

**CITY OF NORWALK**  
**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**January 21, 2026**

**PRESENT:** Chapin Bryce, Chair; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones; Ana Tabachneck

**STAFF:** Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

**OTHERS:** Atty Liz Suchy; Diane Cece; Bret Holzwarth; Tristan Toomey; Sabrina Godeski; Martin Cohen; Michael Losaso; Alexander Gurevich;

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Bryce called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with participants calling in, separately.

**II. ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Mr. Baker called the roll.

Mr. Bryce seated both Ms. Lenkowsky and Ms. Tabachneck. Mr. Bryce noted that one of the applications would not be presented at this meeting since they asked for a postponement to the February 18, 2026 meeting.

**III. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. #2025-89 SP – RMS 394 West Ave LLC – 370 West Avenue (District 1, Block 8, Lot 12) – Special permit for the installation of backlit cornice signs - Public hearing, report & recommended action**

Mr. Bryce opened the public hearing and explained the procedure.

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation by noting the application was for two cornice signs on the south side of the building. The public hearing had been noticed and the certified, return receipt cards had been returned to the Planning & Zoning office, as well as two signs being placed in front of the property. She described the zoning of the property. She said that the commission had approved their application in November for the text amendment to allow corner signs in this zone. She showed them a rendering of the cornice signs. She said that they met the regulations that had been adopted in November.

There was a discussion about which side of the building the signs would be on so that they could determine what it would be like from the other buildings around it. The signs were facing busy streets.

Mr. Bryce opened the hearing for the public to comment and explained the rules for commenting.

Diane Cece had concerns about these signs being light pollution in the community. She addressed the justification for the signs being for wayfinding. She asked if any of the other buildings in the area have these types of cornice signs. She had concerns that this application would be setting a precedent as well as the lights being kept on overnight. She said she was opposed to this application.

There were no other members of the public that spoke on this application.

Atty Suchy said that the cornice signs had become legally non-conforming under the revised regulations. The new text is similar to the language in the prior regulations. She addressed comments about the necessity for wayfinding. She said it met all of the zoning requirements.

**\*\* MS. LANGALIS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-89 SP – RMS 394 West Ave LLC – 370 West Avenue (District 1, Block 8, Lot 12) – Special permit for the installation of backlit cornice signs be **APPROVED** subject to the following:

1. That the site shall be developed in accordance with the following plans:
  - a. Per the signage exhibits provided as part of the special permit application package; and
2. That any changes to the approved plans shall be submitted to the Commission's Staff (Staff) for review and approval prior to implementation. 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
3. That prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance, the applicant shall provide documentation to Staff demonstrating compliance with the maximum illumination measurement permitted (200 nits); 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 action shall be January 30, 2026.

**Mr. Jones seconded.**

**Chapin Bryce; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones; Ana Tabachneck approved.**

**No one opposed.**

**No one abstained.**

**IV. REVIEW AND ACTION ON APPLICATIONS**

**A. #2025-93 SPR – TCT Enterprises – 542 Westport Avenue (District 5, Block 8, Lot 6) – Change of use within portion of existing building from Retail to Commercial Recreation Establishment - Report & recommended action**

Bret Holzwarth, the representative for the applicant, began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He then gave a brief description of the current property. There is a large vacancy where the Bed, Bath and Beyond had been in the building. They would like to open an indoor playspace for children which would also host birthday parties. He described the interior modifications which included adding some windows. He then discussed the parking analysis and count. He said that there was a parking surplus. He addressed staff's recommendation for blocking two of the parking spots.

Tristan Toomey continued the presentation by describing the indoor playspace which would be open to residents of Norwalk and surrounding towns. He said there would be STEM areas, calming areas, rooms for basketball, and rooms for birthdays.

There was a discussion about the age range for the children who would be visiting. There was also a discussion about the types of membership and whether they would be able to pay with EBT.

Mr. Holzwarth said that they would have to return to the commission with a signage application.

**\*\* MS. TABACHNECK MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-93 SPR – TCT Enterprises – 542 Westport Avenue (District 5, Block 8, Lot 6) – Change of use within portion of existing building from Retail to Commercial Recreation Establishment be **APPROVED** subject to the following:

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

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- a. Per architectural drawings entitled “Proposed Renovations to The Chalk Space for Children, 542 Westport Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851,” prepared by Achilles Architects, dated 12/1/2025; and
2. That any changes to the approved plans shall be submitted to the Commission’s Staff (Staff) for review and approval prior to implementation. 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
3. That any and all conditions required by Norwalk Health Department are applicable to this approval; and
4. That any and all conditions required by Norwalk WPCA are applicable to this approval; and
5. That any and all conditions required by Norwalk DPW are applicable to this approval; and
6. That a Connecticut licensed engineer shall certify that all the required improvements, including any required off-site improvements, were installed to City standards prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance (COZC); 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 action shall be January 30, 2026.

**Ms. Langalis seconded.**

There was a discussion about changing the language about parking from a Whereas clause to a condition. There was also a discussion about whether the space would become retail if this business did not succeed.

**Chapin Bryce; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones; Ana Tabachneck approved.**

**No one opposed.**

**No one abstained.**

**B. #2025-91 POCD – Planning & Zoning Commission – Amendment to the 2019-2029 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) to adopt the Art and**

**Cultural District Plan, dated 2025, as an addendum to the POCD - Preliminary review and referral**

Sabrina Godeski, Director of Business Development & Tourism and staff to the Norwalk Arts Commission, introduced the project team who began the presentation.

Martin Cohen, Arts & Culture Plan, continued the presentation with a slide show. He began with the planning process and how it was connected to the POCD.

David Plettner, said that they had worked on the plan for a year. He said that they had held in person discussion groups and interviews, as well as open meetings and forums. They had done a resident survey for a total of about 500 residents who had been a part of the process. He then described the findings which included their top priorities of connectivity, infrastructure, artist support, historic preservation and management capacity. He noted that cultural districts are not successful without funding and infrastructure. He also discussed the tensions of the project which included the geographic scope of the area, plus overlay zones. There were also tensions from development vs. displacement, as well as tourism vs. resident focus.

Mr. Cohen noted that they had state certification for a formal arts district. He then described the POCD vision for Norwalk which included it as the center for art, culture and entertainment for the region. He addressed the core recommendations of the Arts & Cultural Plan which included those for programming and activation, artist support, marketing and branding, economic development, and connectivity and unification. He then discussed the references to Chapter 4 and 6 in the POCD. He also discussed the proposed POCD amendment. The last thing he discussed was the next steps.

Mr. Kleppin said that it would be referred to the Common Council and that there would be a public hearing.

Mr. Cohen said that they saw the opportunity that the arts and culture would bring to Norwalk. Mr. Plettner said that it was good to see that plans from the POCD were being implemented.

**\*\* MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-91 POCD – Planning & Zoning Commission – Amendment to the 2019-2029 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) to adopt the Art and Cultural District Plan, dated 2025, as an addendum to the POCD will be referred to the Common Council as per 8-23.

**Mr. Jones seconded.**

Chapin Bryce; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones; Ana Tabachneck approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

**C. #2025-90 SPR – 200 Connecticut Ave, LLC – 200 Connecticut Avenue (District – 5, Block – 64, Lot 42) – Proposed interior renovations to convert 3 office floors to thirty-five residential units - Report & recommended action**

Michael Losaso began the presentation by introducing the project team. He continued with a description of the zoning for the property as well as orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He also showed them the floor plans. There were no plans to change the exterior of the building. He explained that there were 1 or 2 bedroom units and affordable housing units. He discussed the number of units. There would be 3 two-bedroom units on the penthouse level. He then discussed the number of parking spaces and summarized the traffic study. There would not be a negative impact and believed that it reduced the amount of vehicles coming and going from the site. He then discussed the comments that they had received from other departments.

There was a discussion about the residential section having their own elevators. Alexander Gurevich said that one set of the elevators would be for residents. The lobby would be shared.

Mr. Kleppin asked about the occupancy for the remainder of the building. Mr. Losaso said that there would be retail. Mr. Gurevich said that the first floor only had a lobby and a small cafe. There is no retail in the building.

There was a discussion about the other businesses in the building, including law firms. They said that the conversion to residential should take about 12-18 months. There was also a discussion about a concierge service which would be 24 hours. There would also be a gym open to tenants and residents.

**\*\* MS. LENKOWSKY MOVED: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-90 SPR – 200 Connecticut Ave, LLC – 200 Connecticut Avenue (District – 5, Block – 64, Lot 42) – Proposed interior renovations to convert 3 office floors to thirty-five residential units be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. That the site shall be developed in accordance with the following plans submitted as part of this application:

- a. Per architectural plans entitled "200 Connecticut Avenue" prepared by Antinozzi Associates Architecture and Interiors, dated 11/25/2025 (three sheets); and
2. That all department sign-offs are obtained prior to issuance of any Zoning Permit; and
3. That any changes to the approved plans shall be submitted to the Commission's Staff for review and approval prior to implementation. 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
4. That a final Workforce Housing Plan showing a total of 4 workforce housing units shall be submitted to Staff for review and approval and shall include deed restriction documents, architectural floor plans and a breakdown of the number of bedrooms for each workforce housing unit provided. All such workforce housing units shall be deed restricted in perpetuity and meet all requirements of the Workforce Housing Regulations; and
5. That any and all existing conditions of approval remain in place; and

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

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the effective date of this action shall be January 30th, 2026.

**Ms. Langalis seconded.**

At this point, they reviewed the resolution. There was a discussion about condition #4.

**Chapin Bryce; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones; Ana Tabachneck approved.**

**No one opposed.**

**No one abstained.**

**D. #2025-79 SPR – Lofts M7 LLC – 101-201 Merritt 7 – Conversion of Office Buildings to Residential - Report & recommended action**

This item was postponed until February 18, 2026.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

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**A. #2026-02 R - Planning & Zoning Commission - Zoning regulation text amendment to Article 4 and Article 9 regarding Accessory Dwelling Units**

Mr. Baker began the presentation by noting that the staff had made additional edits to the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations based on the feedback from the commissioners. The proposed changes were separated into three different categories, the first being general requirements for all ADUs, the second being height, bulk and location standards for attached and detached ADUs and the third being permitting procedures. Under the permitting procedures, one item would be notification of the permitting for an ADU, both for over-the-counter applications and site plan review. However, neighbors would have to be sent a written notification.

There was a discussion about whether property owners should have to live on the property. Mr. Baker suggested that the commission should either allow it or not. He said that he could reach out to cities that don't require it to see how it is working for them or if there is an increase in corporate ownership of single family residences. There was a discussion about the number of ADUs in Norwalk and whether this could increase additional rental properties. Mr. Baker said that they could check whether they were owner-occupied. There was also a discussion about duplex ownership. There was also a discussion about holding a public hearing for the proposed regulations. Mr. Kleppin suggested that they could advance the application to public hearing and still make changes after they had heard the public comments. Mr. Baker said that Mr. Roina had read the regulation and would have additional comments at the public hearing. There was additional discussion about the notification process to neighbors.

The staff would begin the referral process and set a date for a public hearing.

**B. #2026-03 R - Planning & Zoning Commission - Zoning regulation text amendment to Article(s) 4 regarding public realm requirements; Artist Live/Work uses and workforce housing; Band Sign requirements; definitions for Dormer, Earth Processing and Contractor's Materials Storage Yard, Landscape Nursery, Patio, Porch, Stoop, and Wetbar; Landscape Nursery use limitations; encroachments; village district review standards and procedures**

Mr. Kleppin began the presentation by discussing proposed regulations which would exempt certain developments from providing public realm space. In lieu of that they would pay a fee which could upgrade or enhance park land or even purchase park lands. He discussed the formula for this payment. This regulation could only be used for certain types of developments. There was a further discussion about developments where the commission still may want the development to have a public realm space but

that it met the criteria for not having it. Mr. Kleppin said he could re-draft the language for their review at the next meeting. There was an additional change made to the language. There was a suggestion that there should be language in the regulation as to how the fees would be used. Mr. Kleppin said that Recreation and Parks would decide about the funds usage, and that it was referenced in the proposed regulation.

Mr. Kleppin discussed the certification in the form of an affidavit to certify that the artist's live-work spaces were still being used as an artist live-work space for those that are work-force housing. He also discussed proposed changes to band signs, the definition for dormer, and landscape nursery use limitations as to where it would be located. There were also changes to the definitions for patios and porches, as well as wet bars. There was a change to the language for village districts.

Mr. Kleppin said that he could work on revising the language further for the public realm spaces. Ms. Langalis said she had a tour of the public realm space at Mill Pond development which worked, and gave other examples of developments where public realm worked and did not work.

## **VI. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

### **A. Regular Meeting: January 7, 2026**

**\*\* MR. SCHULMAN MOVED to approve the January 7, 2026 minutes, as amended.**

**Ms. Langalis seconded.**

**Chapin Bryce; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones approved.**

**No one opposed.**

**Ana Tabachneck abstained.**

## **VII. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR**

Mr. Kleppin said that the scam he had mentioned at the January 7 is ongoing. One developer had received an email and almost paid a large sum of money. They would continue to spread the word about it and the city would send out information on social media. They have reported it to the police. It has happened all over the state. He mentioned how he believed the scammers were getting applicant email addresses.

As part of the citation fine process, a fine had been appealed and they were settling the matter. Corporation Counsel asked that the settlement be approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission. Mr. Kleppin said that they could do a special meeting

before their February 4 meeting at 5:30 pm. He noted that the Manresa application would be on their full agenda that evening.

## **VIII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

Mr. Schulman had comments about the trees taken down on Water Street at Harborside. Mr. Kleppin said that they had worked with DPW to get them to complete this but it had not been done in the fall. They would work with them in the spring to complete it.

Ms. Tabachneck had questions about the Mill Pond public access. Mr. Kleppin explained the next steps in the process. The staff would review the workforce housing regulations and the plan to confirm that the information is there. If not, they could amend the regulations.

Ms. Tabachneck requested that the application process should be the same for workforce housing units as the one for market rate units, including on the building's website. There was also a discussion about additional fees for the workforce housing units.

Ms. Tabachneck asked if there was a way to find out if the rents for market rate units were being increased to make up for the difference in the rents for the workforce housing units. There are developments that are not required to have workforce housing units because they are either smaller or older and are not required to have them. There was a further discussion about the inflation of rents and how to determine this.

Mr. Bryce asked when the referral for the Capital Budget would be on the agenda. Mr. Baker said that he would follow up with the Finance Department.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Tabachneck made a Motion to Adjourn.**

**Ms. Langalis seconded.**

**Chapin Bryce; Diana Lenkowsky; Louis Schulman; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones; Richard Roina; Nick Kantor; Galen Wells; Jacquen Jordan-Byron approved.**

**No one opposed.**

**No one abstained.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Diana Palmentiero