

**CITY OF NORWALK
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 6, 2018
SPECIAL MEETING
THE TOWN HOUSE
MILL HILL HISTORIC PARK
2 EAST WALL STREET
NORWALK, CT 06851**

ATTENDANCE: Susanne Betts, Chair; Eric Chandler; Holly Cuzzone; Dana Laird;
Thomas Livingston; Lisa Wilson Grant (6:45 p.m.)

GUESTS: Todd Bryant, Norwalk Preservation Trust; Morris Gross, Norwalk
Hospital; Attorney Liz Suchy; David Westmoreland

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Betts called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present this evening who wished to speak.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Liz Suchy to Discuss Norwalk Hospital/West Avenue Plans

Ms. Suchy began her presentation by inviting anyone with questions to reach out to her or Mr. Gross. In addition, she offered to come back and discuss the project after this initial meeting.

The plans for the project were reviewed. The idea is to develop the site with a new out-patient facility. Part of the plan requires dealing with the existing house which creates issues and challenges. If the structure is demolished, Ms. Suchy suggested placing a model in the lobby of the new facility along with photographs to show people what was there and what the house looked like. She also suggested they could de-construct and re-construct the structure and give it to the City.

Ms. Suchy explained the new facility will create hundreds of jobs.

Ms. Suchy said they engaged the services of an architect who has the expertise to evaluate the home. Ms. Betts said she believed the house has historical value. Mr. Bryant added that both the house and the YMCA have historical value.

Mr. Gross explained that over the years, the house has had multiple uses and been added to. He offered to provide a tour to the Commissioners.

Ms. Wilson Grant joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Gross described the interior of the home, noting the banisters were in good shape along with the tile around the fireplace. He noted there are drop ceilings in the home. The house has not been occupied for a while and been broken into numerous times. He said that the former YMCA building has also been broken into. He said it developed so much mold that the Police will not go inside. The Fire Department talked to him about doing hazmat drills in the building.

Mr. Gross explained they plan to build a new bed pavilion along with providing out patient services. In addition, they are planning to have assisted living units along with healthy living retail.

Mr. Westmoreland said he did not believe anyone had an issue with the plan; the only issue is with the loss of the historic buildings. Ms. Suchy in response to his question said the plan is for 72% assisted living units.

A discussion took place about creating an exhibit on the history of the property and displaying it in the new project. When the Tracey building is removed, Ms. Cuzzone asked if the name would be saved. Mr. Gross said there are a number of plaques that will be located in a centralized area. He added that the hospital is proud of their history. Ms. Cuzzone said it was important to incorporate the historical display and make it accessible to the residents.

Ms. Betts asked if an effort was made to incorporate the façade of the existing building into the new building. Ms. Suchy said her charge is to bring back suggestions from the Commission.

Mr. Westmoreland commented on Ms. Suchy's offer to move the building. He said moving an historical building is frowned upon. He said the house is seen as historical and valuable because it is the last surviving West Avenue home. Unless there is an amazing use for it, it is not worth the cost to move it someplace else. Its location is what makes it important. Mr. Westmoreland said if it can't be incorporated into the new site, a memorialization in the new building would be helpful.

Mr. Bryant said documentation would be good.

Ms. Betts asked about traffic flow. Ms. Suchy said that would have to be worked out with the City. Mr. Wilson Grant asked if there would be green space. Mr. Gross said there would be green space and it would be very attractive.

Mr. Westmoreland said parking is a serious issue for Mathews Park during events and asked if they could park at the new site. Mr. Gross said they are willing to work with and be supportive of the Mansion. He said it is worth talking about.

Mr. Westmoreland talked about a gap in funding for projects at the Mansion and asked if they would be willing to help fill in that gap. Mr. Gross said he was not sure he could answer that question this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services