

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 8, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Colin Grotheer; Emily Burnaman; Christine Bisceglie

OTHERS: Steve Kleppin, Director, Planning & Zoning; Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; Carly Kramer, Redevelopment Agency; Jahliah Green, Health Department; Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Phil Chiaia; Paul Chenard; Sheri Brennan; Audrey Cozzarin; Gary Washinsky; Jeremy Leung; Peter Franz; Paul Chenard; Wendy Bjerke; Dianne Lauricella; Jack Pegler

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at <http://www.norwalkct.org/meetings>.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:10PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Pegler said he is a resident of Darien, and that walkability is an issue that he deeply cares about, and he is excited to learn more about what people can do to make our communities more walkable.

Ms. Lauricella congratulated the Bike/Walk Commission on the event for the next phase of opening the NRVt.

Ms. Lauricella said that she is very pleased that the city is updating the zoning regulations and suggested whenever possible to find out if there are overlays in certain parts of the city that would accommodate biking and walking which has been done in other towns across the country.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED ZONING REGULATIONS

- Planning & Zoning Director, Steve Kleppin

Mr. Kleppin presented and said the purpose of updating the zoning regulations is that they are currently outdated, and that Norwalk presently has 31 zones which includes 14 base zones plus overlays and needed to come up with something that would be easier to regulate. He said the zoning regulations will align the zoning districts in the POCD and make it consistent with the future land use map whenever possible and will try to concentrate development near existing

transit infrastructure and employment centers and develop a form-based hybrid model. The regulations pose to combine the West Avenue/Wall Street corridor with the South Norwalk corridor and define the city's urban core and there are two other areas that they focused development and one of those is a small area in East Norwalk and the other is along the route 1 corridor.

Mr. Kleppin said that they are proposing a hybrid code that includes traditional zoning for single-family areas, a form-based approach for commercial and multi-family areas, and the existing zoning designations are disappearing. He said over time the form-based code will allow a more uniform design because all the parking for developments will be required in the rear or the side so the buildings will be closer to the street and the building design and signage will be consistent. He said that are also proposing the consolidation of business zones, smaller multi-family zones, neighborhood business zones, as well as the creation of a civic zone. He said they will no longer regulate the height of a building and will only regulate the number of stories, will no longer regulate lot coverage and will regulate impervious surface coverage only, and will regulate grading, vegetation, and tree removal and there will be new standards to regulate lighting as there are none currently in place. He said there is also a whole section on sustainability and revisions to the flood zone regulations and will increase public notification requirements for certain types of applications. There will also be parking exemptions near Wall Street and Washington Street related to historic structures and further parking reductions around mass transit. He said some other items that are related to walkability and bikeability include the increase of two-family dwellings and by focusing them around infrastructure will over time hopefully lead to less vehicle traffic as well as required bicycle parking for multifamily, commercial, and industrial.

Mr. Kleppin provided an overview of the schedule and said that they have been doing outreach meetings with the Common Council districts and next Monday will be doing a neighborhood meeting and two public hearings to solicit feedback on June 21st and June 28th and in July and August the commission will review the comments and changes that people are suggesting and toward the end of September there will be an additional hearing with an effective date for the regulation on January 1, 2024. He said if people go the City of Norwalk Zoning page and click the zoning regulations update all the links from the videos, presentations, and meetings will be included for consistency.

Mr. Grotheer asked if there was any thought to the increased cost of allotting sustainability measures and how that factors into smaller projects and how that will be accommodated. Mr. Kleppin said at one of the public meetings there will be a roundtable discussion regarding sustainability.

Mr. Aley asked how the difference is defined for ADU and two-family. Mr. Kleppin said that ADU's can be attached but there are size limitations where a two-family does not. Mr. Aley asked what the square footage is for an ADU. Mr. Kleppin requested that Mr. Aley send him an email and he will provide the information regarding the square footage.

Mr. Thompson said there are cities that are doing with parking requirements and asked Mr. Kleppin if he considered including using bicycle parking to count towards parking minimums. Mr. Kleppin said he does not think that aligns with a lot of people's viewpoints at this time. Mr. Thompson said that his concern is that by requiring parking minimums we are committing to a certain level of car use. Mr. Aley said over the last 10 years the Zoning Commission has reduced parking requirements and that may continue and get expanded.

SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL GRANT

Mr. Pacelli said that TMP is applying for the Safe Street and Road for All grant, and it was submitted in the previous round and will be submitting it again as it is being opened again for projects. He said they submitted a grant for a streetscape project on Main Street from Hoyt Street to Route 123. Ms. Kramer said they will also be applying for the grant through the Redevelopment Agency, and it is due on July 10th and will be requesting a letter of recommendation from the Bike/Walk Commission.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THAT THE BIKE/WALK COMMISSION SUBMIT A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE GRANT APPLICATION.**

**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NRVT CROSSING ROUTE 1 BELDEN AVENUE AT RT. 7 RAMPS

Mr. Thompson said it is a long crossing and the feedback that he has received is that cars are coming in both directions and often don't realize there are people crossing when they are turning right on red. Mr. Pacelli agreed that it is a very long crossing and there is a lot of traffic in the area and he spoke with the signal engineer and he said the signals were upgraded eight years ago but over the next several years the signal is slated to be upgraded to allow for exclusive pedestrian crossing so that all vehicular traffic is stopped on red. Mr. Grotheer suggested that discussions with the state be started because this area is vastly becoming a usable asset in the city and he does not accept waiting for the traffic signalization upgrade and that it is a design issue with the intersection. Mr. Pacelli said that he agrees but there is a limited budget and can't do all the projects at one time. Mr. Thompson said that he is on the complete streets guide steering committee and one of the core projects is a demonstration project and the consultant has asked for ideas for the demonstration project so this may be a good candidate.

Ms. Cozzarin said there are several intersections around the city where there should not be a turn on red when there is a pedestrian crossing.

Ms. Bisceglie suggested having the NRVT install signs on the trail warning people that cars turn right on red and to use caution. She also asked if it would help if members of the commission contacted the CTDOT to help facilitate the projects. Mr. Pacelli said he will discuss this internally with the TMP team to see what the best course of action will be to address the intersection sooner rather than later.

Mr. Thompson requested that this item be included on the next meeting agenda so that an update can be given to the commission. Mr. Grotheer suggested that Jim Carter of the NRVT be included on all communications.

SEAVIEW AVENUE COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Pacelli said the second public meeting for the Seaview Avenue complete streets project will be held on Monday, May 22, 2023, from 5:00PM-8:00PM and will be split into two sessions and the first session will include a walk-through of the Seaview Avenue corridor and discuss the existing conditions and what is being proposed, and the second session will include a presentation at the South Norwalk Library for different concepts based on the recommendations that were provided by the public and business owners and following the presentation will solicit feedback again.

Mr. Pacelli said the complete streets website is now live.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd