

CITY OF NORWALK
INDUSTRIAL ZONES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
October 27, 2020

PRESENT: Louis Schulman; Amelia Williams; Sabrina Church; John Kydes; Tammy Langalis; Darlene Young

STAFF: Steve Kleppin

OTHERS: Will Cohen, Kevin Hively, Maggie Tsang, Lisa Hollywood, Tim Love

The meeting began at 9:07 am

I. DISCUSSION OF STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROCESS

Maggie Tsang began the presentation with a review of the Business Engagement Strategy for the committee members. It would include which businesses they would meet with. She discussed the engagement plan with business outreach occurring first, followed by neighborhood outreach as well as online surveys. They toured the various industrial zones. There were industrial uses up against residential areas. There was a discussion about small and large contractor's yards. Different areas had different geographic advantages. There was also a discussion about the different employment sectors in Norwalk and smaller subsectors. There is a diversity within the sectors.

Lisa Hollywood then discussed the focus groups and one on one interviews that would be conducted. They would also work in geographic areas such as SoNo East and West. She discussed the key considerations especially contractors including landscape contractors. In some areas, they would speak with some of the contractor's yards which abut residential areas. She also discussed some businesses they would speak with in one on one interviews. There are issues of code enforcement in the South Norwalk area.

Ms. Tsang then discussed the East Norwalk area which was different than South Norwalk. She noted which companies they would reach out to for one on one interviews including Dooney & Burke which were larger businesses. She then discussed the waterfront area which had water dependent uses. She noted the businesses that they would do one on one interviews. Another industrial group was called South of Merritt which was south of the Merritt Parkway and less known than the other industrial areas.

Kevin Hively then continued the presentation with a discussion of the peer communities and noted that they did a comparison to Bridgeport. He discussed the industries that were analyzed. He discussed the categories of establishment and employment distribution. He noted the industrial sector snapshot. He then discussed the comparisons that were done with other towns around Connecticut in construction, manufacturing, administrative/waste

management services, and wholesale industry in employment. He noted that Danbury and Milford were similar to Norwalk in terms of the industrial establishment trend and the industrial employment trend. He noted that Norwalk was a leader in some categories in Connecticut but lagged in others.

Will Cohen explained how the businesses were categorized with the levels of details that were used. There was a further discussion about the diagrams that they provided to the committee members. There was also a discussion about sharing the data that they used.

Ms. Tsang then discussed the engagement plan and how to reach businesses and neighbors. There would also be an online survey which Mr. Cohen then discussed further. He noted that there are potential statements that could be used in interviews. Ms. Young asked that a statement could be added about the contractor's yards contributing to blight in some of these areas. There was a discussion about the value of the surveys.

II. NEXT STEPS

Ms. Tsang noted that they would begin scheduling interviews and draft the survey. Mr. Cohen asked that the committee members also send them comments especially with the statements. They also discussed the next meeting and what would come next. They would send an email with the survey. The interviews are different from the surveys. They would send an email about potential statements and asked that the committee members respond by the end of the week. They also discussed how long it would take to conduct the interviews. Mr. Hively asked that the city help with setting up meetings. The whole process might be completed right before Thanksgiving. There was also a discussion about meeting with the Harbor Management Commission. There was also a discussion about feedback from the South Norwalk area, possibly on Zoom as well as the survey. Mr. Kleppin suggested a Zoom meeting after the survey, to get further comments from South Norwalk residents.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Lauricella asked if the consultants had seen a copy of the Industrial Zone survey in the early 2000s. She asked them to look at polluted sites around Norwalk. She also noted that large land plots were given away to developments, rather than clean industry. She asked them to put something into the survey about green jobs. She asked them to interview the owners of Muller site. She would send Mr. Kleppin and Ms. Church some phraseology for the survey. She noted there are issues related to health.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cohen said that they would do a first round of surveys and interviews before they scheduled another meeting with the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero