the state had taken into account Norwalk's affordable housing rate. There was also a discussion of what Norwalk had done as compared to other towns for affordable housing. This item would be on the agenda again at the next meeting to discuss a recap.

VI. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: June 4, 2025

**** MR. BRYCE MOVED to approve the June 4, 2025 minutes, as amended.**

Ms. Langalis seconded.

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

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

VII. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin said that there would be new software for building permits and zoning applications. They were working with a consultant for this project. The city should have a contract in September and the new platform would be ready by late 2026 or early 2027.

The project to scan field cards should be completed and online by early fall of 2025. The next project would be to scan old permits as well. It is Mr. Kleppin's hope to have those completed over the next few years.

The department would also be using new software to 3D model every building in the city. It would show how things would look if additions were added to a building, etc. They would be able to show them the software later in 2025. There was a discussion about the city's website and how it needs to be updated.

VIII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

There was a discussion about Wegmann's and Target opening. Mr. Baker said that Wegmann's had added more solar panels to the parking lot. There was discussion about holding a roundtable for former applicants that had installed solar panels and their experience with them.

Mr. Bryce said that Mr. Williams laptop battery had died so he was not at the meeting.

Mr. Schulman asked if Jessica Vonashek to come to a meeting to discuss Manresa Island. There would be another public forum about this as well.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bryce, on behalf of Mr. Williams, made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Schulman seconded.

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

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero