

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES
March 4, 2026**

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, acting as Chair until Ms. Wells arrived; Diana Lenkowsky; Tammy Langalis; Ana Tabachneck; Harvey Jones; Richard Roina; Galen Wells (arrived at 6:14 pm)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

OTHERS: Dan Stanton; Atty Liz Suchy; David Plettner-Saunders; Atty Adam Blank; Henry Conroy; Craig Flaherty; Seelan Pather; Eric Rains; Brian Dempsey; Lynelle Jones; Braden Lynn; Tom Ryder;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman 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 & SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Mr. Kleppin called the roll.

Mr. Schulman seated both Ms. Lenkowsky and Ms. Tabachneck for this meeting. He said that Mr. Williams had not accepted re-appointment to the commission. He also explained that Mr. Bryce would not be attending the meeting and Ms. Wells would be late. He noted that the order of some items on the agenda would be changed.

III. REVIEW AND ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

A. #2026-14 8-24 Referral - City of Norwalk - 8-24 Referral to acquire drainage easement for purposes of maintaining newly installed storm drainage, per Drainage Easement Map 13 Heather Lane and Drainage Easement Map 15 Heather Lane - Report & recommended action

Mr. Schulman began with this matter. Dan Statnon, a civil engineer with DPW, began the presentation with an explanation of the easement that would be necessary for a storm drainage project on Heather Lane. The existing easement was not sufficient for the pipe.

**** MR. ROINA MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission, that application #2026-14 8-24 Referral - City of Norwalk - 8-24 Referral to acquire drainage easement for purposes of maintaining newly installed storm drainage, per Drainage Easement Map 13 Heather Lane and Drainage Easement Map 15 Heather Lane be **APPROVED**.

Ms. Langalis seconded.

Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Tammy Langalis; Ana Tabachneck; Harvey Jones; Richard Roina approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

B. #2024-08 SP/CAM – Harbor Ventures, LLC and Plumbing Works, LLC – 18 Harbor Avenue (District 1, Block 25, Lot 7) – Extension of time request for construction of a new building and use of the entire property as an Earth Processing and Contractor Materials Storage Yard - Report & recommended action

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation with the introduction of the project team. She also noted that they were requesting a 2nd extension of time. She explained the application as well as why they were requesting another one. She also explained what was in process and had been worked on for the last several months. She also noted that there was still one last tenant that was in the building that they were working with. She said that they would not need a full year but were requesting one.

**** MR. ROINA MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission, that application #2024-08 SP/CAM – Harbor Ventures, LLC and Plumbing Works, LLC – 18 Harbor Avenue (District 1, Block 25, Lot 7) – Extension of time request for construction of a new building and use of the entire property as an Earth Processing and Contractor Materials Storage Yard for one year be **APPROVED**.

Mr. Jones seconded.

Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Tammy Langalis; Ana Tabachneck; Harvey Jones; Richard Roina approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. #2025-91 POCD - Planning & Zoning Commission - Amendment to the 2019-2029 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) to adopt the Arts

and Cultural Plan, dated 2025, as an addendum to the POCD - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Mr. Schulman opened the public hearing. There was a discussion as to who would be presenting for this application. Mr. Kleppin said that since they had already seen a presentation from the applicant, they could start public comment. Mr. Schulman asked for a quick presentation from the consultant as to how the plan was developed and their recommendations.

David Plettner-Saunders, the consultant on the project, began the presentation for Norwalk's Arts and Cultural Plan. Norwalk is the only large city to receive this designation from the state, which it received in 2024. The plan would implement a provision of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). They are seeking an amendment to recommend that a part of the POCD had been achieved. He then discussed that the plan had been developed in 2025 as well as how it had been developed with city residents, etc. There would be programming, support for artists including work opportunities and living spaces, marketing and branding for the district, economic development for small businesses, and connectivity of different areas of the district.

Mr. Schulman then explained how the public could make comments. There were no members of the public that spoke for or against the application.

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

WHEREAS, the Plan provided recommendations on five core themes; programing & activation, artist support, marketing & branding, economic development, and connectivity & unification;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to the Citywide Plan were also formally referred to WestCOG on December 16th, 2025 and the Harbor Management Commission on January 29th, 2026;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to the Citywide Plan were formally referred to Common Council on January 21st, 2026;

WHEREAS, the Economic and Community Development Committee of Common Council approved the Plan to be amended to the Citywide Plan, on February 5th, 2026;

WHEREAS, the Common Council approved the amendment to the Citywide Plan, on February 10th, 2026;

WHEREAS, the Commission conducted a public hearing on the proposed amendment on March 4th, 2026 and considered all testimony presented;

**** MR. ROINA MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission, that the amendment to page 112 of the Citywide Plan be **APPROVED**; and

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

1. Chapter 6, Goal A. iv. Develop a strategic plan for arts and culture that is focused on enhancing Norwalk's identity as destination for arts and culture.
2. Chapter 6 Goal B. i. Work with stakeholders, including property owners, to identify and zone an appropriate area in Norwalk Center to provide incentives for artists' studios, livework options, gallery spaces, performance spaces, and so on.
3. Chapter 6, Goal B. v. Promote arts, entertainment and cultural activities and venues to cities and towns outside of Norwalk.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action shall be March 14th, 2026.

Mr. Wells seconded.

Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Tammy Langalis; Ana Tabachneck; Harvey Jones; Richard Roina; Galen Wells approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

At this point, Ms. Wells became the acting chair of the commission, replacing Mr. Schulman.

B. #2026-05 SP/CAM – Spinnaker Acquisitions LLC – 108 Water Street (District 2, Block 84, Lot 18) – Special permit and coastal site plan review application for the construction of a 4.5-story mixed-use development - Public hearing, report & recommended action

Atty Adam Blank, the attorney for the applicant, began the presentation by orienting the commission as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He said that

the applicant had been before the commission in the fall for an existing approval. Now a part of the office building would become hotel rooms. He showed them some of the designs from the original presentation. The exterior is almost identical to the previous design. Since this is a new application, they would have 2 approvals for the property as they continue to look for office tenants.

Henry Conroy, the representative for Spinnaker, said that they still believed that office would work but there were concerns about the finances. The hotel concept seemed to be feasible and generated interest from hotel operators. He explained further why it was important to have the two approvals. He thought the hotel space would activate the waterfront and surrounding public spaces. He also said that they've had a lot of discussions with several potential end users for the waterfront, including the Maritime Aquarium and Manresa Island. The discussions are in the early stages. It's early for any operators to make a commitment this early. He also discussed the construction timeline.

Atty Blank noted that the conditions of approval would not be impacted by the hotel. He said that some improvements would help with flooding concerns as well as a reduction in traffic from the change to hotel use. He also asked that the hearing from the prior application be made a part of this one. They have received all department sign-offs with comments from a few. The Harbor Management Commission approved the application. They had provided the Planning & Zoning Department with the notices of the public hearing as well as posting a sign about it. He then introduced the remainder of the project team.

Craig Flaherty continued the presentation by noting that the building is fully compliant with the city's and FEMA's flood regulations. He then showed them the revised site plan. There would be two improvements in the entrances which included widening them. He noted that changes to the elevation would help during the 100 year storm. He said that the drainage had not changed. They had submitted a flood preparedness plan which had incorporated language about the hotel manager. He believed that many hotel operators had operational plans for floods, especially since they had to be responsible for their guests. He said that another part of the flood plan was to reduce nuisance flooding that occurs on Water Street. He also discussed a study that the city had commissioned several years ago that recommended that Water Street be elevated. He said that this was a city project since it could not be done, one property at a time. This property was designed so that when the elevation was done in the future, this property could be elevated.

Seelan Pather, the architect on the project, continued the presentation, by showing them the various parking levels. There would also be a grand staircase and a walking loop around the property. He noted that the plans are more detailed since they

are construction plans and described the elevations further. He explained how driveways were wider for fire trucks and that changes were made so they could reach multiple areas. He then said that the restaurant would remain unchanged and would be attached to the hotel. He showed them the elevations for the hotel as well.

There was a discussion about the restaurant operators. Mr. Conroy described it as being in partnership with the hotel and open to the public. They would like it to take advantage of the waterfront access and patio that is being created. The buildings are connected through the garage which would have separate lobbies in there. Hotel guests would be able to use some of the same amenities as the residential guests, such as the gym and the pool. The lobbies would be at street level, not the parking. Pedestrians would not see it as they were walking on the street.

There was a discussion about how many rooms there would be in the hotel as well as how it compares to the proposed hotel near the police station. Atty Blank noted that the one near the police station had been struck down by the courts so there would be a demand for hotel space. Mr. Conroy explained that there were discussions with different hotel operators but they have not made a decision yet. They would like it to be a boutique hotel, but there would be benefits to working with a larger brand, such as Hilton. The waterfront access would allow people to pull up in their boats and stay at the hotel or go to the restaurant.

Eric Rains, the landscape architect, said that the original design of the landscaping has remained the same. It had not been affected by the conversion to a hotel.

Atty Blank clarified that in their discussions with Manresa Island, there would be a boat shuttle to the Island, not buses from this site.

Brian Dempsey, the traffic engineer, said that there would be less trips with the conversion of part of the site to a hotel. He also said that there would be less demand for parking on the weekdays. There would be an increase on the weekend, but there are a sufficient number of parking spaces to handle the increase. They had also received comments from Traffic, Mobility and Parking (TMP) which they had responded to.

There was a discussion about the letter that the commission had received from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), due to the change from office to hotel. Atty Blank noted that DEEP's concern was due to hotels being similar to residential, and residential being worse than offices in terms of safety of lives in the event of a flood event or a storm event. He disagreed with this assessment.

He described what could happen in the event of a storm from the standpoint of a hotel operator. He believed it would be easier to manage people with the hotel use.

There was a discussion about the number of apartments on the site as well as the width of the public access corridors, and what the applicant could do to improve them. Atty Blank addressed these concerns. Most of the walkways would be 6 feet. They were trying to work with the northerly neighbor to enhance that one. There was a discussion about the use of the parking for anyone who wanted to walk on the waterfront. There was also a discussion about the traffic report and whether it accounted for when the Stroffolino Bridge went up. Mr. Dempsey said that it was not in the report, since TMP had not asked for it. There was a discussion about the retail that would be in those spaces. Mr. Conroy noted that it was still early for tenants to be looking at the space.

At this point, Ms. Wells asked members of the public to make comments on this application.

Lynnelle Jones, 10 Point Road, discussed a video on the ENNA website. She noted that Westport had recently denied a waterfront plan. She asked whether it was the commission's responsibility to balance economic and community development with environmental protection and conservation. She believed that DEEP's letters were denials because the application violates the Connecticut Coastal Management Act. She criticized the lack of a dry egress at 108 Water Street and questioned the review process of the flood preparedness plan by the Harbor Management Commission. She urged the commission to consider DEEP's denials and the potential risks to public safety before approving the application.

Braden Lynn, CT DEEP, said that they had concerns about the residential units and had issued a denial in August. He said that they had issued another letter this month. He asked them to review the flood preparedness plan as to whether it mitigates the risks. He had a concern about the flood plan with people calling 911 during a flood event when emergency vehicles could not get through. He said that having residential units on this property was inconsistent with the Coastal Management Act, as well as having hotel space on the property.

Ms. Wells closed the public comment portion of the public hearing. Atty Blank then addressed comments from the public in his rebuttal including the flood preparedness plan. He said they would work with staff on the language about the hotel shutting down in a flood emergency such as a hurricane. He believed this plan was a better plan than the one for the previous approval. He also noted that the development is something that has been allowed since the regulations were adopted in 1987. He described the water infiltration systems that would improve water quality.

There was a discussion about Atty Blank continuing to work with staff on the emergency plan once they have found a hotel operator. Atty Blank asked that it be a condition of approval prior to obtaining building permits.

Mr. Roina noted that, as far as he could remember, this was the first person from DEEP that had ever commented at a Planning & Zoning Commission meeting.

**** MR. ROINA MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2025-51 SPR/CAM – Spinnaker Acquisitions LLC – 108 Water Street (District 2, Block 84, Lot 18) – Coastal site plan review application for the construction of a 4.5-story mixed-use development be **APPROVED** with the following findings:

1. That the Commission has found that the application is consistent with the goals of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA); and
2. That the Commission acknowledges that per the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) memo and has found that the applicant's flood preparedness plan, installation of new drainage infrastructure, and reduction of impervious surface reduces adverse impacts as much as feasibly possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission that application #2026-05 SP/CAM – Spinnaker Acquisitions LLC – 108 Water Street (District 2, Block 84, Lot 18) – Special permit and coastal site plan review application for the construction of a 4.5-story mixed-use development be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. That the buildings and site will be developed in accordance with the following plans:
 - a. Per site plan package entitled "Zoning Site Plan Depicting 108 Water Street," prepared by Redniss & Mead, dated 1/8/2026; and
 - b. Per architectural drawings entitled "108 Water St," prepared by Beinfield Architecture, dated 2/27/2026; and
 - c. Per landscape site plans entitled "108 Water Street," prepared by Eric Rains Landscape Architecture, LLC, dated 6/13/2025; and
2. That the overhead service wires and all other utilities shall be installed underground; and

3. That prior to the issuance of a zoning permit the applicant shall provide documentation that the application complies with Section 8.4.5.N.2.g of the zoning regulations; and
4. That a water-dependent use shall be located within the portion of the building labeled as “water related use;” and
5. That the applicant shall work with Staff and revise their plans to widen the public access paths to the boardwalk and park at the rear of the property as much as feasible, including but not limited to providing different materials for the walkways and a signage plan, to improve public wayfinding; and
6. That a public right-of-way passage easement agreement shall be filed on the Norwalk Land Records for the sidewalk space needed to ensure a continuous, five-foot wide, unobstructed pedestrian access route along the frontage of the property on Water Street; and
7. That any areas open to the public as indicated on the approved site plan shall be open to the public from dawn to dusk at a minimum while the special permit and/or coastal site plan approval remains effective; and
8. That prior to the issuance of a zoning permit and per the Transportation, Mobility and Parking (TMP) Department’s August 29, 2025, memorandum, the applicant has agreed to:
 - a. Coordinate with TMP on a mutually agreeable plan to remove, relocate, replace and/or modify traffic signal infrastructure; and
 - b. Revise the site plans per comment #4 and shall incorporate the design of a new pedestrian curb ramp at the southeast corner of Water Street/Hanford Place, in addition to associated pedestrian signals, push buttons, pedestals/bases and conduit; and
 - c. Submit a revised signal plan to include any agreed-upon signal infrastructure changes; and
 - d. Install curb ramps, pavement markings, and the foundations for Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) for a new crosswalk across Water Street in the vicinity of the north site driveway exit, in partnership with TMP, who will help determine the exact location/design of the crosswalk and install the RRFBs; and
 - e. Ensure that the driveway aprons shall be city standard Type B; and

f. Ensure that city standard light pole details/specifications shall be included in a detail sheet; and

9. That the applicant has agreed to pay for the reasonable design, consultant, material and applicable permit fees necessary for a duckbill backflow preventer at the city's stormwater outflow pipe located at 130 Water Street within 90 days of the applicant receiving a request from the city for payment; and

10. That the applicant, including the hotel operator, shall continue to work with Staff to finalize a flood preparedness plan(s) prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance; and

11. That a final Workforce Housing Plan showing a total of three 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

12. That a surety bond be submitted, in an amount to be determined by the Staff, to guarantee the installation of the required erosion and sediment controls prior to the issuance of a zoning permit; and

13. That all erosion and sediment controls be installed and maintained prior to the start of any construction or site work and that additional controls be installed at the direction of the Staff, as needed; and

14. That a Connecticut licensed engineer shall certify that all 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

15. That a surety bond be submitted to guarantee the completion and maintenance of the site plan and any modifications to the plan and all work required as a condition of approval under this special permit/coastal site plan review prior to the issuance of a 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 approval is March 13, 2026

Mr. Jones seconded.

At this point, the commissioners reviewed the resolution and made revisions.

Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones;

Richard Roina; Galen Wells approved.

Ana Tabachneck opposed.

No one abstained.

IV. REVIEW AND ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

C. #2025-84 CSPR – LandTech – 163 Gregory Boulevard – Retain a Shoreline Flood and Erosion Control Structure that was built without permits and construct a new residential dock - Report & recommended action

Tom Ryder, the engineer on the project, began the presentation by noting that the commission had requested a chronology of what the owner had known about the problems with the wall. He said that the chronology had been submitted in the prior week. He then reviewed the chronology for the commissioners.

Mr. Roina believed that in this case DEEP performed two different functions, one enforcement and the other advisory. He also said that he didn't like the boulders on the property but was not concerned about them. Mr. Schulman said that Planning & Zoning bore some responsibility for not having done something about this earlier. There was a discussion about the timing of the zoning and building permits which might have caught the height of the wall issue. There was then a discussion about the proposal to reduce the height of the wall. The commissioners then discussed modifications to the draft resolution that they had received from staff. There was a discussion about lowering the height of the wall, as well as the part of the application dealing with the dock. The dock had been approved by DEEP. There was a review of the plans and pictures to discuss what the applicant was proposing, lowering the wall. Mr. Ryder discussed the types of plants that would be planted, as well.

At this point, Mr. Roina made a motion to allow the applicant to keep the wall as it is but there was no second from any of the commissioners. At this point, the commissioners discussed the three options for the applicant so that they could decide which one to approve.

**** MS. TABACHNECK MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that application #2025 – 84 CSPR – LandTech – 163 Gregory Boulevard – Retain a Flood

and Erosion Control Structure that was constructed without permits and construct a new residential dock be **APPROVED** as modified subject to the following conditions:

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

a. Per proposed improvement plans dated 1/8/2025 and revised 2/6/2026 prepared LandTech, Westport, CT and as modified within the plans presented by Mr. Ryder at the March 4, 2026, public hearing; and

2. That the approval is in accordance with the "Lowering the Wall" option within the "Boulder Wall Compliance Options" memorandum provided by the applicant; and

3. That any modifications to the approved plan be reviewed and approved by City Staff prior to implementing; 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 the Staff; and

6. That 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 sections of the Zoning Regulations for the City of Norwalk; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these 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 March 13, 2026.

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

Mr. Jones seconded.

At this point, the commissioners reviewed the resolution. Mr. Kleppin said that there were three options: to deny, remain the same, and lower the wall. There was a discussion about setting precedent for others in the future if they didn't lower the wall. Mr. Kleppin recommended the compromise of lowering the wall. Mr. Roina withdrew his earlier motion. The commissioners then reviewed the resolution that Mr. Baker had modified. There was a discussion about whether DEEP could still say that the wall was not appropriate.

**Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones;
Richard Roina; Galen Wells; Ana Tabachneck approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.**

D. FY 2026-27 Capital Budget - Report and recommended action

Mr. Baker said that there would not be a formal presentation. The commission is making a finding of the Capital Budget being consistent with the POCD.

**** MR. SCHULMAN MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission the FY 2026-27 Capital Budget is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development.

**Ms. Tabachneck seconded.
Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Tammy Langalis; Harvey Jones;
Galen Wells; Ana Tabachneck approved.
No one opposed.
Richard Roina abstained.**

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: February 18, 2026

**** MR. ROINA MOVED to approve the February 18, 2026 minutes.
Mr. Schulman seconded.
Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Ana Tabachneck; Harvey Jones;
Richard Roina; Galen Wells approved.
No one opposed.
Tammy Langalis abstained.**

VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Mr. Kleppin said that there would not be a meeting on March 5, but rather, there would be a joint meeting on April 2, 2026. There would later be a public hearing for the POCD amendment. It would be held on Zoom but he would confirm for them.

VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Ms. Tabachneck noted that the Parking Authority had begun the process for the residential parking permit program. There were sessions in February about it. They were obtaining feedback through a website. The program would be citywide but not every street would have residential parking permits. This had come up in relation to the East Norwalk corridor.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tabachneck made a Motion to Adjourn.

Ms. Langalis seconded.

Louis Schulman; Diana Lenkowsky; Ana Tabachneck; Harvey Jones; Richard Roina; Galen Wells; Tammy Langalis approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero