

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
MAY 4, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; Thomas Livingston; Lisa Shanahan; Darlene Young
(7:10 p.m.)

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski, Director of Business Development and Tourism;
Jessica Vonashek, Chief of Community and Economic Development;
Steven Kleppin, Director of Planning and Zoning

OTHERS: Brian Bidoli, Executive Director, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency;
Diana Revolus Common Council Member

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Kydes called the Roll as indicated above.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted. Speakers are Norwalk residents unless otherwise noted.

Ms. Diane Lauricella asked about the future of the library and what was going to be done to put together a true library center. Currently there is a crisis because there is a month or less to exercise an option. She said it is not only a library issue, but is also a library expansion issue.

Ms. Lauricella said she would like to see the first floor made into a modern auditorium. She asked if this would be part of the discussion tonight, because they do not have until next month. She asked if this Committee can go out to tell the public what is going on with the Library.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of the Minutes of April 6, 2023 Meeting.

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

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Add Ms. Smyth to attendance and correct the spelling of Bryan Meek's name.

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. PLANNING AND ZONING

1. Update on the Waterfront Study.

Mr. Kleppin shared his screen and provided an update on the Waterfront Study. He presented the proposed industrial use classifications broken down by right, special permit and multi family. He said the plan has several uses built into it and presented options A – K. He said there are competing uses.

Mr. Livingston said that at the last meeting they were clear about having less industry on waterfront. Mr. Kleppin said the idea is to show that a lot of these ideas are plausible. He referred to Devine Brothers, O & G and King Industries that are water dependent uses. Mr. Livingston said this presentation is not consistent with that they discussed at their last meeting. Mr. Kleppin said he would be happy to come back next month to re-visit the options.

Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Kleppin if he had a slide showing the current zoning in the area. Mr. Kleppin said he did not, but reviewed zoning in the upper harbor north area. Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Kleppin for an update on King Industries. Mr. Kleppin said would reach out to them. When they last discussed this item, King Industries wanted to remain. When he spoke to O & G, they were more open. Devine Brothers intend to stay.

Mr. Kydes asked if there was any information on remediation. Mr. Kleppin said he would look into it. He said that one of the goals was to try to determine what is needed for industrial land.

Ms. Shanahan said these are important industries and they need to think about the future. She would like to see a light industrial type of use on the waterfront.

Mr. Kydes said they received a lot of information and asked if there were any questions on the options. Ms. Young said the new plan will not impact community in the best way. She said she would be in favor if there was an opportunity to make adjustments. She added that they do not need all of the contractor's yards in South Norwalk. Ms. Revolus agreed with Ms. Young.

Mr. Kydes said that it sounds like the Committee is leaning toward options G and I. Mr. Livingston and Ms. Shanahan agreed. Ms. Smyth said ideally, yes, but realistically it is too hard to tell. Ms. Young said she did not know which option she approved of.

Mr. Kleppin shared his screen and presented the Water Street scenario. He said there were a lot of conversations about the north part of Water Street to allow for more pedestrian access.

2. Update on Zone Norwalk (zoning regulations update).

Mr. Kleppin shared his screen. He said four meetings were held to date with various districts. He said he received requests from other neighborhoods for meetings. He presented upcoming meeting dates and said the schedule is on the website. Mr. Kleppin said they are thinking about holding meetings with other groups such as land use professionals, business owners, smaller neighborhood groups and other interested parties. Planning and Zoning is looking at two public hearings with the adoption hearing at the end of September and an effective date of January 1, 2024. Mr. Kleppin said they are also thinking about other methods of outreach such as reverse 911 calls and City wide mailings.

Mr. Kleppin reported that he heard concerns from the residents of Shorefront Park, Devil's Den and East Norwalk about the proposal of two-family properties being included in single family zones. Ms. Shanahan asked him to include Rowayton on that list. Mr. Kydes said he has never been a supporter of multifamily homes and asked how many homes they were talking about for East Norwalk. Mr. Kleppin said he will send out that information. He said that over half of the multi-unit homes are owner occupied.

Mr. Kleppin said that ADUs are already permitted in B zones. In his opinion, this zone change will not increase density and can lead to potential home ownership. Mr. Kydes asked for detailed, accurate information about how many homes will go from one to two family homes. Mr. Kleppin said he would break it down and noted that these changes will happen incrementally. He added that currently the zone does not include design requirements.

Ms. Revolus said this is South Norwalk and what they have to deal with on a normal basis. She said her overwhelming concern is who can do this. She asked if they could include verbiage on who can do this. Mr. Kleppin said he did not think they could legally do this. Ms. Revolus said she wants to be sure families can do this.

Mr. Kleppin reviewed the proposal that combines Wall Street to where South Norwalk was rezoned. He discussed building height, but said it did not go over well.

Mr. Kleppin said he also heard about the lot width and said the recommendation was to regulate the lot width. Ms. Shanahan said the West Norwalk Neighborhood Association met and they were not convinced. She said she is not convinced and asked Mr. Kleppin if he would meet with

her and Mr. Livingston to help them understand the issue. Mr. Kleppin said he would do some mapping to provide a sense of what that would look like.

Mr. Kydes said that regular updates to the Committee would be beneficial.

B. REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADVANCE THE FINAL PY49 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN (AAP) TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR ITS APPROVAL AND TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SUBMISSION OF THE PY49 AAP TO HUD AND ALL DOCUMENTS CONSISTENT WITH THE APPROVED PY49 AAP.**

Mr. Bidoli reviewed the item and said this is a reflection of what has been discussed over the past three meetings.

Mr. Kydes reminded everyone to complete and submit their conflict of interest form.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

C. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT DELINEATED BOUNDARIES FOR INCLUSION IN THE ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT PACKAGE TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR ITS REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**

Ms. Godeski reviewed the item and said they going to hold a public hearing on this topic at the Ordinance Committee meeting next month. The purpose of this approval is to be sure the Committee sees the boundary. If this is approved by the Common Council, it will then go to the State.

Ms. Young pointed out that she did not see Recreation and Parks in this item. She said they just completed a process for accepting gifts. Ms. Shanahan said the Ordinance Committee created guidelines that will direct how all artwork will be addressed. Ms. Young asked what needs to be done to include Recreation and Parks. Ms. Shanahan said this proposal gives more flexibility to Recreation and Parks. Ms. Godeski said they envision that a lot of items will go through Recreation and Parks. Ms. Vonashek added that when it relates to cultural, they can bring it to Recreation and Parks and anything that will end up on City land can also go through Recreation and Parks.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

III. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services